

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region  
Executive Officer's Summary Report  
June 17, 2021

**ITEM: 8**

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Work Plan for the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (*Matt St. John*)

**BOARD ACTION:** This is an information item only; no action will be taken by the Regional Board.

**BACKGROUND:** The purpose of this information item is to present the proposed Work Plan of the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 (Work Plan) and to receive feedback from Board members and the public. Work Plans have been developed for the Watershed Stewardship Program and each of the four Regional Water Board Divisions – Point Source & Groundwater Protection; Non-Point Source & Surface Water Protection; Planning & Watershed Stewardship; and Cannabis & Enforcement. The Introduction to the Work Plan explains the purpose of the work plans, outlines special considerations reflected in the work plans, and identifies several office-wide initiatives that are not discussed within the division-specific work plans.

**DISCUSSION:** The purpose for having Work Plans is to prioritize and guide the work of Regional Water Board staff during the fiscal year, and to manage expectations regarding the scope, content and schedule associated with work plan milestones and deliverables. Included in the Introduction to the Work Plan is an explanation of the organization and outline of the components of each of the division-specific work plans.

All work plans serve as both a planning tool and a tool to track progress throughout the fiscal year. Throughout the fiscal year the Management Team meets to assess the status of projects/activities in the division-specific work plans and makes modifications, as necessary. The work of the Regional Water Board can be dynamic, with new, unplanned activities/projects emerging which require response and, in many cases, require action that takes time and energy away from planned work activities. Migrating the entire office to working remotely due to local shelter-in-place requirements and shifting to this new work paradigm is an obvious example. Responding to fires and floods is another real example that our region has faced regularly over the past several years. And, we are frequently asked to respond to requests, large and small, programmatic and administrative, from the State Water Board.

New Components of the FY 21/22 Work Plan

New to the Work Plan in FY 21/22 is the addition of a standalone Watershed Stewardship Program work plan, previously incorporated within the Planning & Watershed Stewardship Divisions work plan. The Watershed Stewardship Approach is a strategic initiative designed to support the Water Board's efforts to coordinate program activities, build watershed-based partnerships, and improve water quality and ecological

resiliency. Because the Watershed Stewardship Approach is more strategy than a resourced program, this work plan identifies key partnerships, projects, and watersheds which have been identified as priorities to increase the Regional Water Board capabilities in adaptive management, collaborative project funding, large-scale ecological restoration, and building consensus solutions. The Watershed Stewardship Coordinator facilitates the application of this strategy.

Also new to the FY 21/22 Work Plan is the presentation of two priority Office-wide Initiatives: 1) the work of the Employee Engagement Steering Committee to identify and implement recommended actions to address organizational improvements; and 2) the work of the State and Regional Water Boards to address systemic societal problems associated with racial equity and environmental justice, both with respect to our own agency and workforce and with respect to how we serve the communities within our jurisdiction.

#### Accommodating the Fiscal Impacts from Coronavirus Pandemic

At the time these work plans were finalized for the June 17, 2021 Regional Board meeting, the proposed California budget for FY 21/22 includes the funds to reinstate full salaries for all Water Board staff effective July 1, 2021. However, since the budget was not passed when the work plans were drafted, they reflect a 10% reduction in staff time and commensurate reductions in work productivity to accommodate potential staff furlough days. Should the final approved budget reinstate full salaries for Water Board employees, performance targets for some of our regulatory programs may be exceeded.

Since June 2019 three North Coast Regional Board staff were redirected to work on a limited term assignment as Covid-19 contact tracers, under the supervision of the California Department of Public Health. The State Water Board's Division of Administrative Services has informed us that all Water Board staff who volunteered to act as contact tracers are scheduled to be reinstated to full time Water Board work by July 1, 2021. The work plans have been written to reflect the return of these three staff to Water Board work.

At the June 17, 2021 Regional Water Board meeting staff will provide a general overview and summary of the Work Plans. We look forward to feedback from Board members on these priorities for FY 21/22, welcome comments by interested stakeholders, and we will be available to answer questions on these plans.

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

#### **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:**

1. FY 21/22 Work Plan Introduction & Office-Wide Initiatives
2. Point Source & Groundwater Protection Division FY 21/22 Work Plan
3. Non-Point Source & Surface Water Protection Division FY 21/22 Work Plan
4. Planning & Watershed Stewardship Division FY 21/22 Work Plan
5. Cannabis & Enforcement Division FY 21/22 Work Plan
6. Watershed Stewardship Program FY 21/22 Work Plan