

Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report
Thursday, August 17, 2017
Regional Water Board Office
Santa Rosa, California

ITEM: 6

SUBJECT: Workshop on Draft Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL (*Alydda Mangelsdorf and Charles Reed*)

BOARD ACTION: This is public workshop. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.

BACKGROUND: Several reaches of the Russian River Watershed were listed on the 303(d) list of impaired waters for pathogens in 2012. A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development project has confirmed evidence of fecal waste discharge at locations throughout the watershed, with concerns about human exposure to pathogens through water contact recreation (REC-1). A draft Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load and staff report (Action Plan and staff report) were released for public review in 2015. Public comments identified many important areas for improvement. As such, staff has made major efforts in several specific areas including:

1. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities with the counties related to the implementation of programs for onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS), homeless and farmworkers encampments, recreation, and others issues. In December 2016, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the County of Sonoma and the Sonoma County Community Development Commission to clarify these roles. Similar efforts are planned with Mendocino County;
2. Refining the definition of Advanced Protection Management Program (APMP) boundaries for assessment, upgrade and/or replacement of failing OWTS;
3. Assisting counties in obtaining technical and financial assistance to plan for and to implement upgrades or replacements of failing OWTS. Staff is in the process of working with Sonoma County, the State Water Board Division of Financial Assistance and Office of Public Participation, and the Rural Community Assistance Corporation to apply for a planning grant for the communities of Monte Rio, Villa Grande, Northwood, and Camp Meeker as a pilot project; and,
4. Meeting with various communities that can potentially be affected by the Action Plan to seek their input.

In the meantime, the State Water Resources Control Board (State Board) has released for public review a draft bacteria water quality objective for REC-1, which supports the pathogen analyses conducted by the Regional Water Board. The TMDL, wasteload allocations, load allocations, and numeric targets have been updated to reflect the State Board's proposed objectives with additional margin of safety.

DISCUSSION: A newly revised Action Plan and staff report have been released for another public comment period, which begins on August 7, 2017, and ends on September 29, 2017, in preparation for an adoption hearing scheduled for the December 12 or 13, 2017 Board meeting. The revised Action Plan and staff report incorporate changes resulting from public comments received in 2015. Substantial changes were made to the Program of Implementation. Changes to the technical analysis were minor or non-substantial. The August 17, 2017 workshop is an opportunity for the Regional Water Board staff to present the major revisions to the action plan and staff report and for the Regional Water Board to hear oral comments from the public. Written public comments on the revised Action Plan and staff report will be due September 29, 2017 and will be summarized and responded to in a Response to Comments document available prior to the December 2017 hearing.

Key important updates include:

1. The TMDL, waste load allocations and load allocations are now based on the State Board's draft *E. coli* objectives to protect REC-1;
2. The numeric targets are based on the State Board's draft *E. coli* objectives and national enterococci criteria, which provide an additional line of evidence of pollution to serve as a margin of safety;
3. The APMP bounded area includes all parcels that fall partially or fully within the area 600 linear feet in the horizontal direction on either side of the entire mainstem of the Russian River and all mapped waters in subwatersheds with a parcel density of 50 parcels per square mile or more. Subwatersheds, defined as Hydrologic Units Code 12 basin names, with parcel densities greater than 50 parcels per square mile include the following: Brooks Creek, Dutch Bill Creek, East Fork Russian River, Green Valley Creek, Lower Laguna de Santa Rosa, Lower Santa Rosa Creek, Mark West Creek, Porter Creek, Salt Hollow Creek, Upper Laguna de Santa Rosa, Upper Santa Rosa Creek, Ward Creek-Austin Creek, and Windsor Creek;
4. Requirements for OWTS owners has been revised in response to prior public comments; and,
5. The roles and responsibilities for the Regional Water Board and counties with respect to program implementation have been clarified.

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES: There have been significant changes to certain chapters of the Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL and staff report that warrant another 45-day public review. The significant changes are enumerated above.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

Draft Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL
Draft Staff Report