

Update on Post-Fire Monitoring Current State of Knowledge and Future Planning

Item 9

September 6, 2018



December 2017 Board Meeting

- Comprehensive review of all Regional Water Board staff's fire response activities including surface water monitoring
- Board requested future update on monitoring activities and results



Panelists

Katharine Carter - North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Kevin Lunde - San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

Janice Thomas - State Water Board – Division of Drinking Water

Heaven Moore - City of Santa Rosa

Break for Questions

Todd Schram- Sonoma Water (formerly Sonoma County Water Agency)

Lisa Micheli- Pepperwood Preserve

Virginia Mahacek- Office of Recovery & Resiliency – Watershed Task Force

Chuck Striplen - North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Break for Questions

Take questions for all 8 panelists



Panelists

Katharine Carter - North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

- Winter 2017/2018 surface water monitoring & conclusions
- Winter 2018/2019 surface water monitoring

Kevin Lunde - San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

- Winter 2017/2018 surface water monitoring & conclusions
- Winter 2018/2019 surface water monitoring

Janice Thomas - State Water Board – Division of Drinking Water

- Winter 2017/2018 drinking water monitoring

Heaven Moore - City of Santa Rosa

- Winter 2017/2018 first flush, BMP effectiveness, & post debris removal monitoring
- Winter 2018/2019 monitoring & winter preparedness planning

Break for Questions



**North Coast
Regional Water Quality Control Board
Katharine Carter**



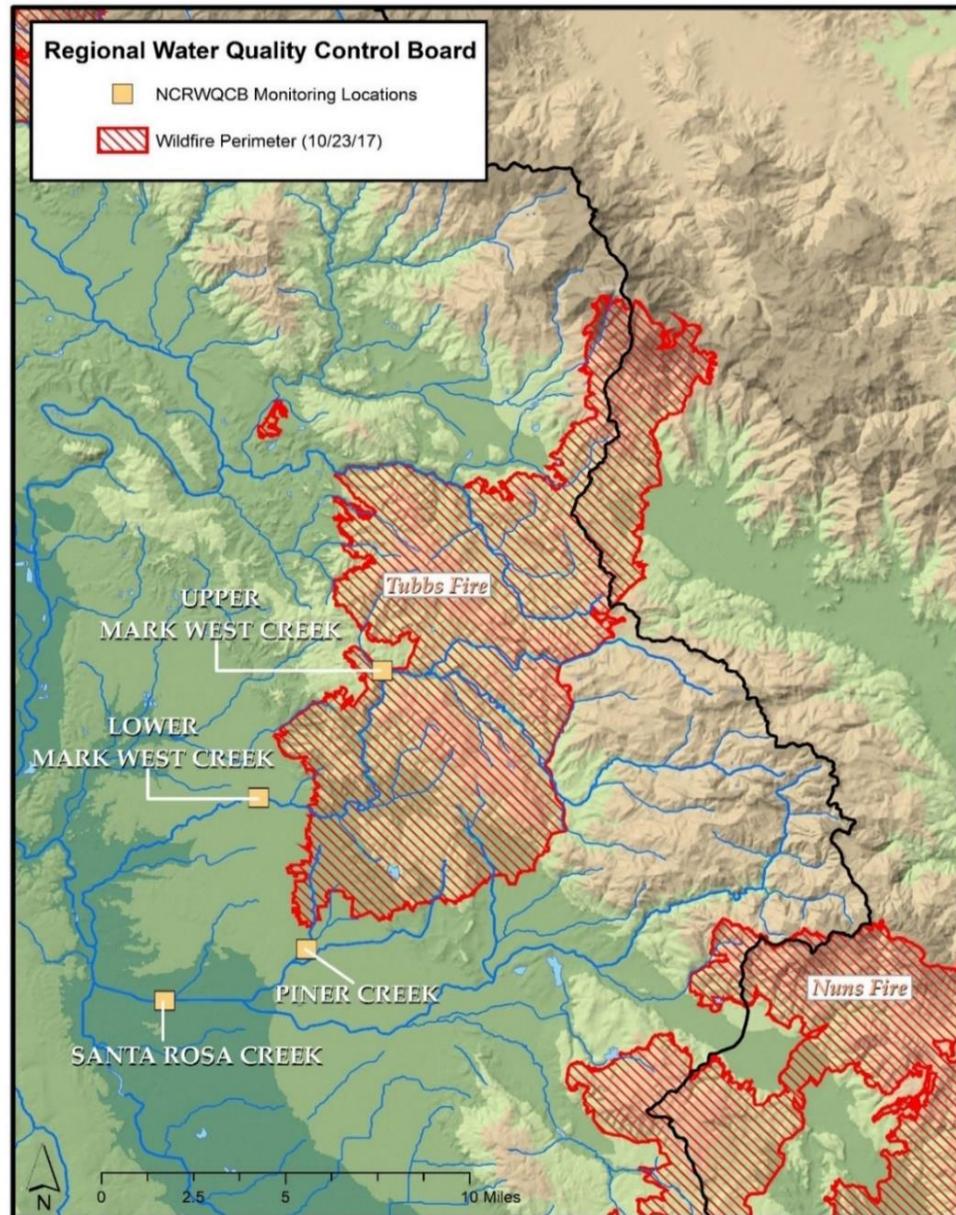
Surface Water Monitoring Response (Winter 17/18)

- Fires burned 93,363 acres in Mark West & Santa Rosa Creek
- Water quality concerns
 - Public Health
 - Aquatic Life
- Primary objectives:
 - Surface water characterization
 - Determine stormwater BMPs effectiveness



Surface Water Monitoring Plan

(Winter 17/18)



Surface Water Monitoring Plan

(Winter 17/18)

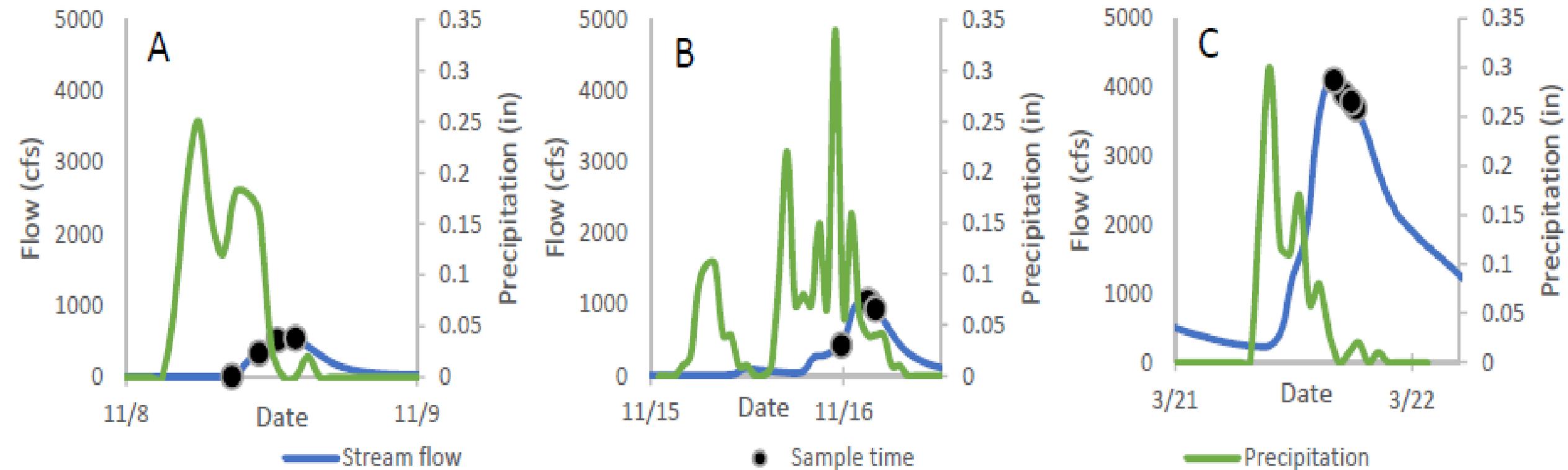


Figure 3. Hydrographs showing stream flow and precipitation vs. sample time for (A), a 1.36" storm on Nov. 8-9, (B), a 1.95" storm on Nov. 15-16, and (C), a 1.21" storm on March 22. Flow data was collected from the USGS flow gauge on Santa Rosa Creek at Willowside Road, USGS Gage #11466320. Precipitation data was collected from the Santa Rosa CalFire weather station.

Surface Water Monitoring Results (Winter 17/18)

Conclusions

- No immediate threat to public health or aquatic life
- Some metals exceeded thresholds for aquatic life but were in historic range of concentrations observed during storm runoff
- No aquatic toxicity exhibited
- BMPs and debris removal prevented pollutants from entering waterways

Caveats

- Only third storm event suggests erosion

North Coast Regional Water Board Fact Sheet Available at:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/swamp/



FACT SHEET

Santa Rosa Post-Fire Water Quality Monitoring

Tubbs and Nuns Fires

In October 2017, the Tubbs and Nuns Fires burned a combined 93,363 acres. This amounted to 8% land coverage of the Russian River watershed and 28.5% of the Laguna-Mark West Creek sub-watershed^{1,2}. More than 8,000 structures were damaged or destroyed, elevating the potential for toxics-laden runoff within these watersheds. Surface waters within and downstream of the Tubbs and Nuns Fires include impaired waterbodies, endangered species habitat, and source water for drinking water systems.



Figure 2. BMP controls installed downslope of a burned structure.

Post-Fire Pollutants

During storm events, surface waters may be affected as rain carries pollutants away from burned areas. Research shows that fire affected areas in Southern California contained increased concentrations of contaminants including nutrients (e.g. nitrates and phosphorus), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), copper, zinc, mercury, lead, and other metals^{3,4}. Several of these pollutants, especially metals, can be detrimental to human health and toxic to aquatic life. Many pollutants often attach to suspended particles and enter the water as runoff. Therefore, high flows can transport sediment bound pollutants to creeks and downstream to the Russian River. To minimize this transport of pollutants, Regional Water Board staff worked with local partners to implement post-fire best management practices (BMPs) in an effort to mitigate pollutants entering surface water during post-fire storm events (Fig. 2).

Surface Water Monitoring

Regional Water Board staff assessed potential impacts to surface waters downstream of burned areas by monitoring surface water quality. Samples were collected at four locations within the Mark West Creek watershed (Fig. 1). The first set of samples was collected on November 1st, prior to any storm events as a baseline dataset. Three subsequent sampling events were timed to collect samples in conjunction with storm runoff events on Nov. 8, Nov. 15 and March 22 (Fig. 3).

The State Water Board's Division of Drinking water coordinated with drinking water purveyors to ensure that drinking water was safe to drink. Tests conducted by the Sonoma County Water Agency and others reflected no issues with drinking water after the fire.

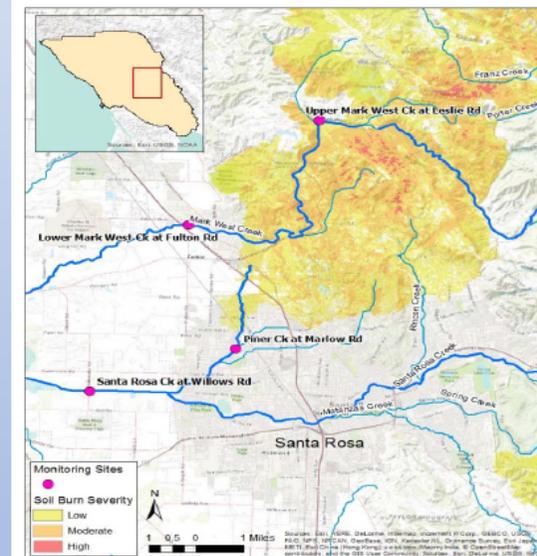


Figure 1. Post-fire water quality monitoring sites on Mark West Creek, Piner Creek, and Santa Rosa Creek.

Winter 18/19 Monitoring plans

- Seeking to secure contract for additional surface water monitoring
- Targeting larger storms
- Adding sediment toxicity monitoring
- Coordinate with City and County Partners



SF Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board

Kevin Lunde



SF Bay Water Board

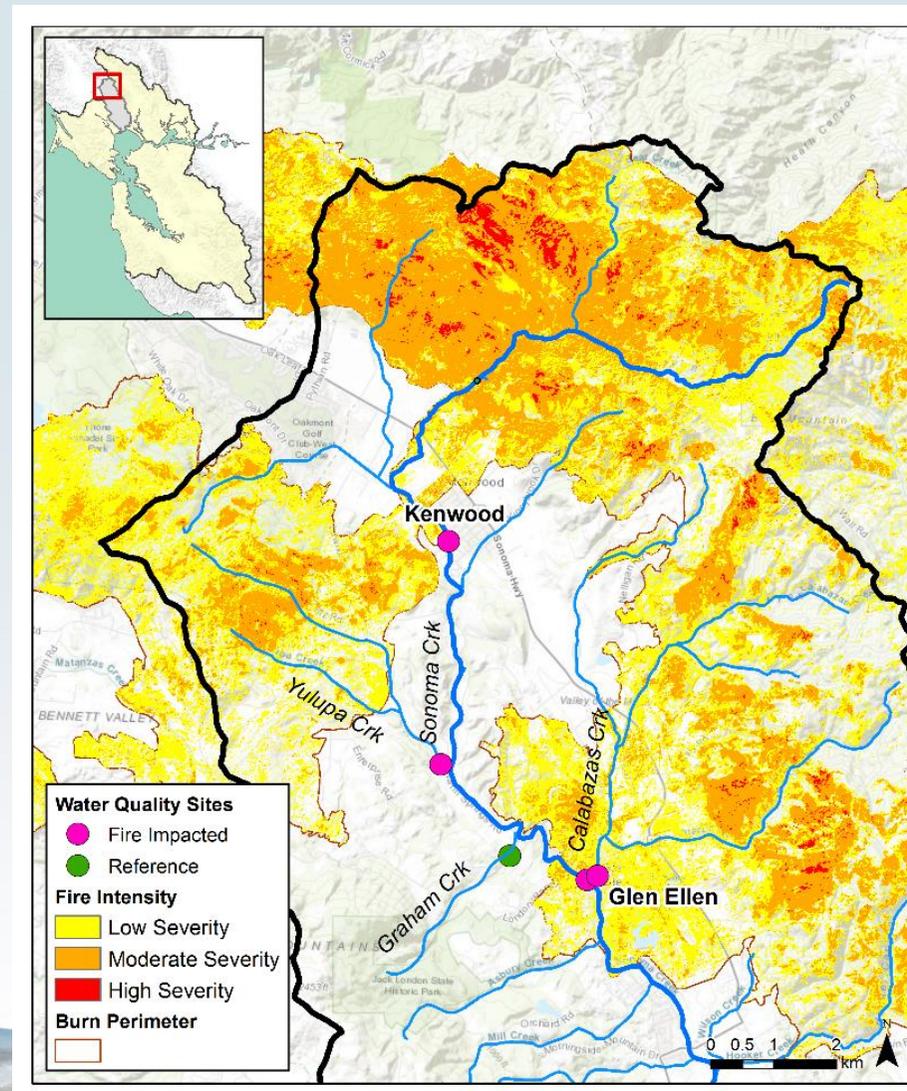
Water Quality Monitoring Response

- Fires affected 80,000 acres in Napa River and Sonoma Creek
- Water quality concerns
 - Aquatic resource impacts
 - Drinking water
- Primary objective to determine if stormwater BMPs effective



Monitoring Plan

- Consulted with North Coast & SCCWRP
- 10 sample locations in Napa & Sonoma
- Reference sites
 - Unburned watershed, pre-storm conditions
- Sampled heavy metals, PAHs, nutrients
- Used CAA funding



Fire Monitoring Results

- Nearly every sample (~2000) below acute or chronic thresholds
- Small increase in storm samples resulted from typical storm response
- Concentrations metals 100x < S. Cal
- **Stormwater BMPs effective**

FACT SHEET
Napa Valley Post-Fire Water Quality Monitoring

Napa Valley Fires
In October 2007, the Atlas, Bliss, and Tilden firestorm (11,000 acres in the Napa River watershed) burned watersheds with and without access to areas affected by the fires include urban watersheds, and riparian areas habitat, and the source water for drinking water systems.

Monitoring Plan
The big storm events surface water may be affected source water pollutants away from source. The fact sheet document get out information by the surface water discharge of stormwater by monitoring chemical conditions during storm events. Research shows that the affected areas in Napa Valley California contains the usual concentrations of contaminants including nutrients (e.g., nitrate and phosphate), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), copper, zinc, mercury, lead, and other metals. Several of these pollutants, especially metals, can be detrimental to human health and toxic to aquatic life. Many pollutants often attach to suspended particles and enter the water. However, high flows can transport sediment-bound pollutants to vents, and discharge to the San Francisco Bay.

Monitoring Results
The fact sheet collected samples from the sites in Fig. 1 on four consecutive periods (twice during the beginning of the first storm of the season, and again during three subsequent "ordinary" storms). A sampling event was defined as a minimum rainfall of 0.1 in. in a 24-hour period. Precipitation and flow rates for the 8 of the first 10 storms are reported in Fig. 2. More information on the San Francisco Bay Water Board's report for monitoring plan is available [here](#).

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board



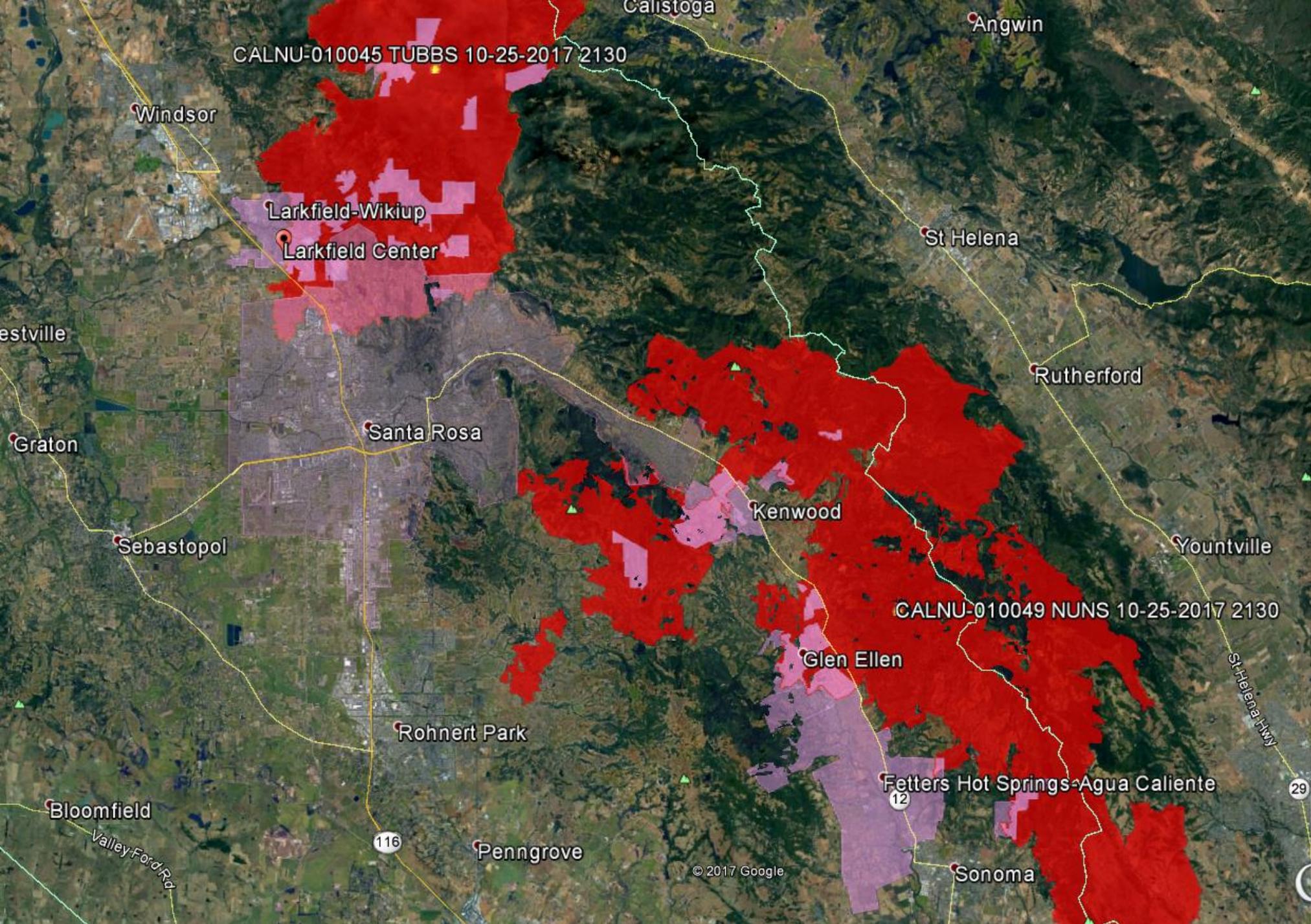
Future Monitoring Plans

- Preparing to sample one storm
- Target large storm (2-4 inches)
- Use existing funding
- Coordinate with North Coast

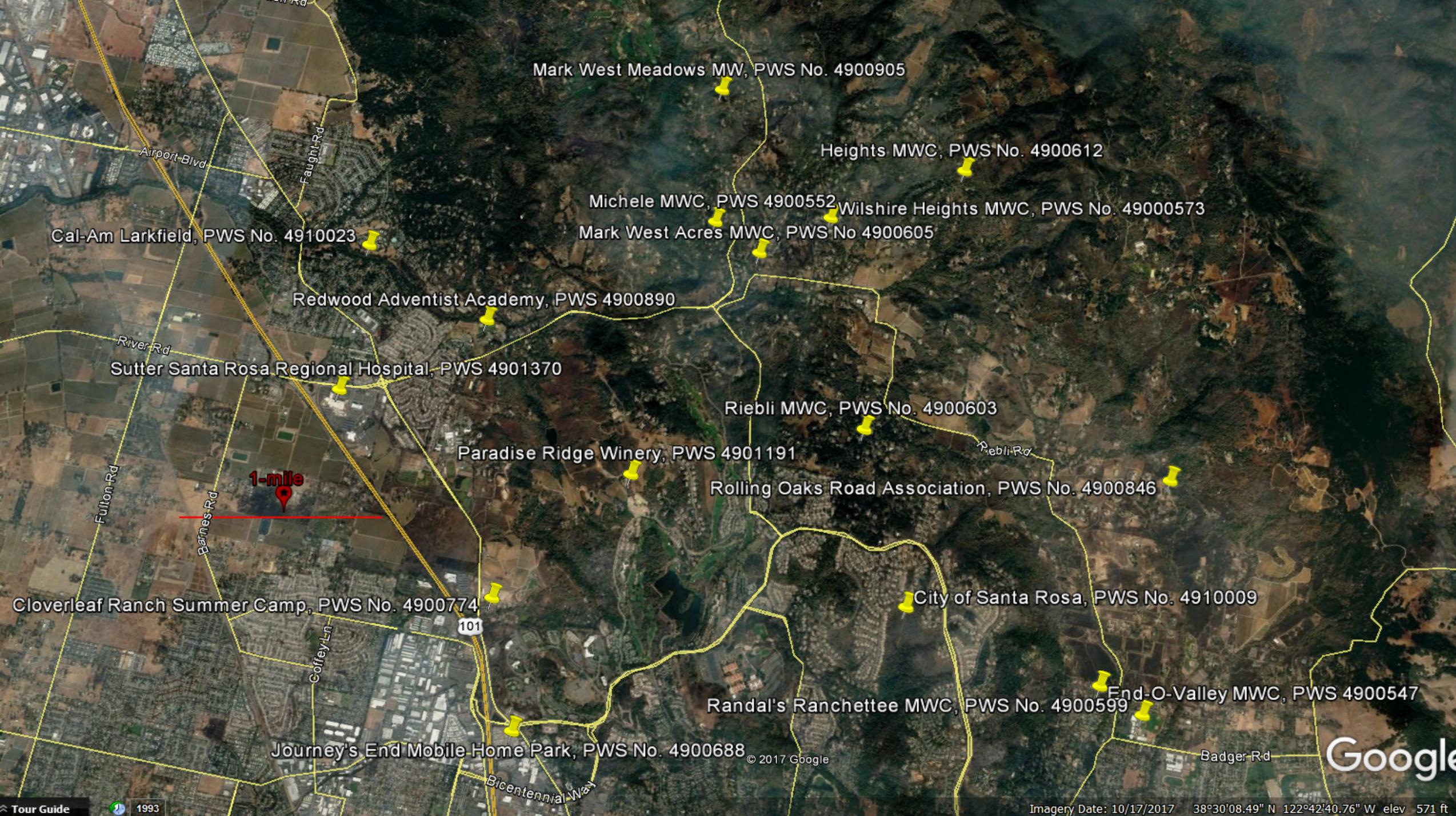


**State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Drinking Water
Janice Thomas**





© 2017 Google



Mark West Meadows MW, PWS No. 4900905

Heights MWC, PWS No. 4900612

Michele MWC, PWS 4900552

Wilshire Heights MWC, PWS No. 49000573

Mark West Acres MWC, PWS No 4900605

Cal-Am Larkfield, PWS No. 4910023

Redwood Adventist Academy, PWS 4900890

Sutter Santa Rosa Regional Hospital, PWS 4901370

Riebli MWC, PWS No. 4900603

Paradise Ridge Winery, PWS 4901191

Rolling Oaks Road Association, PWS No. 4900846

1-mile

Cloverleaf Ranch Summer Camp, PWS No. 4900774

City of Santa Rosa, PWS No. 4910009

Randal's Ranchette MWC, PWS No. 4900599

End-O-Valley MWC, PWS 4900547

Journey's End Mobile Home Park, PWS No. 4900688

Google

DDW Impacts

- 35 Public Water Systems affected
 - 33 Groundwater systems
 - 2 Surface water systems
- Debris Flow/R1 Analysis



Type of Sampling

- Sources
 - Groundwater
 - Watershed
- Tanks
- Distribution







Findings

- Groundwater
- Surface Water
- Tanks
- Distribution System



City of Santa Rosa Heaven Moore



City of Santa Rosa

Post Fire Monitoring in the Burn Scar

- First Flush Monitoring and BMP Effectiveness Study
 - Conducted in coordination with in-stream sampling by Regional Board and SCWA
 - November 8, 2017
 - Grab samples



City of Santa Rosa

Post Fire Monitoring in the Burn Scar

- First Flush Monitoring
 - Grab samples from five locations in the storm drain system in Coffey Park
 - *Constituent levels were found to be consistent with typical first flush levels and consistent with Regional Board findings in receiving water*





City of Santa Rosa

Post Fire Monitoring in the Burn Scar

- BMP Effectiveness Study
 - Evaluated effectiveness of three different configurations of gravel bag and wattle configurations
 - Grab samples from upstream and downstream of installed BMPs in different configurations
 - *All three BMP configurations functioned similarly.*
 - *BMPs reduced constituent levels by approximately an order of magnitude*





City of Santa Rosa

Post Fire Monitoring in the Burn Scar

- Post Debris Removal Sampling
 - Conducted in coordination with in-stream sampling by Regional Board on March 22, 2018
 - Grab samples from five locations in the storm drain system in Coffey Park
 - *Constituent levels shifted to those generally consistent with transport in sediment and consistent with Regional Board findings in receiving water*



City of Santa Rosa

Upcoming Sampling and Storm Water Quality Efforts

- Additional sampling planned in the burn scar area
 - To be conducted in coordination with in-stream sampling by Regional Board
 - Research shows years 2-5 tend to have higher constituent loads after wildland fires.
 - Winter Preparedness Planning- multiple efforts to protect storm water including outreach, inspection, storm patrols, and rebuild support.



Questions?



Presentation Overview

Panelists

Todd Schram- Sonoma Water (*formerly Sonoma County Water Agency*)

- Study to understand water quality changes and potential impacts on treatment efficacy of riverbank filtration at Wohler-Mirabel Production Facilities from wildfire disturbances in Russian River watershed

Lisa Micheli- Pepperwood Preserve

- Infiltration and sedimentation monitoring

Virginia Mahacek- Watershed Task Force (Sonoma County Office of Recovery and Resiliency)

- Overview of Watershed Task Force purpose & activities

Charles Striplen - North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

- Post-fire long term planning & monitoring

Break for Questions



Sonoma Water

Todd Schram



Post-Fire Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Purpose
 - Understand water quality changes and potential impacts on treatment efficacy of riverbank filtration at Wohler-Mirabel Production Facilities from wildfire disturbances in Russian River watershed



Post-Fire Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Extension of ongoing collaborative research project at Wohler and Mirabel Production Facilities since 2008
 - Sonoma Water
 - Lawrence Berkeley National Lab
 - USGS
 - CA Water Science Center
 - Subsurface Microbiology Lab (Boulder, CO)



Sampling Program Components

- Surface Water Samples
 - Aqueous
 - Microorganisms
- Sediment Samples
 - Sediment Collected w/ Aqueous Samples
 - Wohler / Mirabel Bulk Sediment Sample (Annually)
 - Cryocores
- Ash Samples
 - Conduct ash leachate column study experiments

Surface Water Sampling Protocol

- Baseline
 - Ten locations sampled on October 19, 2017
- Wet Season
 - Post-Storm Events (4) – Eleven locations
 - Dry Conditions (5) – Wohler / Mirabel
- Dry Season
 - Monthly (4) – Five locations
 - Biweekly (3)– Two locations



Sampling Program Sites

- Wet Season
 - Mainstem (3 sites)
 - Tributaries (8 sites)
- Dry Season
 - East Fork & Dry Creek
 - Wohler & Mirabel



Aqueous Sample Parameters

- Wet and Dry Season
 - Dissolved Organic Carbon
 - SUVA-254
 - Anions
 - Cations
 - Total Dissolved Nitrogen
 - Dissolved and Whole Water
 - Iron Speciation
 - Mercury
 - Aquatic Microbiome DNA
- Wet Season
 - Trace Metals
 - PFAS
 - Sugars



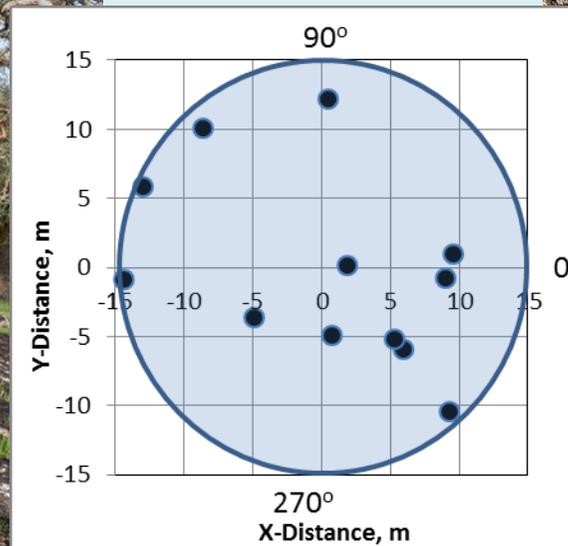
Sediment Sampling

- Characterize changes in microbial populations at streambed
- Parameters
 - Sediment Microbiome DNA
 - Carbon
 - Nitrogen
 - Mercury



Ash Sampling and Characterization

- Collect bulk ash samples
 - Pepperwood Preserve, McCullough Ranch, Shiloh Regional Park
 - Ash leachate experiments
 - DOC and mercury release concerns

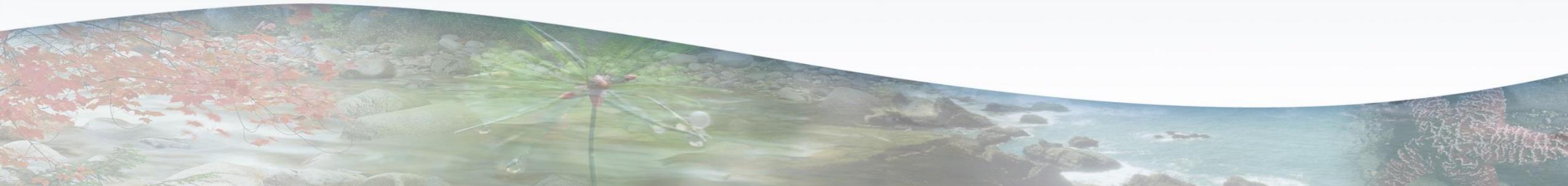


Next Steps

- Sampling on-going
- Evaluate additional potential sites downstream of Mendocino Complex fire
- Flow & Reactive Transport Model
- Ash leachate column experiments

Pepperwood Preserve

Lisa Micheli



Monitoring infiltration and sedimentation in Wine Country fire zone uplands

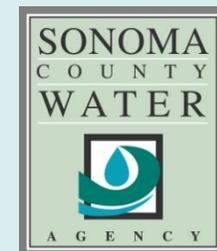


North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Lisa Micheli, PhD

Pepperwood's Dwight Center for Conservation Science

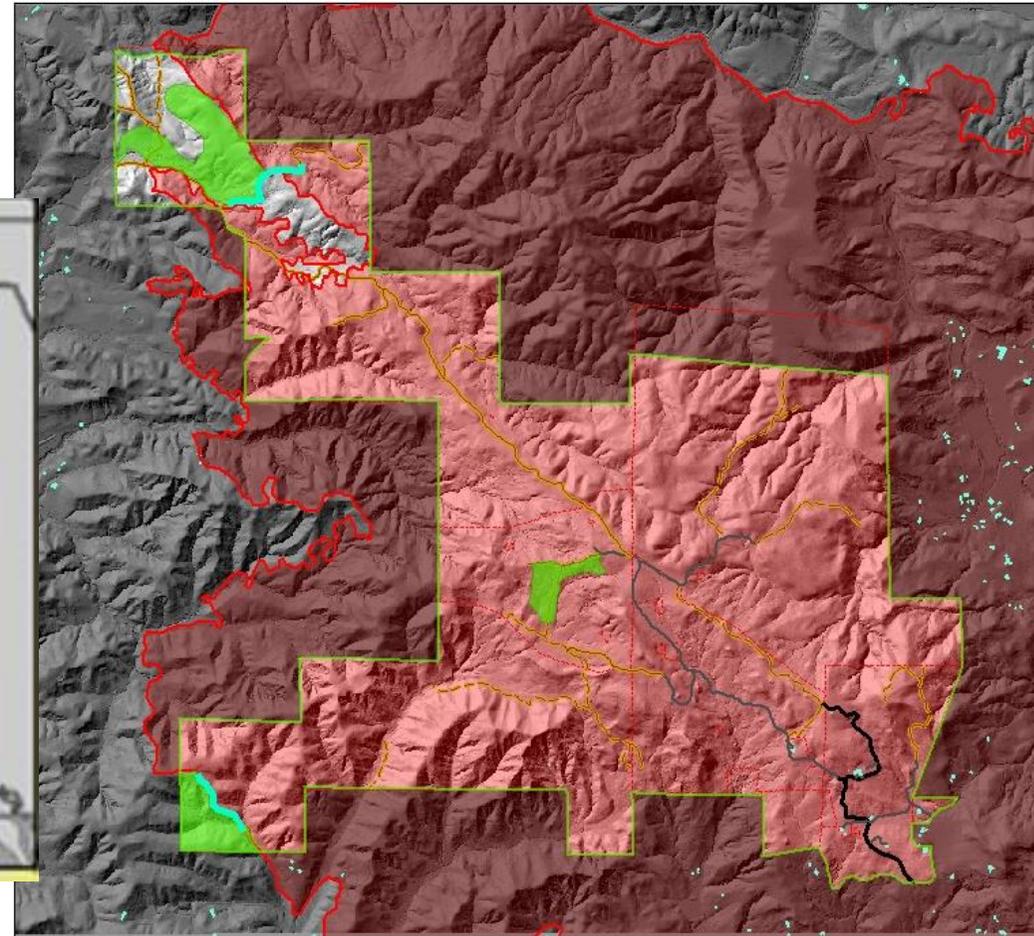
September 6, 2019



Pepperwood Mission: advance science-based conservation science across our region and beyond



Tubbs Fire Official Perimeter, preliminary dozer lines and unburned regions October 2017



- TubbsFireOfficial_171023
- TubbsFireOfficial_171023
- PWD_BASE_Jursd_Boundaries_PepperwoodPreserve
- PWD_BASE_Infstr_Buildings_LIDAR_2013

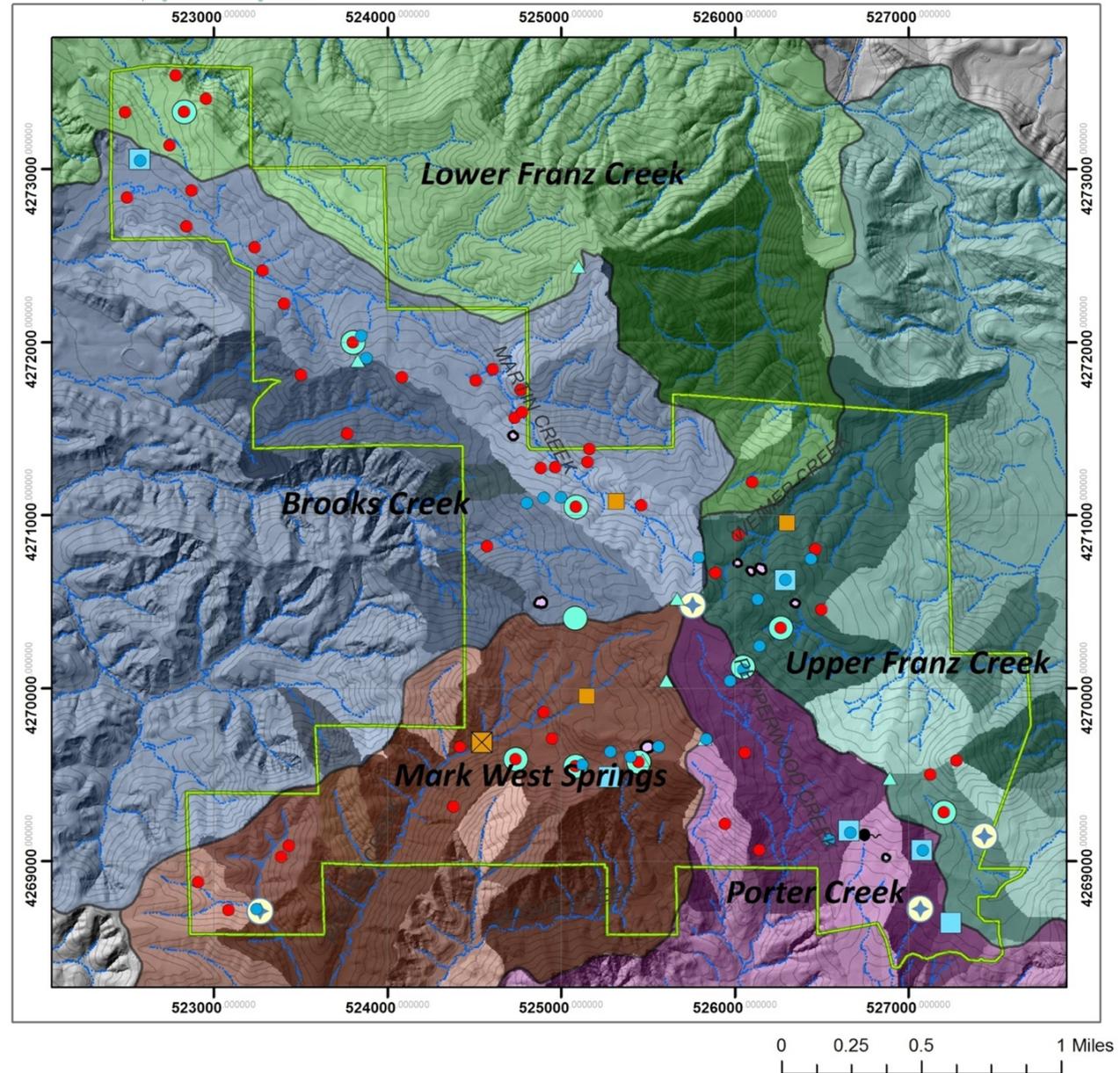
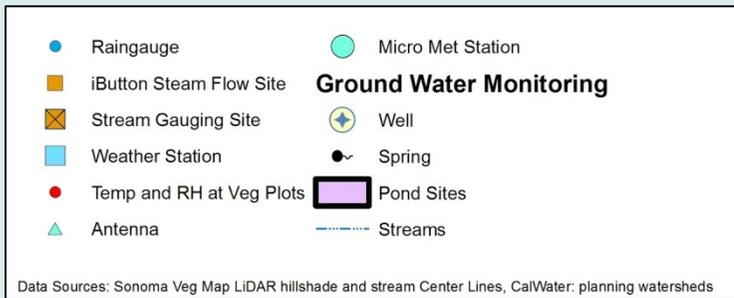
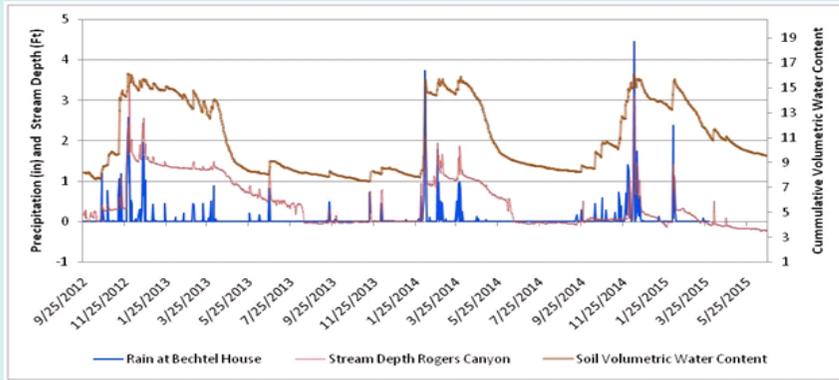
Supression

- Observed Dozer Lines

Preliminary Satellite Observations

- Unburned regions

Baseline Data: Sentinel Site hydrology



How are our watersheds projected to respond in terms of runoff and erosion?



TUBBS FIRE Watershed Emergency Response Team FINAL REPORT



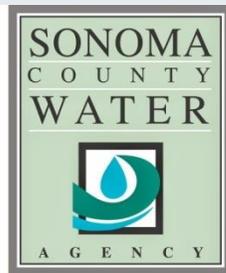
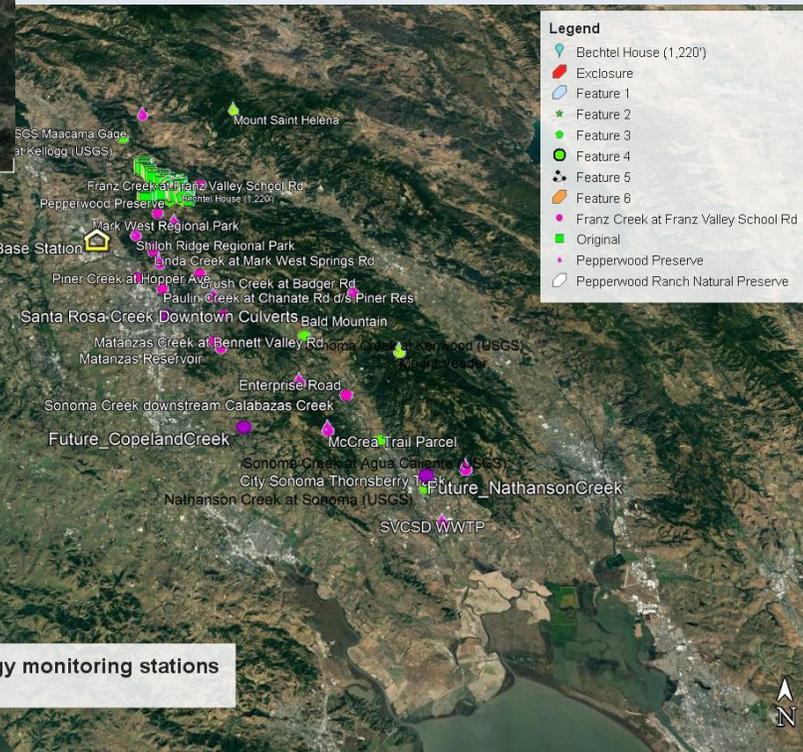
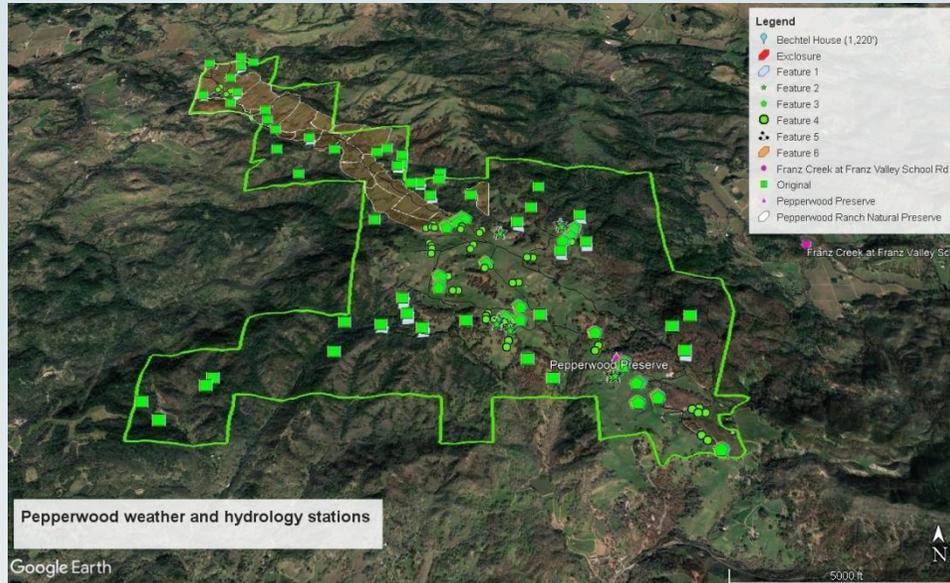
CA-LNU-010104

November 15, 2017

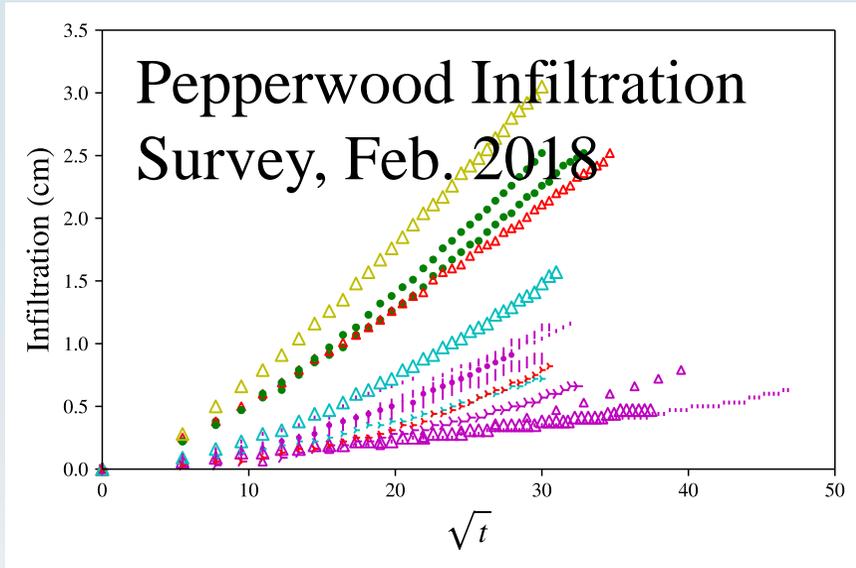


Quantifying Watershed Response to Northern California Wildfires

Rain gages, stream gages, soil moisture probes, sedimentation assessments, complementary flood warning system



Quantifying Watershed Response to Northern California Wildfires: Key Questions



1 – How severely did the 2017 Northern CA fires affect soil hydrologic properties?

2 - When do burned watersheds return to their reference runoff conditions? How does this vary with ecologic community/parent material?

3 – What are the rainfall thresholds for processes that transport sediment, and what are the expected hillslope sediment loads to streams?

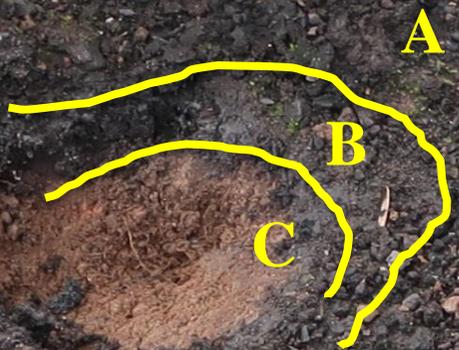
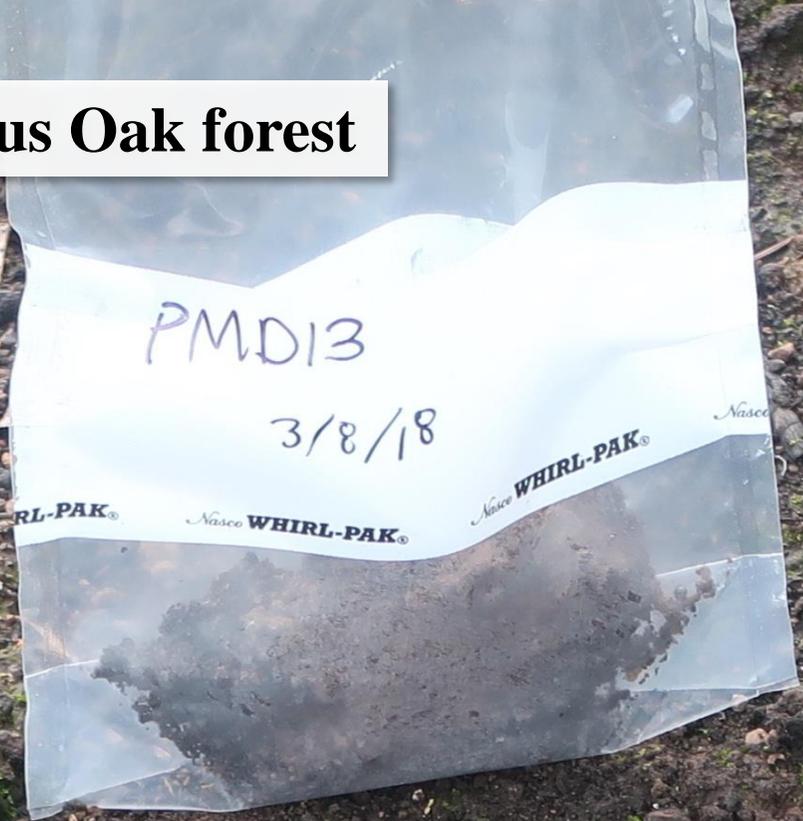


How fire affects soil characteristics: sealing and **hydrophobicity**

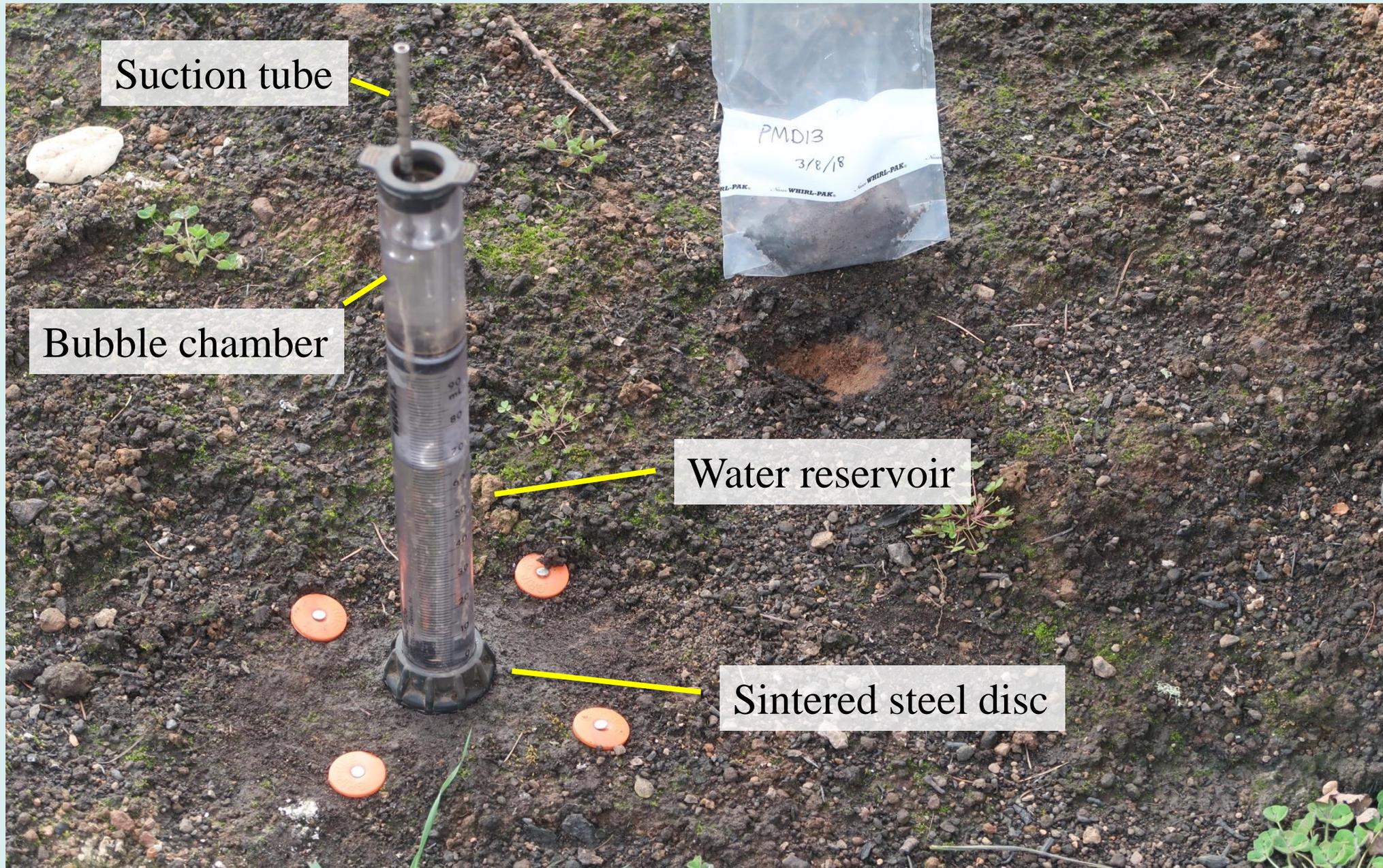


Figure 2.8—The “tin roof” effect on burned chaparral watersheds as described by earlier watershed researchers include (A) the wettable ash and carbon surface layer, (B) the discontinuous water repellent layer, and (C) the wettable subsoil. (After DeBano 1969).

Franciscan mélange, deciduous Oak forest



Infiltration monitoring: tension-disk infiltrometers



Infiltration sampling across the 2017 wine country burn zone

	Evergreen	Broadleaf	shrubland/chaparral	herbaceous	soil burn severity
Franciscan	PMD06, PMD07, SMD05	PMD12, PMD13	PMD05, SMD04	PMD01, PMD03, SMD03, PMD14	very low
Volcanic	AMD01, AMD03, AMD05, AMD08, AMD09, AMD11, PMD04	AMD06, PMD15	AMD02, AMD04	AMD07, AMD10	low
Sedimentary	AMD16, AMD17, PMD11	AMD18, AMD19, PMD10	AMD12, AMD14	AMD13, AMD15	moderate
Serpentinite	SMD06		PMD02, PMD08, SMD02, SMD07	SMD01	high
Silica Carbonate	PMD09				

40 sites total

~75 including Pepperwood Grassland surveys

What does soil hydrologic recovery look like?





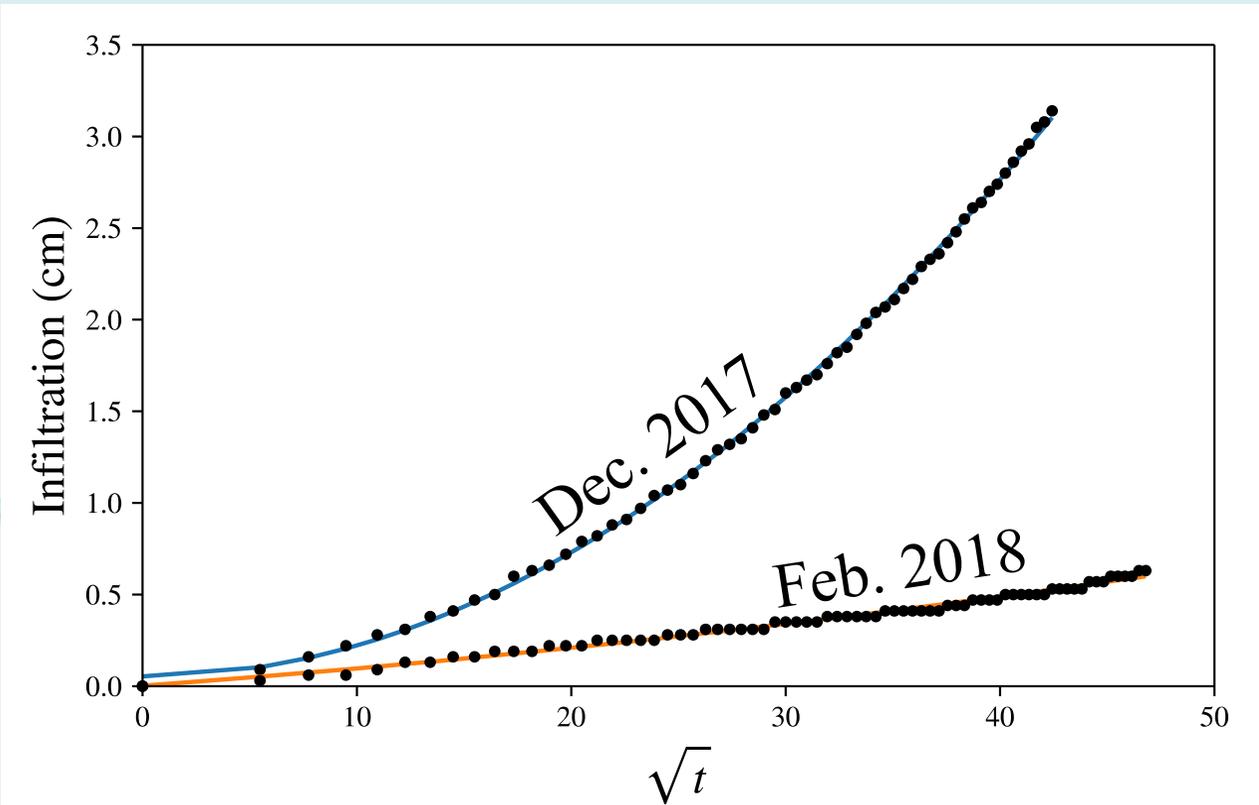
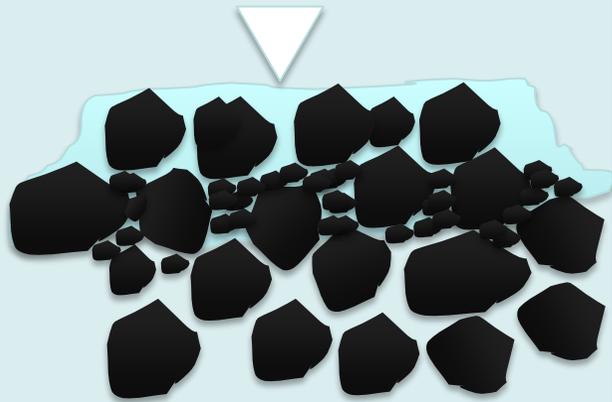
Revisit
monitoring sites
monthly during
wet months, less
often during dry
months



Potential soil sealing after 2017/2018 rainy season

How do soil macro-pores (cracking, etc) impact recovery?

Site PMD01 (Franciscan mélange grassland) changes over time



Objective 2: *Geomorphic process mapping*

Goal: Geomorphic process map for subset of burned watersheds to detect change over seasons

Utilize:

- Monthly (Digital Globe, sub-m-resolution) and daily (Planet labs smallsats, ~6 m resolution) satellite imagery
- Pre- and (hopefully) post-fire Lidar
- Correlate Pit2Pixel measurements to extrapolate over greater areas

Calculating hillslope sediment flux and stream loading



Goals:

Measure talus cone volumes using ground-based LiDAR or structure-from-motion

Measure source area and slope

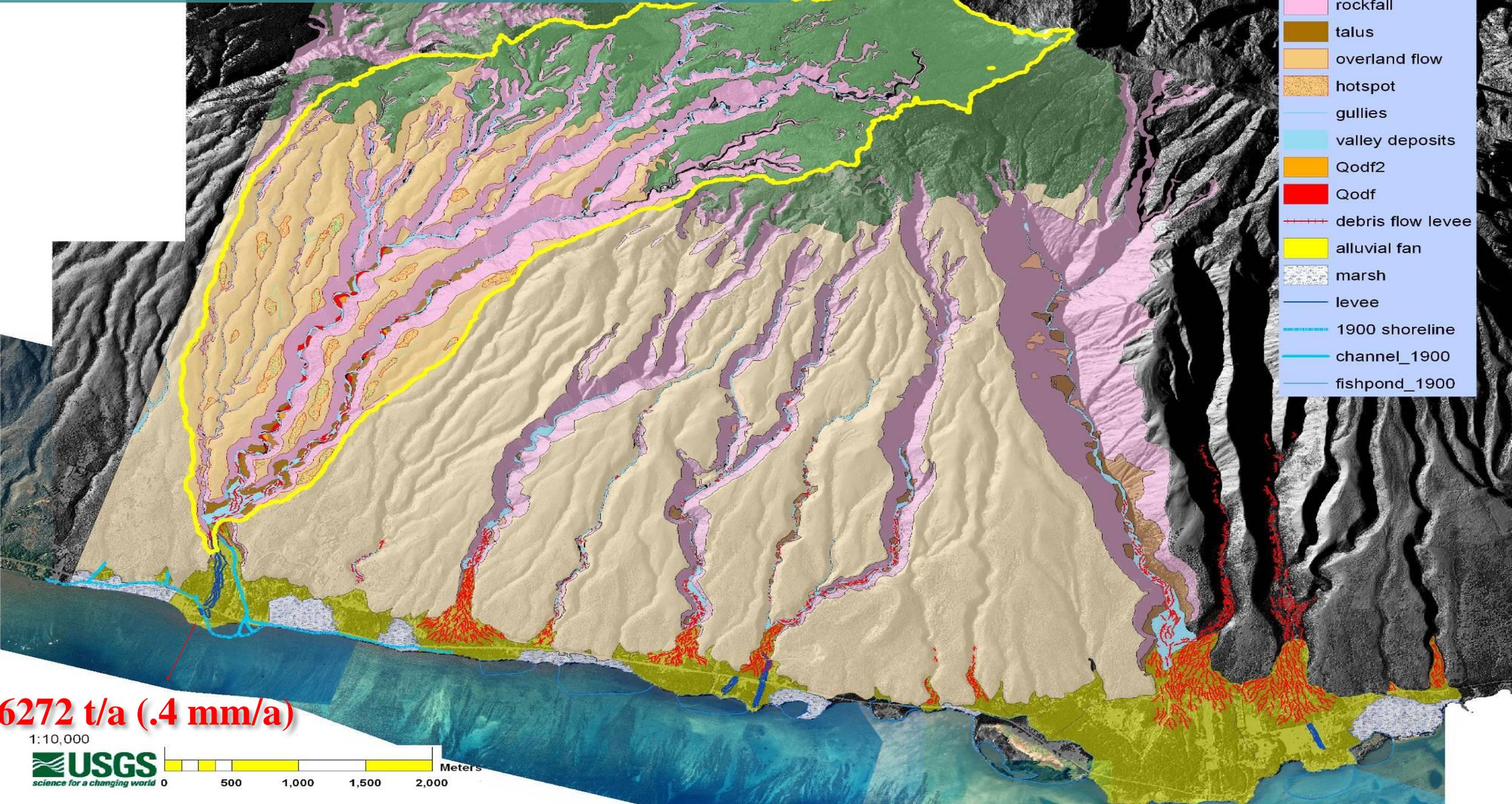
Calculate hillslope sediment flux law

Model sediment loading per stream length

Bouverie Preserve, Glen Ellen, CA

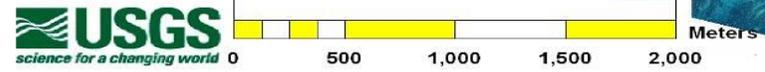
Geomorphic Process map

- soil creep
- rockfall
- talus
- overland flow
- hotspot
- gullies
- valley deposits
- Qodf2
- Qodf
- debris flow levee
- alluvial fan
- marsh
- levee
- 1900 shoreline
- channel_1900
- fishpond_1900



6272 t/a (.4 mm/a)

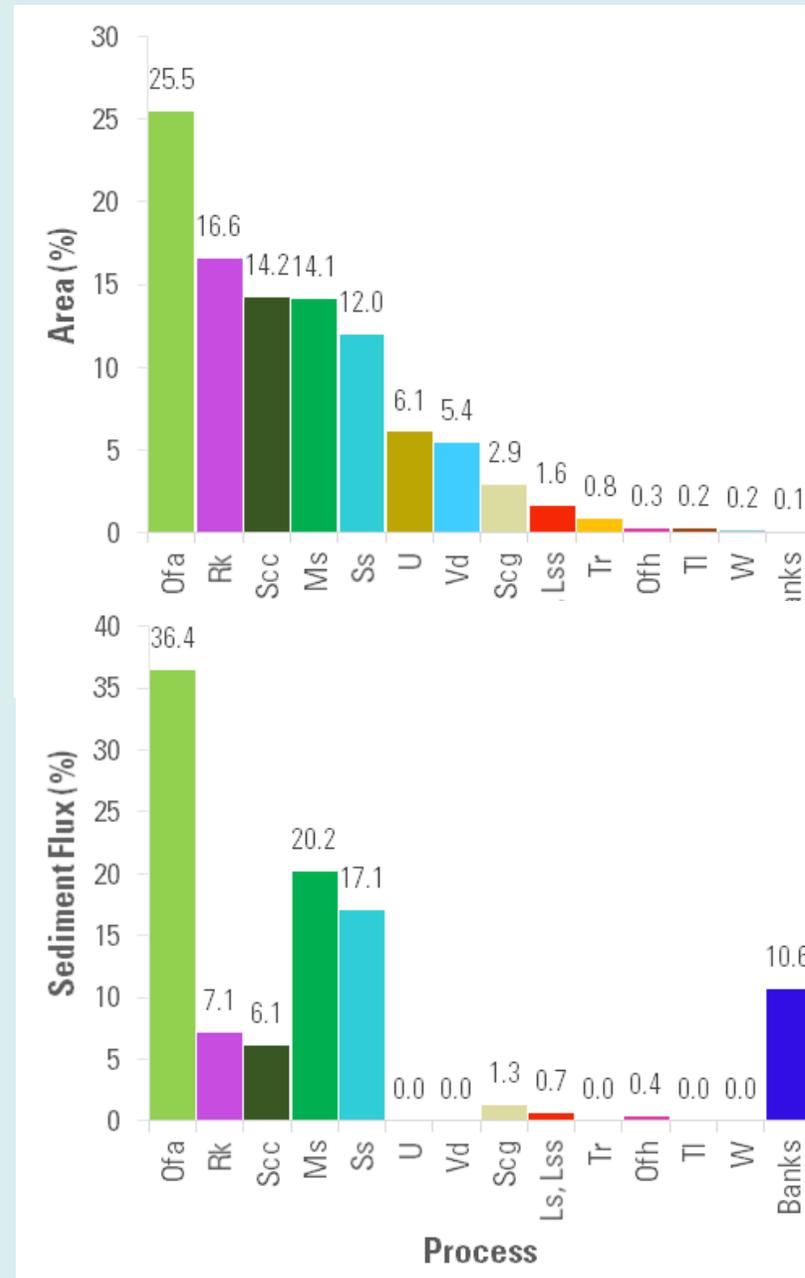
1:10,000



Modeling Example

- We will be calculating sediment flux: erosion rate x process area

■	Ls	Landslide
■	Lss	Landslide Scarp
■	Ms	Modified Soil
■	Ofa	Agricultural Field
■	Ofh	Hot Spots
■	Rk	Rockfall
■	Scc	Soil Creep, canopy
■	Scg	Soil Creep, grass
■	Ss	Side Slope
■	Tl	Talus
■	Tr	Terrace
■	U	Urban
■	Vd	Valley Deposit
■	W	Waterways



A living laboratory for demonstrating land management : forest thinning, conservation grazing, and returning prescribed to the landscape

Thank you!

lmicheli@pepperwoodpreserve.org



**Sonoma County Office of Recovery & Resiliency
Watershed Task Force
Virginia Mahacek**



Watershed Task Force

- Overview
- 2017/18 Focus and Activities
 - Pre-winter storm drain protection and pollutant containment
 - Erosion and sediment control measures
 - Forecasts and alerts improvements and dashboard
 - Storm patrol coordination
 - Water quality sampling plans and data exchanges
 - Recovery funding proposals support



Watershed Task Force

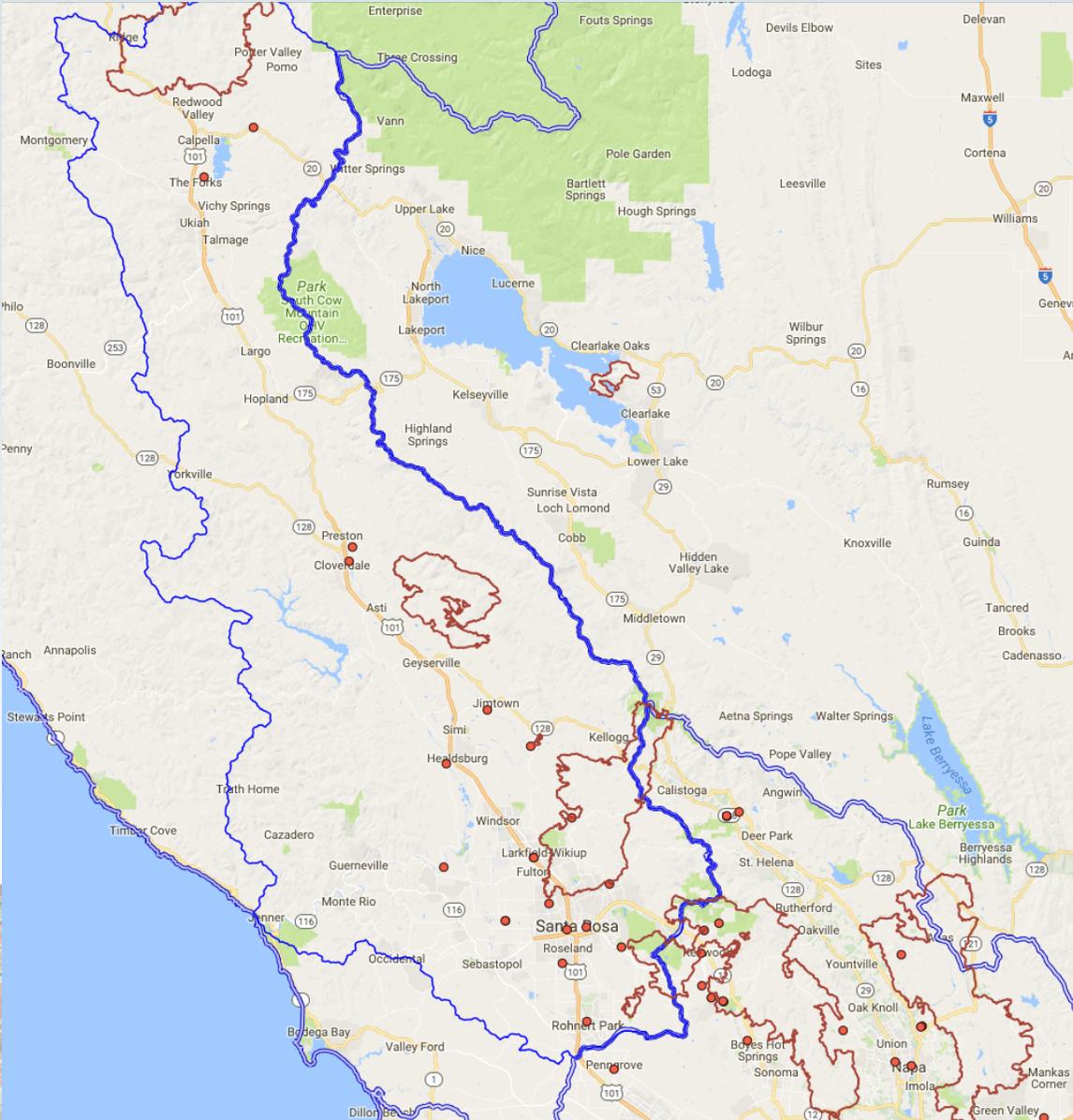
- 2018/19 Focus and Activities
 - Burned watersheds assessment
 - Secondary hazards preparedness/warning
 - Storm patrol coordination
 - Erosion and sediment control outreach
 - Online incident submittal
 - Data sharing portal development
 - Post-fire monitoring & reporting cooperation



**North Coast
Regional Water Quality Control Board
Chuck Striplen**

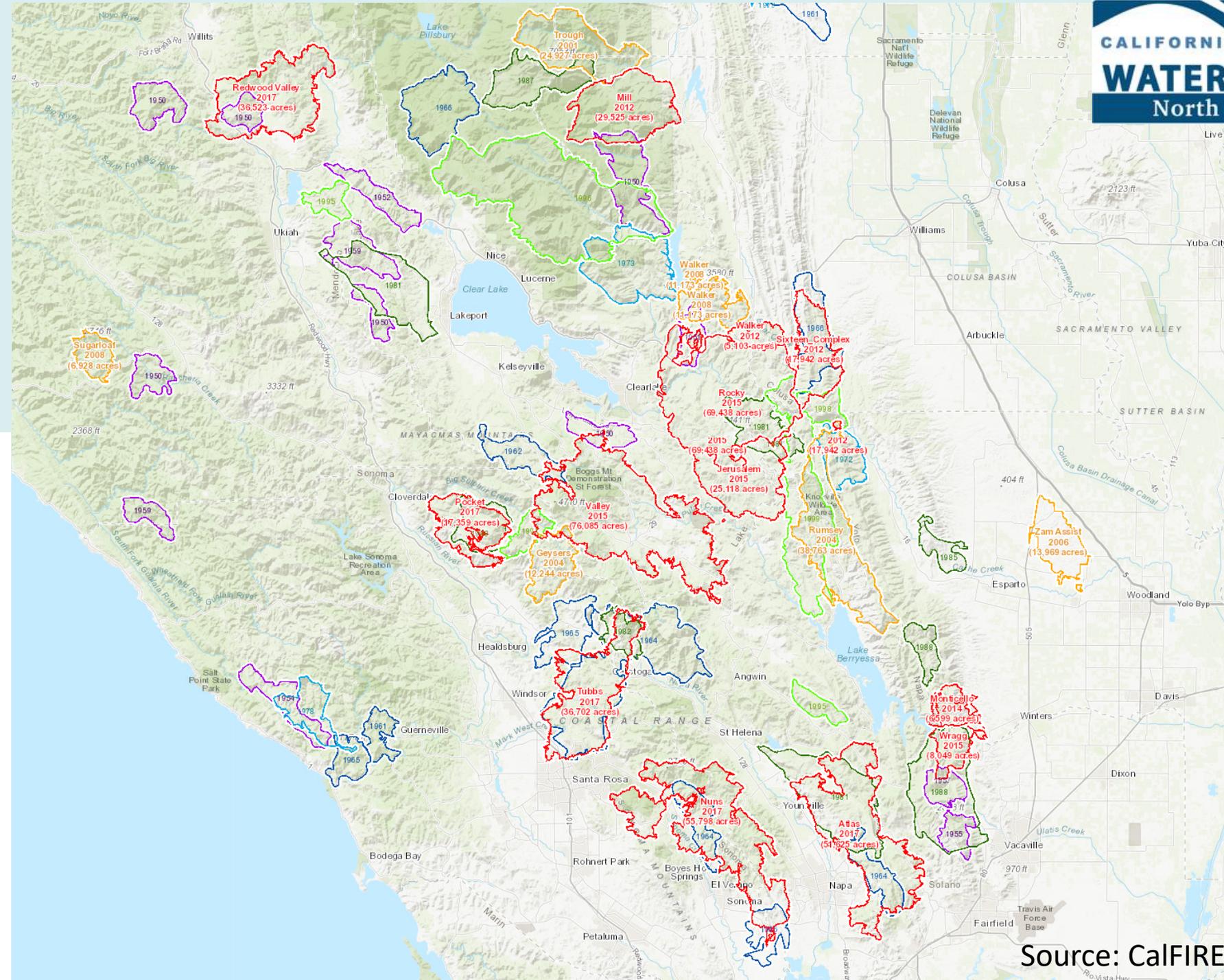


Update on Post-Fire Monitoring and the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program



Post-Fire Long Term Planning & Monitoring

- Good handle on near-term monitoring
- Rain event prediction improving
- Good channels of communication
- Need for coordinated basin-wide monitoring



California Fire Perimeters

Large Fires (5000+ acres)

- 2010s ■
- 2000s ■
- 1990s ■
- 1980s ■
- 1970s ■
- 1960s ■
- 1950s ■

Confluence (Russian River Watershed Assn.)

Watershed Task Force (Sonoma County)

Watershed Collaborative (Sonoma County Ag + Open Space)

FireSmart Lake Sonoma (Sonoma Water)

Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP)



Confluence (Russian River Watershed Assn.)

Watershed Task Force (Sonoma County)

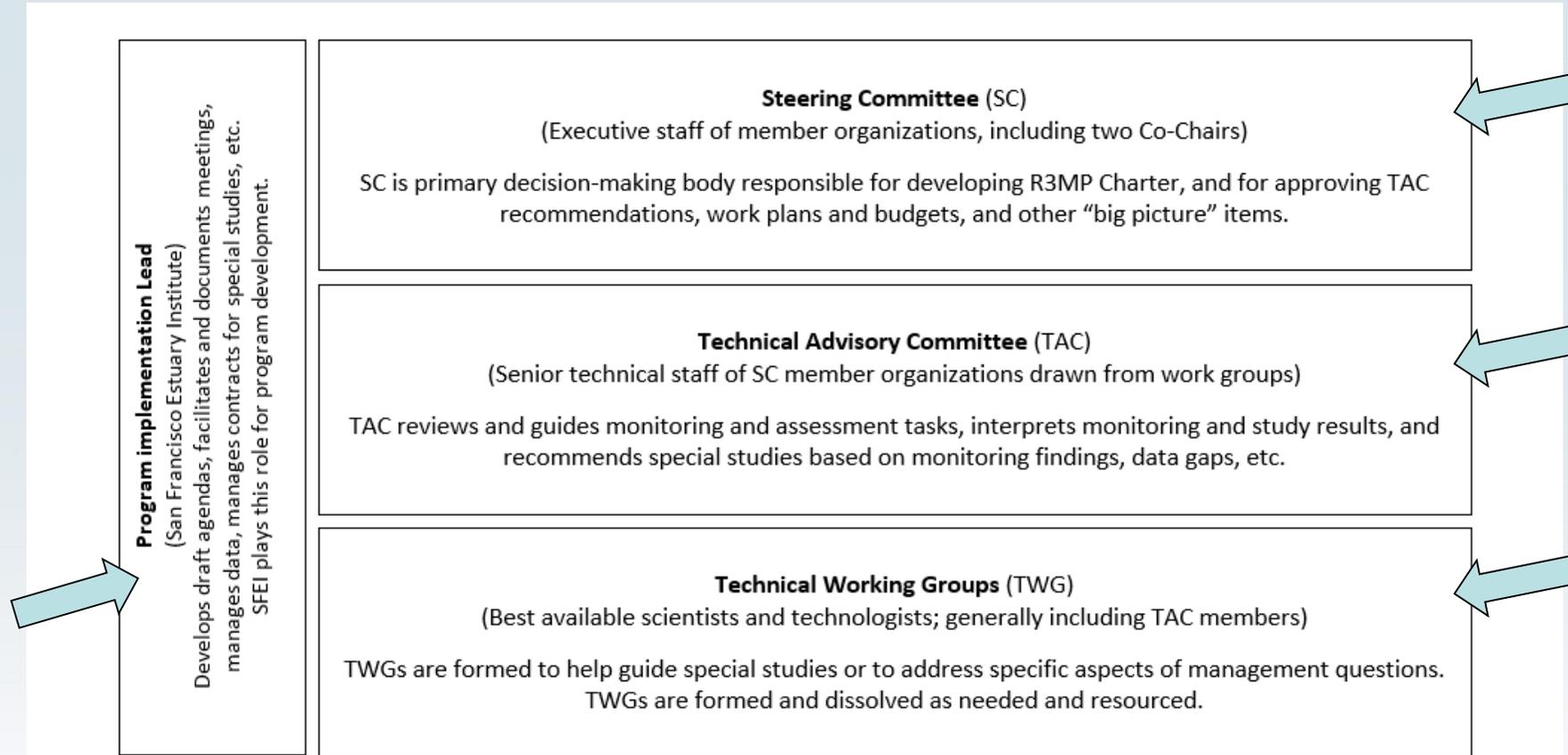
Watershed Collaborative (Sonoma County Ag + Open Space)

FireSmart Lake Sonoma (Sonoma Water)

Russian River Regional Monitoring Program (R3MP)



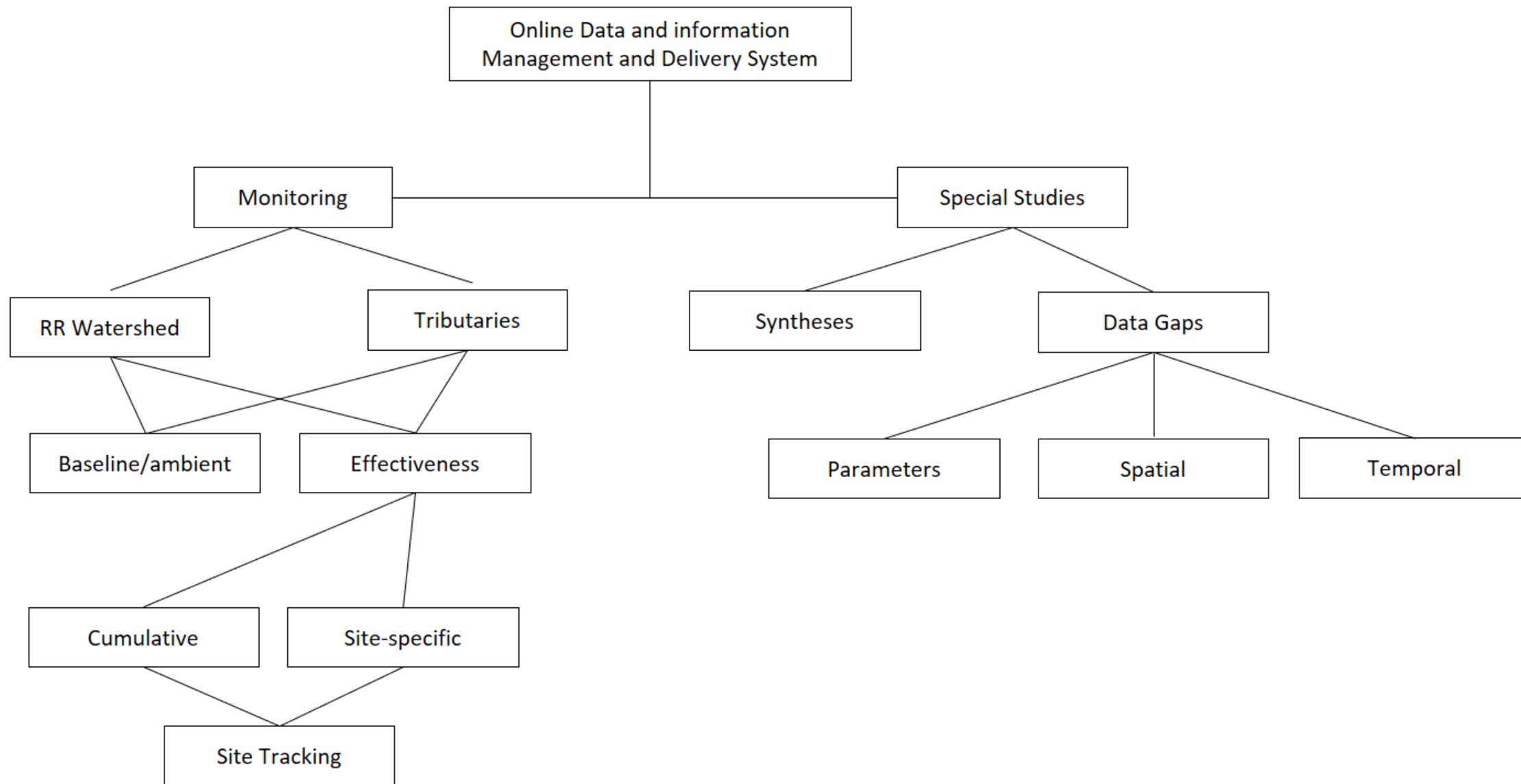
Governance Structure for the Russian River Regional Monitoring Program



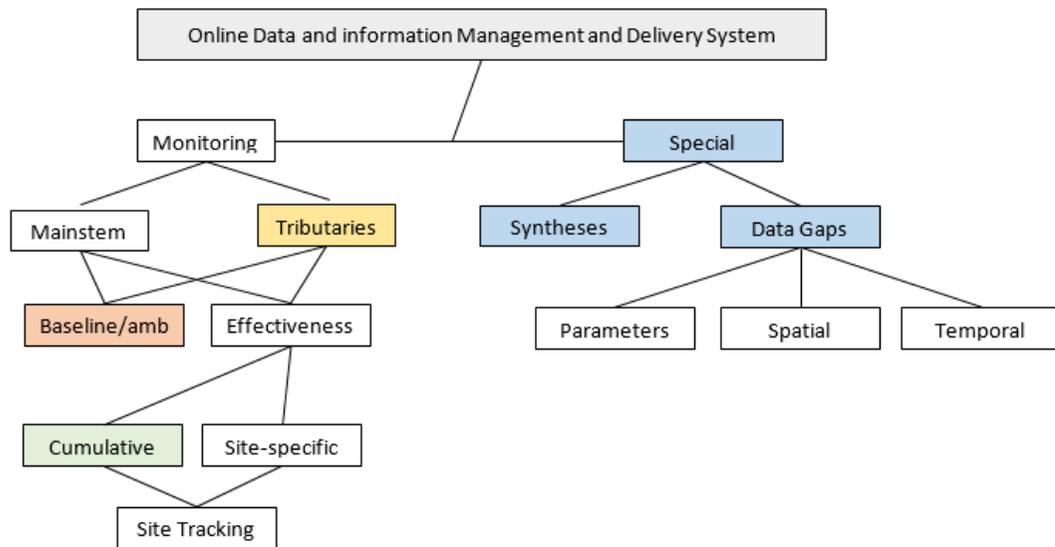
Public attendance is accommodated for meetings of the Steering Committee (SC), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Workgroups (TWG).

The R3MP Charter provides the goal and objectives of the R3MP, criteria for membership in any R3MP Committees or Workgroups, procedures for decision-making, and other directives by which the R3MP operates.

Management Questions Framework



Framework to Organize R3MP Management Questions and Related Concerns



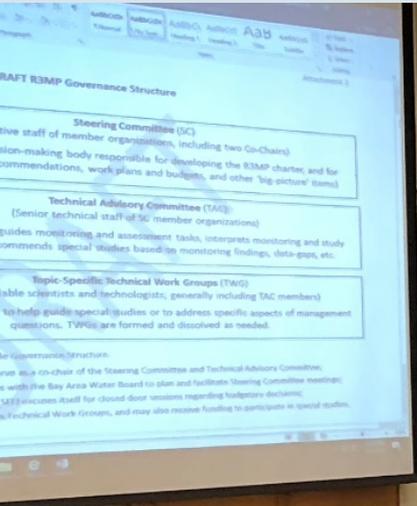
<p>21. Investment in collection of baseline information for the tributaries and the West Fork Russian, including instream flows, water quality, location of fish barriers, mapping of invasive plants, spawning and rearing studies, and habitat assessment.</p>		
<p>22. A compilation of existing available research into a central, easily accessible central database to determine data gaps.</p>		<p>Online data and information delivery system</p>
<p>23. What are the priority reaches for restoration in the upper Russian River? Where is the potential highest for improvements to aquatic habitat (focus on salmon)?</p>	<p>MCRCD (Deborah Edelman 8-20-18)</p>	<p>Special Studies, Synthesis and Data Gaps</p>
<p>24. Which restoration activities are needed in the priority areas to improve instream habitat for salmonids and other aquatic species? Which options are the most effective per time/dollar spent?</p>		<p>Special Studies, Synthesis and Data Gaps</p>
<p>25. What are the long-term impacts of the Oct 2017 fires on the West Fork Russian?</p>		<p>Cumulative effectiveness monitoring in selected tributaries</p>
<p>26. What are the effects of forest management on flows.</p>		<p>Cumulative effectiveness monitoring in selected tributaries</p>
<p>27. MS4 Program. Seems like low hanging fruit in terms of developing coordinated effort rather than individual Co-Permittee sampling. Lots of resources being expended already that could be reprioritized into integrated effort.</p>		<p>Special Studies, Synthesis and Data Gaps</p>
<p>28. California Tiger Salamander (CTS) and condition of terrestrial and aquatic habitats on Santa Rosa Plains. CTS is arguably the canary in the coal mine for the health of the Santa Rosa Plains. Species is declining arguably do to loss or change in terrestrial and aquatic habitats due to ongoing land use changes. Integrated effort needed to arrest decline and find a new stable state for this species.</p>	<p>Permit Sonoma (John Mack 7-19-18)</p>	<p>Cumulative effectiveness monitoring in selected tributaries</p>
<p>29. Stream Hydrology – Short interval flow, water level data. Characterize baseline, declining water table (ground water withdrawal), what is natural “flashiness” versus storm water “flashiness”, changes in peak and total volume from LID, management, other measures. Need focused hydrology monitoring with USGS gages on key reaches combined with peak flow, water table, continuous flow in small streams (e.g. ISCO 2150) as well as continuous water chemistry (e.g. YSI sondes).</p>		<p>Baseline ambient monitoring within selected tributaries</p>



Next steps for R3MP

- Finalize management questions
- Finalize and adopt Charter
- Develop short and long-term funding models
- Coordinate with partner agencies to fund and implement long-term post-fire monitoring





Questions?

