

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
North Coast Region

Executive Officer's Summary Report  
Thursday, October 7, 2021

**ITEM: 3**

**SUBJECT:** Report on Rising Waters Initiative: Water Quality & Homelessness – Results and Implementation (*Dr. Chris Halle, Sonoma State University*)

**BOARD ACTION:** This is an informational item, only. No action will be taken by the Regional Water Board.

**BACKGROUND:** In the last 8 years, the WATERS Collaborative, a partnership between Sonoma State University's Center for Environmental Inquiry and Sonoma Water, has engaged 3,164 students and 50 faculty to work with more than 30 community partners on social, economic and environmental aspects of water ([cei.sonoma.edu/waters](http://cei.sonoma.edu/waters)). Over the next decade, society will face unprecedentedly complex challenges that require new ways of identifying and implementing water solutions.

In February 2020, the Center's Director, Dr. Claudia Luke, updated the Regional Water Board on the WATERS Collaborative and identified opportunities for the Regional Water Board to partner on upcoming projects. Following that meeting, the Collaborative invited the Regional Water Board's Executive Officer to serve on the Steering Committee for the new WATERS Collaborative initiative called "Rising Waters".

Over the past academic year, Rising Waters has begun to investigate issues and deepen meaningful engagement on complex challenges at the intersection of individuals experiencing homelessness and water. With the aid of the Rising Waters Steering Committee, three faculty-student teams addressed three questions identified by regional water and homeless experts. The three questions are:

- Resource Mapping: Where are resources for the homeless located, and where can we best deploy further resources?
- Case Studies: What are the costs and barriers to providing sanitation and water to individuals experiencing homelessness?
- Knowledge Mapping: What is the "universe" of available services to help the homeless and improve water quality and how do we better align that universe across sectors?

This presentation will outline results from the first year of research, present comments from the experts in the public sector (received during a September 24, 2021 public workshop) and seek additional input on next steps in the research.

**SUPPORTING MATERIALS:** [cei.sonoma.edu/waters](http://cei.sonoma.edu/waters)

<http://cei.sonoma.edu/projects-funding/individual-collaborative-subsites/waters-collaborative/rising-waters>