Draft Waste Discharge Requirements Discharges Related to Timber Harvesting and Associated Activities Conducted by Humboldt Redwood Company, LLC in the Upper Elk River Watershed (Order No. R1-2016-0004)

Item No. 2
November 18, 2015

Jim Burke
Presentation Outline

- Status and Timelines
- Discuss Draft Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs)
- Questions and Public Comments
Anticipated Timeline:

- November 18, 2015 – Workshop on Draft WDRs
- By December 4, 2015 - Public comment for Draft WDRs and Mitigated Negative Declaration
- March 10, 2016 – Adoption Hearing
New WDRs

- TMDL nearing completion
- Ongoing impairment and lack of assimilative capacity in Elk River
- Zero load allocation
Draft WDRs- Overview

- Applies to largest landowner (HRC) in the Elk River watershed

- HRC owns approximately 22,200 acres in Elk River:
  - ~66% Elk River
  - ~79% of the upper Elk River
Draft WDRs- Overview

- Addresses challenges unique to Elk River:
  - Significant impairments
  - Harm to residents
  - Responsible timber companies
Report of Waste Discharge

- April 28, 2015 - First Draft
- September 22, 2015 – Completed Draft
- October 21, 2015 – Letter acknowledging complete ROWD
- Some significant issues remain
Draft WDRs- Overview

- Consolidates HRC’s WDRs and Cleanup and Abatement Orders (CAOs)
- Largely based on:
  - HCP prescriptions
  - HRC’s management practices
  - FPRs
- Similar to Bear and Jordan WDRs
Draft WDRs- Overview

- Control existing sediment source
- Prevent creation of new sources
- Stream restoration
- Monitoring and reporting
Draft WDRs- Overview

- Harvest limits
- Temporary harvest prohibition in high risk subwatersheds
- Enhanced riparian management zones
- BMPs to prevent new sediment sources
- Inventory and treat existing sediment sources
- Feasibility study to control in-stream sediment sources
- Monitoring and reporting program
- 5-year check-in with Board
Harvest Limits

- Harvest rates associated with sediment production:
  - Increased peak flows
  - Loss of root strength increases landslides
  - Overall increased ground disturbance
Harvest Limits

- **Silviculture**
  - No clearcutting
  - Mostly single tree and group selection
  - Limited variable retention and rehabilitation
Harvest Limits

- HRC’s proposed harvest
  - ROWD included 20-year harvest projection
  - Subwatershed harvest acreage in 5-year
  - Modeled overlapping crown canopy
  - Watershed-wide less than 1.5% equivalent clearcut acres/year

- Order specifies average annual subwatershed harvest not exceed 2% equivalent clearcut acres for any 10-year time period
Temporary Harvest Prohibition

- Subwatershed risk:
  - Sediment production
  - Bedrock geology
  - Landslide hazard
  - Proximity to impacted reach

- Five high risk subwatersheds:
Temporary Harvest Prohibition

- Prohibition will remain until determination by Executive Officer of significant progress toward improved beneficial uses
- Individual THPs can be approved based on proposed projects that contribute towards correcting beneficial use impairment
Riparian Management Zones

- RMZs based on Elk River watershed analysis prescriptions
  - 300 feet on Class I
  - 200 feet on Class II
  - 100 feet on Class III
- Equipment exclusion zones
- Highest feasible erosion control standards
Control of Sediment – Roads

- All roads “stormproofed” by 2018:
  - Hydrologic disconnection
  - Inventory and treat potential discharge sites
  - Design watercourse crossing for 100-year flow
  - Annual inspection and maintenance
Control of Sediment – Non-Road

- CAOs require inventory and treatment of Controllable Sediment Discharge Sources (CSDS)
- Over 80% of high priority sites treated since 2007
- Remaining sites will be treated based on priority and location
- Erosion Control Plans for THPs
In-stream Sediment Sources

- Approximately 74% of sediment in Upper Elk River from in-stream sources
- HRC must conduct feasibility studies to evaluate methods to control, trap, or meter sediment:
  - 2017 - initial plan
  - 2018 - annual updates
  - 2020 - final feasibility study report
- If infeasible, resources can be directed to impacted reach
Landslide Prevention

- HCP hillslope prescriptions
- Professional Geologist review for all harvest and road construction/reconstruction
- Maintain landslide inventory
- Periodic aerial photograph review
- Harvest limits
- Riparian protection
Wet Weather Limits

- No timber operations between October 15th and May 1st
- Exceptions allowed for emergency corrective action
- FPR restrictions on operating during saturated soil conditions apply
Enrollment Procedure

- First 5 years – HRC must apply for THP enrollment
- After 5 years – THPs automatically enrolled upon approval by CAL FIRE
- Staff remain involved in all phases of THP review
Monitoring and Reporting

- Report on covered activities
- Monitoring compliance with requirements
- Periodic summaries
- Evaluate effectiveness of management measures
- Identify and treat new sediment sources
- Track HRC’s participation in watershed stewardship
- Track water quality and recovery trends
Monitoring

- Inspections
  - Roads
  - THP areas
  - Landslides

- Water quality
  - Aquatic trends monitoring
  - Hydrology and suspended sediment
Reporting

- Annual Summary Report and Work Plan
  - Timber harvest
  - Road work
  - Sediment control
  - Inspections
  - Landslides
  - Water quality

- Five Year Summary Report
WDR Summary

- Acknowledges WQ benefits from HRC’s management strategy
- Relies where possible on:
  - HCP prescriptions
  - FPRs that provide water quality protection
- Balance between stringent control measures and HRC’s management objectives
- 5-year check-in
Thank You