
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD, WORKSHOPS AND HEARING
TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF THE DRAFT BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT
TO THE WATER QUALITY CONTROL PLAN FOR THE NORTH COAST REGION
FOR THE RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED PATHOGEN INDICATOR BACTERIA TOTAL
MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD AND ACTION PLAN AND PROHIBITION OF THE DISCHARGE
OF FECAL WASTE MATERIALS
AND
NOTICE OF FILING UNDER CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 23, § 3779
FOR
DRAFT SUBSTITUTE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT (SED)**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board) is proposing to amend the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) to establish a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Action Plan for pathogen indicator bacteria in the Russian River watershed. The draft Basin Plan Amendment includes a prohibition of the discharge of fecal waste materials that cause or contribute to an exceedance of bacteria water quality objectives except as authorized by waste discharge requirements or action of the Regional Water Board or State Water Board. Additional regulations or policies, consistent with the general purpose of the draft amendment and complementary to the proposal may be developed at the hearing as a logical outgrowth of discussions.

The State Water Board's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) implementation regulations for Certified Regulatory Programs require the development of Substitute Environmental Documentation (SED) analyzing the potential environmental impacts of the Basin Plan Amendment. Regional Water Board staff have released for public review, the *Draft Staff Report for the Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Indicator Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load* (Staff Report). The Staff Report includes the draft SED and was prepared pursuant to statutes and regulations governing the Regional Water Board's regulatory programs. The Regional Water Board's regulatory programs are certified by the Secretary of the California Resources Agency, in accordance with subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code section 21080.5, as meeting certain environmental standards, and therefore being exempt from the requirements of the CEQA to prepare an environmental impact report, negative declaration, or initial study.

I. Availability of Documents

The draft Basin Plan Amendment, draft Staff Report, draft substitute environmental document (SED) are available for public review and comment and can be downloaded from the Regional Water Board's website at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river

These documents can also be viewed by contacting or visiting the Regional Water Board's office at 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95403 weekdays between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or calling 707-576-2220.

II. Public Comments

Persons wishing to comment on the draft Basin Plan Amendment, draft SED, and draft staff report for the Regional Water Board to consider, are invited to submit them in writing. To be evaluated and responded to by the Regional Water Board, and fully considered in advance of the hearing, all written comments and evidence must be *received* by the Regional Water Board no later than **5:00 p.m. on October 8, 2015**. Untimely submittal of written comments will not be accepted or responded to.

Please send comments to the attention of Charles Reed at the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board to the mailing address below or electronically to the email address Charles.Reed@waterboards.ca.gov, or by fax to 707-523-0135.

California Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region
ATTN: Charles Reed
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, California 95403

Persons wishing to present oral comments are invited to attend the hearing and present oral comments. The hearing will take place **8:30 A.M., Thursday November 19, 2015** at 5550 Skylane Blvd. Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA.

III. Hearing Date and Location

The Regional Water Board will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of staff's draft Basin Plan Amendment and approval of the SED at its regular public meeting scheduled:

Time and Date: 8:30 A.M., Thursday November 19, 2015
Location: 5550 Skylane Blvd. Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA

The hearing will be conducted in accordance with 23 Cal. Code of Regulations §649.3. Time limits may be imposed on oral testimony at the public hearing; groups are encouraged to designate a spokesperson.

Written comments submitted prior to the close of the comment period will be considered by the Regional Water Board as part of their decision making process. Changes to staff's draft amendment consistent with the general purpose of the amendment may be considered by the Regional Water Board during the hearing. Testimony at the above-scheduled hearing may summarize or explain timely submitted written evidence.

IV. Staff Level Workshops

The staff of the Regional Water Board will hold three public workshops to provide information and answer questions related to the draft Basin Plan Amendment, SED, and staff report.

Locations, Dates and Times:

Workshop 1
Monte Rio Middle School
20700 Foothill Dr, Monte Rio, CA
Tuesday September 22, 2015 - 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Workshop 2
University of California Cooperative Extension – Mendocino County
890 N. Bush St. Ukiah, CA
Wednesday September 23, 2015 - 6:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M.

Workshop 3
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd. Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA
Thursday September 24, 2015 - 5:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M.

To be evaluated and responded to by the Regional Water Board, and fully considered in advance of the hearing, all written comments and evidence must be *received* by the Regional Water Board no later than **5:00 p.m. on October 8, 2015** and any oral comments

should be presented at the public hearing to take place **8:30 A.M., Thursday November 19, 2015** at 5550 Skylane Blvd. Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA.

V. PUBLIC HEARING ACCESSIBILITY

A map and directions to the hearing are available online at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/about_us/contact_us.shtml

Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation to participate in the hearing should contact Patti Corsie, Executive Assistant, at (707) 576-2307, at least five days prior to the scheduled Board Meeting. The hearing location is accessible to persons with disabilities. TTY users may contact the California Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 or voice line at 1-800-735-2922.

VI. BACKGROUND

Water quality monitoring from the Russian River and its tributary creeks reflect widespread contamination with bacteria and other indicators of human waste, which pose a potential threat to the health of the river ecosystem and the people who visit it. This has led to the placement of surface waters on the federal Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list of impaired waters requiring TMDLs. Bacteria can indicate the presence of pathogenic organisms that are found in warm-blooded animal waste. The contamination identified has been linked to impairment of the contact recreation (REC-1) and non-contact recreation (REC-2) designated beneficial uses. Public health advisories have periodically been published and/or posted by Sonoma County authorities at numerous locations in the Russian River watershed over the past 10 years. Several laws and regulations govern the development and implementation of TMDLs, most notably the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the state Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act.

The Basin Plan is designed to preserve and enhance water quality and protect beneficial uses in the North Coast Region including a definitive program of actions. The Basin Plan addresses many factors and activities which may affect water quality. It includes actions to be taken by the State Water Board and the Regional Water Board as they have primary responsibility for maintenance of water quality in the North Coast Region. The purpose of the Staff Report is to present the supporting information to amend the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) to establish a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Action Plan for pathogen indicator bacteria in the Russian River watershed. In addition, the draft Basin Plan Amendment includes a prohibition of the discharge of fecal waste materials that cause or contribute to an exceedance of bacteria water quality objectives except as authorized by waste discharge requirements or action of the Regional Water Board or State Water Board.

VII. Future Notifications from Regional Water Board

Interested parties who would like to receive email notifications for various basin planning projects of the North Coast Regional Water Board, including the Russian River Pathogen TMDL, are encouraged to sign up on the Russian River TMDL and Basin Planning email list subscription form located at:

http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.shtml

VIII. Regional Water Board Staff Contact

Questions regarding the draft Basin Plan Amendment, draft Staff Report, or draft SED should be directed to: Charles.Reed@waterboards.ca.gov or by phone at 707-576-2752.

Matthias St. John
Executive Officer
August 21, 2015