Response to Written Comments
Draft Waste Discharge Requirements
Order No. R1-2026-0045
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)
for the
California Redwood Company and Trinity River Timber Company
DBA North Fork Lumber Company
Korbel Sawmill
Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region
December 3, 2026

Comments Received

The deadline for submittal of public comments regarding draft Waste Discharge Requirements for Order No. R1-2026-0045, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (Draft Permit) for the California Redwood Company and Trinity River Timber Company, DBA North Fork Lumber Company (Permittee), Korbel Sawmill (Facility) was October 5, 2026. North Coast Water Board staff (Staff) received a single comment letter from SHN, the Permittee's consultant, during the Draft Permit's notification period.

North Coast Water Board staff met virtually with the Permittee on November 9, 2026, to discuss the Draft Permit and proposed changes made in response to comments received. The Permittee did not identify any significant concerns with the proposed changes discussed during this meeting.

This Response to Comments document includes a summary of the comments received from the Permittee, followed by North Coast Water Board staff response to each comment. Additionally, this Response to Comments document includes a summary of staff-initiated changes made to the Permit. Text added to the Proposed Permit is identified by underline and text to be deleted from the Proposed Permit is identified by strike-through in this document. The term "Draft Permit" refers to the version of the permit that was sent out for public comment. The term "Proposed Permit" refers to the version of the permit that has been modified in response to comments received and is being presented to the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) for consideration.

A. Comment Letter No. 1

Comment No. A1: The Permittee asked that any references to Ken Dunn within the permit be replaced with Russell Dorvall. Russell Dorvall shall be filling the position of Operations Manager upon Ken Dunn's retirement.

Response to Comment No. A1: North Coast Water Board staff have updated Table F-1 of the proposed Order's Fact Sheet to indicate Russell Dorvall as the Facility Contact and person authorized to sign and submit reports.

Comment No. A2: The Permittee requests clarification on what is considered a settling basin for the purposes of Sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.4.2.1. Specifically, the Permittee asks if an erosion control program is required if all the settling basins are lined with concrete.

Response to Comment No. A2: For the purpose of Sections 6.3.4 and 6.3.4.2.1, settling basins shall include the catch basins that collect log deck sprinkler water, Station 9, WSB-1, WSB-2, and the constructed wetland. If all settling basins are lined with concrete, then the referenced erosion control program may be accomplished through the construction methods used for the settling basins.

No changes have been made to the proposed Order in response to this comment.

Comment No. A3: The Permittee is requesting to be allowed to collect a series of grab samples in place of a composite sample because of the lack of electricity or buildings, and the intermittent nature of the discharge from the wetland. The permittee identifies that they have been previously allowed to composite three grab samples collected every hour, over a three-hour period.

Response to Comment No. A3: Section 1.1 of the proposed Order's Monitoring and Reporting Program (MRP) indicates that composite samples may be taken by a proportional sampling device or by grab samples composited in proportion to flow. This section further states that in compositing grab samples, the sampling interval shall not exceed 1 hour. As the proposed composite sample method meets the above requirement, the Permittee may continue to collect their composite samples as described above.

No changes to the proposed Order have been made in response to this comment.

Comment No. A4: The Permittee requests clarification on the requirements of the referenced Surface Water Discharge Report identified in Section 5.1.4 of the MRP. Additionally, the Permittee requests clarification on when the species sensitivity screening is required.

Response to Comment No. A4: The identified Surface Water Discharge Report is not applicable to the Korbel Sawmill and is intended for dischargers that have not yet discharged to surface waters. As such, any reference to the Surface Water Discharge Report has been removed from the proposed Order. Section 5.1.4 of the Proposed Order's MRP has been modified as follows:

5.1.4 **Species Sensitivity Screening.** ~~The Permittee shall submit a Surface Water Discharge Report for Executive Officer approval at least 180 days before planned discharge.~~ Species sensitivity screening shall be conducted within 18 months of the Order's adoption ~~prior to discharge to surface waters and shall be included in the submittal of the Surface Water Discharge Report~~. The Permittee shall collect a single effluent sample and concurrently conduct two acute aquatic toxicity tests using an invertebrate and vertebrate species identified in section 5.1.3, above. This sample shall also be analyzed for the parameters required for the discharge at Discharge Point EFF-001. The species that exhibits the highest "Percent (%) Effect" at the discharge IWC during species sensitivity screening shall be used for routine monitoring during the permit term.

Comment No. A5: The Permittee asks for clarification regarding the difference in language used for the species sensitivity screening requirements for acute and chronic aquatic toxicity. The permittee identifies that they have conducted this testing concurrently in the past and wishes to know if this is still allowed.

Response to Comment No. A5: Species sensitivity screening for both acute aquatic toxicity and chronic aquatic toxicity may be performed concurrently and the language within these sections should be similar in nature. Staff have updated Section 5.2.5 of the proposed Order's MRP to make the language from this section, and section 5.1.4 more similar. Section 5.2.5 of the Proposed Order's MRP has been modified as follows:

5.2.5 **Species Sensitivity Screening.** Species sensitivity screening shall be conducted within 18 months of the Order's adoption ~~Regional Water Board Approval to discharge to the Russian River~~. The Permittee shall collect a single effluent sample and concurrently conduct three chronic aquatic toxicity tests using the fish, the invertebrate, and the algae species identified in section 5.2.4, above. This sample shall also be analyzed for the parameters required for the discharge at Discharge Point EFF-001. The species that exhibits the highest "Percent (%) Effect" at the discharge IWC during species sensitivity screening shall be used for routine monitoring during the permit term.

Comment No. A6: The Permittee identified an incorrect reference to the receiving water in Section 5.2.5 of the Order's Monitoring and Reporting Program and asks that it be corrected.

Response to Comment No. A6: The incorrect receiving water reference found in Section 5.2.5 of the draft Order's MRP has been removed as detailed in Response to Comment No. A5 above.

Comment No. A7: The Permittee asks if their groundwater monitoring data collected as part of their Toxicity Reduction Evaluation completed in 2026 is required to be uploaded to GeoTracker.

Response to Comment No. A7: Previously collected groundwater monitoring data is not required to be uploaded to GeoTracker at this time. Future groundwater monitoring data shall be uploaded ot GeoTracker. The North Coast Water Board may request historical data to be uploaded to GeoTracker in the future under a separate Order.

Comment No. A8: The Permittee identified a typo in section 4.3.3.2 of the Order's Fact Sheet, as it references a minimum observed hardness of 7 mg/L and not 22 mg/L as was used to calculate the criteria.

Response to Comment No. A8: North Coast Water Board Staff have updated Section 4.3.3.2 of the proposed Order's Fact Sheet to indicate the correct minimum observed hardness value of 22 mg/L.

Comment No. A9: The Permittee requests that an explanation be added to the fact sheet as to why compliance is based on an instream waste concentration (IWC) of 100 percent while the discharge limit is held at 1 percent of the receiving water flow.

Response to Comment No. A9: The determination of the applicable IWC and one percent discharge flow limitation are separate policies utilized by the North Coast Water Board and serve different functions.

Regarding the use of a dilution zone to determine an applicable IWC, Section III.C.1 of the Toxicity Provisions includes requirements for the Instream Waste Concentration for non-stormwater NPDES dischargers. As provided in Section III.C.1, the State Water Board Policy for Implementation of Toxics Standards for Inland Surface Waters, Enclosed Bays, and Estuaries of California (State Implementation Policy or SIP) allows regional boards, on a discretionary basis, to establish and determine compliance with priority pollutant criteria/objectives or the toxicity objective by granting mixing zones and dilution credits to dischargers in accordance with the provisions of the SIP. A mixing zone is established based on a dilution study to establish the mixing characteristics of the effluent with the receiving water and to demonstrate that allowance of a mixing zone is protective of beneficial uses. When authorized, a mixing zone must be as small as practicable and cannot adversely impact beneficial uses. A discharger must submit a formal request to be considered for a mixing zone. Should the North Coast Water Board find that a mixing zone is warranted, a discharger would need to submit a work plan for review and approval by the Executive Officer prior to initiating a mixing zone study. Until

a mixing zone study is conducted and approved, the IWC will remain at 100 percent. Because no mixing study has been completed, the proposed Order's Fact Sheet states that the Permittee does not qualify for a dilution credit.

Regarding the one percent discharge flow limitation, The Basin Plan requirement for discharges not to exceed one percent of the receiving stream's flow is a flow limitation and not intended to provide a dilution credit. The flow limitation requirement ensures protection of the receiving water at the end of pipe. This flow limitation was established in the Basin Plan beginning in the 1970s based on Department of Health Services, Office of Drinking Water (now the State Water Board Division of Drinking Water) view that discharges of wastewater to surface waters used for drinking water should not be allowed to occur if reasonable alternatives are available and that where reasonable alternatives are not available, discharges should be limited to one percent of the receiving water flow to ensure human health protection (*April 21, 1993, DHS letter from Bruce Burton to Theresa Wistrom, Regional Water Board Staff*). This flow limitation provides protection of all beneficial uses in a receiving stream. The one percent flow limitation is discussed in Section 4.1.8.3 of the Proposed Order's Fact Sheet.

No changes have been made to the Proposed Permit in response to this comment.