

Gualala TMDL Implementation Permit & Action Plan Development

July 2025 Update

You are receiving this email because you have signed up on the North Coast Water Board's email distribution list to receive regular updates on the Gualala River Watershed Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Permit and Action Plan development projects (Gualala Roads Permit and TMDL Action Plan, respectively). These projects are separate but related efforts to improve stream health and water quality in the Gualala River Watershed.

Third Quarter 2025 Update:

Watershed Assessment and Recovery Unit

The North Coast Water Board's new Watershed Assessment and Recovery Unit (WARU) – formed to support the recovery of sediment and temperature impaired watersheds in the North Coast Region, with an initial focus in the Gualala River Watershed – has recently filled its final open position with the hiring of Randy Lew, an Engineering Geologist with extensive experience conducting road-related sediment source assessments and treatment design. The WARU and Gualala Roads Permit development team are now fully staffed.

Upcoming Public Review Opportunities

Two opportunities for public review of projects occurring in the Gualala River Watershed will soon be available to the public: (1) review of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Initial Study of potential environmental impacts of the Gualala Roads Permit and (2) review of the TMDL Action Plan and supporting Staff Report. Though these projects are interrelated, they are being developed separately and are undergoing different stages of public review at this time.

- (1) The Initial Study for the Gualala Roads Permit will be made available in July 2025. An Initial Study is a preliminary analysis conducted by North Coast Water Board staff to determine if the proposed project (i.e., Gualala Roads Permit) will have a significant effect on the environment. Members of the public will have 30 days from the release date to comment on the scope of potential environmental impacts of permit issuance. The North Coast Water Board will host two scoping workshops during the environmental review period. Workshop details and instructions on how to participate will be released when available on our webpage at: https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/waru. Feedback on the permit itself will be requested at a later date when the draft permit is released for public review.
- (2) The public will be invited to provide comments on the TMDL Action Plan and its supporting Staff Report on July 11th. Commentors will have until August 25th to provide feedback. A public workshop will be held prior to the review period closing, during the August 14th-15th board meeting. Details and instructions on how to participate in the workshop will be available in advance of the meeting and can be found on the North Coast Water Board's

meeting agenda webpage at:

https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings.

Proposed Permit Framework

North Coast Water Board staff have developed a Proposed Permit Framework that provides preliminary details about the forthcoming Gualala Roads Permit. While the content of the Proposed Permit Framework is conceptual and subject to change, it serves as a tool for North Coast Water Board staff to further engagement efforts with landowners, community members, tribal and agency staff, environmental groups, and other interested parties. The Proposed Permit Framework will be made available to the public in July 2025 as a supplement to CEQA scoping materials.

Contract Execution

As previewed in prior Quarterly Reports, North Coast Water Board staff have been developing a contract to apply funds to support watershed condition evaluations and permit implementation. This contract is now executed and implementation will begin soon. The contractor, Sonoma Resource Conservation District (Sonoma RCD), will facilitate public outreach and education for the Gualala Roads Permit, assess current watershed conditions, develop a process for assessing and prioritizing road improvements, and conduct on-the-ground assessments with interested landowners.

Future Quarterly Updates

North Coast Water Board staff will continue to provide quarterly updates throughout the development of the projects. Please forward this email and/or direct interested individuals or groups to subscribe at the following link for timely project information:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?topic_id=r1_tmdl_gualala_river_watershed

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to know how to get further involved, please feel free to contact the following staff:

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