

2002 303(d) List Update  
Reference # 132

RWQCB  
REGION 1

OCT 10 2001

SAW \_\_\_\_\_  CRJ \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_  
 RLT \_\_\_\_\_  LGR \_\_\_\_\_  KAD \_\_\_\_\_  
 FCR \_\_\_\_\_  RSG \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_



CITY OF  
SANTA ROSA

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October 8, 2001

Matt St. John  
Regional Water Quality Control Board  
5550 Skylane Blvd., # A  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Mr. St. John:

Subject: Proposed 303(d) Listing

The purpose of this letter is to communicate the City of Santa Rosa's comments on the Public Review Draft 303(d) List Update Recommendations dated September 10, 2001.

The City of Santa Rosa supports the intent of the 303(d) and TMDL process, which is to identify impaired waters and implement appropriate action to protect beneficial uses. We are concerned that the National Research Council (part of the National Academy of Sciences) recommendations for improving the 303(d) listing process were not considered when preparing the Public Review Draft 303(d) List and that particular recommendations in the Public Review Draft 303(d) List are not consistent with water quality data. Our specific comments are provided below.

#### ***Laguna de Santa Rosa – Phosphorus and Dissolved Oxygen***

The National Academy of Sciences has provided recommendations for improving the 303(d) listing process. RWQCB's guidelines for listing were developed prior to the recommendations and have not been updated to reflect the recommendations. Following the recommendations led to the conclusion that the proposed listing of the Laguna for dissolved oxygen and phosphorus is not appropriate.

The dissolved oxygen standard for the Laguna is 7 mg/L. The City of Santa Rosa has submitted testimony (attached) indicating that this is not a suitable standard for a waterway that is naturally warm in the summer. The standard is not attainable because 7 mg/L exceeds the saturation level of oxygen at normal summer temperatures. Therefore, listing the Laguna because it does not attain the water quality objective cannot result in compliance with the current standard.

The Public Review Draft 303(d) List implies that dissolved oxygen is degrading or not improving and should, therefore, be listed. Examination of the RWQCB's TMDL Monitoring Data shows that dissolved oxygen at the four compliance monitoring stations in the Laguna was at a minimum during 1996 through 1998, and has been improving at all stations since 1998 (see attached *Comments on Proposed 303(d) listing for Laguna de Santa Rosa* memorandum dated October 5, 2001). Accordingly, dissolved oxygen should be placed on the watch list rather than the 303(d) list while an evaluation of the suitability of the existing standard is conducted.

The Public Review Draft 303(d) List indicates that the Laguna should be listed because it exceeds the EPA criterion for phosphorus and because recent data indicate that the growth of algae in the Laguna is limited by phosphorus. EPA has not established a criterion for phosphorus as a biostimulant (see attached *Comments on Proposed 303(d) listing for Laguna de Santa Rosa* memorandum dated October 5, 2001). Furthermore, the 303(d) listing of the Laguna for phosphorus is not justified because the Board's recent TMDL Monitoring Data continue to support the conclusion that nitrogen, and not phosphorus, limits the growth of plants in Laguna waters.

#### ***Santa Rosa Creek - Pathogens***

City test data show that summer levels of indicator bacteria in Santa Rosa Creek downtown are above the State Health Department draft guidelines for fresh water beaches. Many other small California urban streams that have been tested for indicator bacteria also show levels above the State draft guidelines. Listing Santa Rosa Creek as impaired for pathogens without testing for levels of indicator bacteria on other urban streams in the North Coast Region may mislead the community into believing that all other streams with human contact have been tested and have levels below the draft guidelines for fresh water beaches.

It is unknown at this time whether the source of pathogens in Santa Rosa Creek is human or non-human so the risk to the human population is unclear. Santa Rosa Creek should be placed on the watch list for pathogens instead of the impaired list to allow agencies to further investigate point sources within the watershed as well as to pursue funding for additional pathogen testing to determine if the sources are human or non-human.

#### ***Santa Rosa Creek - Diazinon - Watch List***

In November 1999 the City of Santa Rosa conducted tests for diazinon in Matanzas Creek at Hoen Frontage Road, Santa Rosa Creek at Melita Road, Piner Creek at Marlow Road, Peterson Creek west of Fulton Road, and Brush Creek south of Highway 12. The test results were non-detect in all cases. Since there is

no data indicating detectable levels of diazinon in Santa Rosa Creek or its tributaries, it should not be included on the watch list.

***Santa Rosa Creek - Copper and Zinc - Watch List***

Water quality data from 24 samples collected over four years at two sites on Santa Rosa Creek show no exceedances of any standards for copper and zinc. Santa Rosa Creek should not be included on the watch list for these metals.

In addition, the proposed recommendations state that the City of Santa Rosa performs surface water monitoring on Santa Rosa Creek at Fulton Road. This monitoring is actually performed by the Sonoma County Water Agency.

The Public Review Draft 303(d) List identifies October 8, 2001 as the comment submittal deadline. Since your office was closed on this day, we hope that you will accept these comments as submitted on October 9. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



ED BRAUNER  
Deputy City Manager

Attachment

c: William Massey, Chairman NCRWQCB  
Miles Ferris, Utilities Department  
Colleen Ferguson, Public Works Department  
David W. Smith, Merritt Smith Consulting