



Media Release

North Coast Water Board names new executive officer with deep ties to region

Valerie Quinto to build on board's strong working relationships, progress

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SANTA ROSA – The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board announced today that it has selected former two-term board member, Valerie Quinto, as its new executive officer to oversee its daily operations and serve as its principal advisor on water quality regulation and policy.

Quinto, the executive director of the Sonoma Resource Conservation District who years ago interned at the regional board while studying biology at Sonoma State University, will start her new job on Jan. 17, 2023. She will succeed Matt St. John, who has been executive officer for over a decade and will be transitioning to a newly created role at the board addressing the complex challenges of climate change in the North Coast region.

“Having Ms. Quinto stepping into this role assures that the agency will continue to provide leadership and stewardship of the North Coast’s precious waters,” said Greg Giusti, the regional board’s chair. “Outgoing Executive Officer Matt St. John created a balanced approach to protecting water quality while building strong working relationships with groups and individuals throughout the region, and I see that continuing.”

Quinto will assume the board’s top administrative role at a time of progress and expansion of its water quality work, including the strategic promotion, funding and permitting of numerous aquatic restoration projects throughout the region; expanded regulation in watersheds impacted by historic forest management activities and watersheds impacted by dairy operations; and the adoption of the first waste discharge regulatory program for cannabis operations. The board has also [bolstered its enforcement efforts](#) tied to water quality violations, especially those involving illegal cannabis cultivators whose disregard for crucial regulations threaten the health of the region’s waterways.

“The agency has a great team and staff, and a board that has coalesced around a strong vision,” said Quinto, who was born and raised in Sonoma County. “My strongest personal conviction is that water quality is not negotiable, and I am eager to work with



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my new colleagues and the North Coast's diverse, regulated community to build on the board's accomplishments protecting the region's waters."

St. John says his decision to step away from the board's top executive position and into the newly created role of climate specialist is inspired by the many climate-related challenges the North Coast is facing, from prolonged drought to the threat of sea level rise. This new position was created to help advance regulatory and non-regulatory actions with the board's partners to help address these challenges.

"The past 10 years have been incredibly rewarding and I'm proud of what we've accomplished together," said St. John. "I know the board will continue to advance water quality protections further under Valerie's leadership, and I look forward to helping the board manage and mitigate climate change impacts in my new role."

The North Coast Water Board's mission is to develop and enforce water quality objectives and implement plans that will best protect the region's waters while recognizing our local differences in climate, topography, geology and hydrology.