



Media Release

North Coast Water Board Adopts Plan to Control Sediment in the Elk River Watershed

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The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board yesterday adopted waste discharge requirements for timber harvest activities conducted by the Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC) in the Upper Elk River as part of comprehensive action plan to control sediment in the watershed.

The waste discharge requirements include water quality protection measures such as riparian protection zones, roads management measures, landslide prevention, harvest rate limits, and wet weather prescriptions. They also include requirements to address existing sources of sediment, and a feasibility study to evaluate potential methods to control, trap, or meter sediment from in-stream sources.

The waste discharge requirements build upon HRC's proposed practices, taking a preventative approach to addressing potential discharges of sediment from logging operations due to high levels of fine sediment deposited in the river over the past 20 years, largely as a result of past logging activities. The sediment deposits have resulted in significant cumulative impacts, filled in channel beds, impaired beneficial uses of the river, increased flooding frequency and magnitude, and threats to public health, safety, and infrastructure.

"Today's permit marks an important step forward. Together with the Action Plan for the Upper Elk River Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load adopted by the Regional Water Board in May of this year, the Elk River Watershed Stewardship program, and the Elk River Recovery Assessment, this permit brings us closer towards recovery of the Elk River watershed," said Regional Water Board Executive Officer Matt St. John.

The Elk River Watershed Stewardship program brings together residents, land managers and other stakeholders to collaborate on projects to improve watershed conditions via a steering committee led by Humboldt County, the University of California Cooperative Extension, Natural Resources Conservation Service, CalTrout and the Regional Water Board. The Elk River Recovery Assessment includes an analysis of river hydraulics and sediment transport in Elk River to Humboldt Bay; an assessment of a variety of sediment removal and restoration activities; pilot stream remediation projects; and development of remediation and restoration options to promote recovery of the ecosystem and beneficial uses of the river.





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For more information on the waste discharge requirements, visit http://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/timber_operations/elk_river_wdrs/.

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