
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast Region Staff Summary Report May 7-8, 2025

ITEM: 5

SUBJECT: Update on development of Waste Discharge Requirements for Certain Agricultural Activities in the Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds (Eli Scott)

BOARD ACTION: This is an informational item; no action will be taken by the Board.

BACKGROUND: Located within Siskiyou County, the Scott River watershed (813 square miles) and the Shasta River watershed (795 square miles) are major tributaries to the Klamath River. The Shasta River watershed shares divides with the Scott River to the west, Butte Creek to the east, and the Trinity and Sacramento Rivers to the south. The Scott River watershed shares divides with the Shasta River to the east, the Trinity River to the south, and the Salmon River to the west.

The Shasta River watershed is home to over 50,000 acres of irrigated agriculture, with pasture, grain, and hay comprising the primary crops. The Scott River Watershed includes approximately 35,000 acres of irrigated agriculture, dominated by field crops, including alfalfa and other hay crops, and livestock ranching.

In 2005, the Regional Water Board adopted the Action Plan for the Scott River Sediment and Temperature Total Maximum Daily Loads. In 2006, the Regional Water Board adopted the Shasta River Temperature and Dissolved Oxygen Total Maximum Daily Loads. Since 2006, the Regional Water Board adopted and has implemented a series of Orders conditionally waiving the requirement for certain agricultural producers in the watersheds to file a Report of Waste Discharge and obtain Waste Discharge Requirements.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS: The Regional Water Board is now undertaking a project to develop General Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Agricultural Operations in the Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds (Scott and

Shasta WDRs). Progress to date has included internal cross-program working group meetings; development of an Initial Study under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA); initiation of formal tribal consultation with the Karuk Tribe, Shasta Nation, Shasta Indian Nation, Quartz Valley Indian Reservation, Yurok Tribe, and Pulikla; and the initiation of an external Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG is made up of interested parties from the agricultural community, tribal technical staff, local environmental groups, Siskiyou County technical staff, and restoration groups. The TAG will support the development of the Scott and Shasta WDRs by providing regular feedback on permit concepts at roughly monthly intervals as development on this effort continues.

CEQA PROGRESS AND PUBLIC INPUT: On February 4, 2025, a public notice was released announcing the availability of, and scoping period for, the CEQA Initial Study for the Scott and Shasta WDRs. A public scoping meeting was held within the scoping period on February 26, 2025, in Yreka, California. The scoping period ended on March 3, 2025. A general overview of these comments will be discussed during the staff presentation.

ADOPTION TIMELINE: Staff aims to have the Scott and Shasta WDRs ready to be considered for adoption by April 2026.

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

1. See documents provided for Agenda Item 4.
2. CEQA Initial Study (https://files.ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/311855-1/attachment/wrR5ACzii4KCSjl6l0iyj_9lvIXuAW5jJNxlguT5xznFVHhpOYHbyvh86gHK2EnPaa5NkXDAksFFFtxQ0)