EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

May 7-8, 2025

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Executive Officer's 2024 Water Quality Stewardship Award goes to the Klamath River Renewal Corporation and Melissa Van Scoyoc

Jake Shannon and Gil Falcone

The Executive Officer's Water Quality Stewardship Award is an annual award given to an individual or group whose exceptional work contributes to the preservation and enhancement of surface water and groundwater quality in the North Coast Region. The Regional Water Quality Control Board and its staff spend much of their time and energy focused on the task of controlling waste discharges to the region's waters. This award is designed to acknowledge and honor our community partners in water quality protection who augment the Regional Water Board's work with their own efforts in pollution prevention, waste minimization, water quality enhancement, and restoration of beneficial uses for all to enjoy.

This year we award two recipients for their exceptional achievements in 2024. The Klamath River Renewal Corporation is recognized for their significant work last year to remove dams along the Klamath river and restore the free-flowing river. Additionally, Melissa Van Scoyoc is being recognized for her impactful career with the Salmon River Restoration Council where she devoted herself to restoring fish habitat in the Salmon River watershed.

Klamath River Renewal Corporation

2024 was a monumental year for the Klamath River. After decades of planning and preparation, the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC) removed three large dams and began the renewal of a healthier river. We recognize KRRC for its leadership, coordination, oversight of its strong team of contractors, and achieving the largest dam removal project in the country this past year. In the leadup to this big year, KRRC mobilized contractors and resources as well as constructed onsite housing, staging areas, bridges, other infrastructure upgrades and even removed a smaller dam (Copco 2) to lay the groundwork for reconnecting the river to its tributaries.

In January 2024, reservoirs behind the JC Boyle dam in Oregon and the Copco 1 and Irongate dams in California were drawn down in a well-planned, synchronized manner to allow for the deconstruction of the dams to begin. By the spring a highly orchestrated and coordinated effort began to remove these three dams. Through the summer these three dams, the oldest of which had stood for over a century, were carefully deconstructed to minimize environmental impacts while maximizing efficiency, worker safety and best use of resources. By the fall the last of the dams had been removed and restoration work had begun along the river.

KRRC's actions in 2024 have led to significant water quality enhancements and restoration of beneficial uses. Previously, the dams in California created water quality conditions where blue-green algae blooms would occur yearly within the reservoirs and river. These annual blooms included species that produce toxins that have led to the annual issuance of state human health advisories in summer and fall. Additionally, these conditions contributed to fish and wildlife diseases, while the dams created physical barriers for fish migration upriver to native spawning habitat. By restoring the reservoirs to free-flowing river reaches, water quality conditions improved dramatically last year with no health advisories in these areas related to harmful algal blooms.

In October 2024, scientists documented the first Chinook salmon to migrate above the Iron Gate Dam since the 1960's, with over 400 miles of fish habitat now accessible. This same month Chinook were observed spawning in the Klamath Basin in Oregon for the first time since 1912. Coho salmon, listed as a threatened species, were observed migrating and spawning upstream of the dam sites by the end of the year. Throughout the year, KRRC's team began land-based river and riparian restoration efforts to re-establish critical native plant communities and healthy soil in areas that were reservoirs previously, as well as placing large wood fish habitat structures within channels.

The Regional Water Board wants to recognize the Klamath River Renewal Team's water quality stewardship work, lead by CEO Mark Bransom. KRRC's diverse Board of Directors including representatives from both California and Oregon state agencies, federal agencies, local governments, Tribal nations, non-profits, scientists and consultants guided the team through this eventful process. KRRC brought together a strong team of skilled consultants, project managers, contractors, engineers, scientists and tribal members this past year to be able to pull off such a significant achievement. Although this project has been decades in the making and restoration will continue for many years to come, KRRC's work this past year to restore a free-flowing, healthy Klamath River is truly historic.

Melissa Van Scoyoc

Melissa (Mel) Van Scoyoc retired from the Salmon River Restoration Council in 2024 after nine years of serving as their Habitat Restoration Program Manager. During her tenure, Mel sought funding, coordinated design development, gained environmental compliance, and managed many restoration projects. Those projects resulted in very meaningful habitat enhancement via large-scale floodplain reconnection, in channel habitat creation through large wood augmentation and habitat structure construction, off-channel refugia habitat features, and robust riparian vegetation plantings.

Beyond the breadth of work that Mel achieved throughout her time at the Salmon River Restoration Council, Mel's approach to how she accomplished everything she did made her stand out. Her intelligence, diligence, humor, and openness made partnering with her on projects a pleasure. Further, her ability to quickly understand rather unintuitive regulatory processes paired with her uncommon level of interest in environmental compliance made issuing permits and navigating CEQA for her projects efficient and easy.

Her coworkers at the Salmon River Restoration Council, the agency staff that worked with her over the years, and the landowners that she worked with all share the same opinion of Mel: she is an incredibly effective, productive, and friendly person whose time working on the Salmon River left a lasting impact. One would be truly hard-pressed to find another individual person who made such a positive impact for salmon over the last ten years.

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Turner's Automotive Site Upgraded to Clean Water Source Thanks to Collaborative Effort

Heidi Bauer

Turner's Automotive is a current Site Cleanups Unit site and a former gas station and automotive service center located in Graton (see site location map) that had a past release of gasoline to the subsurface from two underground storage tanks. The release resulted in benzene concentrations in groundwater well above the State's Maximum Contaminant Levels in drinking water. Recently, this site has undergone a significant transformation that brings both health and environmental improvements to the area. Once reliant on its own domestic well for water, the site, including a family residence, faced numerous challenges due to the groundwater contamination.

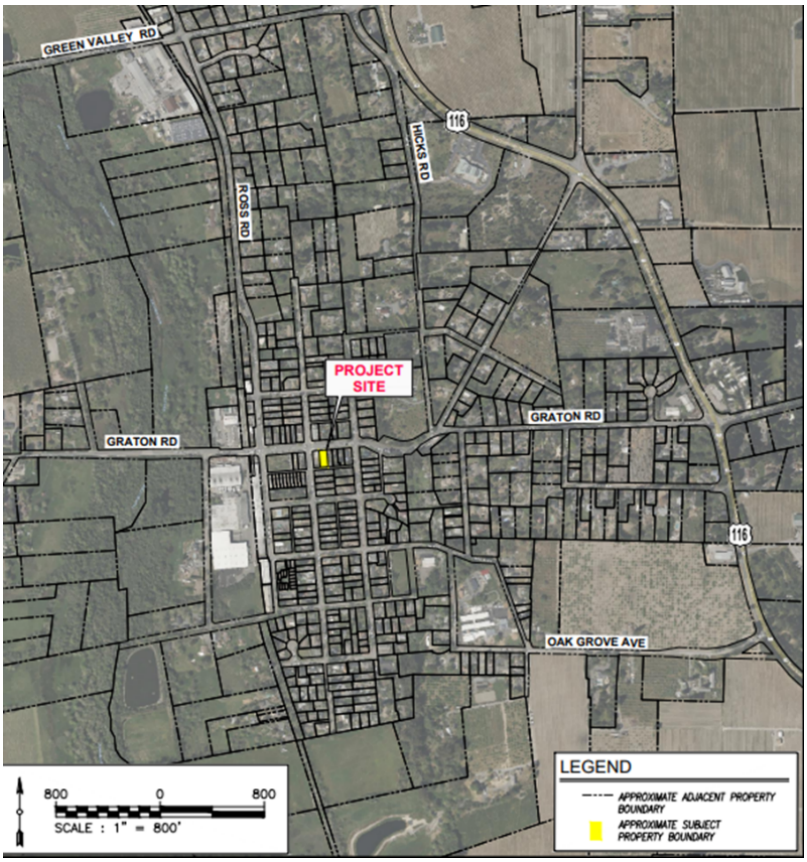
For years, the site utilized a carbon filtration system to remove the benzene from the contaminated well water and make the water suitable for domestic use. However, treatment of the domestic water supply came at a high cost because the treatment system's carbon canisters required frequent replacement. The carbon replacements were previously funded through the State Underground Storage Tank (UST) Cleanup Fund, but by early 2022, the available funds had been depleted, leaving the burden and responsibility for replacing these on the family.

The situation took a positive turn in late 2023, thanks to the hard work and dedication of François Bush, Regional Water Board case manager, and his supervisor, Heidi Bauer. Working closely with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), François and Heidi secured a $50,000 federal grant in early 2024 to connect the site to an alternative clean water source. The grant was set to expire in June 2024, so swift action was required to complete the project before the grant expired.

By April 2024, a collaboration between Site Cleanups Unit staff, the USEPA, and a federal contractor successfully linked the site to the Downtown Graton Mutual Water System, a reliable water source that serves the commercial center of Graton and nearby residential developments. After a final review of planning documents by the Region 1 staff in May 2024, the connection was finalized just in time before the grant expired.

This exciting update means that the site is no longer dependent on treated contaminated groundwater but is now benefiting from a stable, clean, and safe domestic water supply. The former well has been disconnected, ensuring that the residents of the Turner's Automotive site will have reliable access to high-quality water for years to come. The UST site is still open and subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure that site contamination levels continue to decline. This successful effort highlights the power of cooperation between local, state, and federal agencies in resolving environmental challenges and enhancing community well-being.

SITE LOCATION MAP- 9001 Graton Road, Graton



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Caltrans TMDL[1] Compliance Funding Update

Carrieann Lopez

In June 2022, the State Water Resources Control Board adopted a statewide stormwater permit for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Order 2022-0033- DWQ[2]. In the Order, Caltrans is required to comply with the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's sediment and temperature TMDLs. North Coast Regional Water Board (Regional Water Board) staff worked with Caltrans to determine the proportional responsibility in each TMDL watershed and determine the sediment (Table 1) and temperature (Table 2) load reductions needed to comply with the Order.

In past iterations of the Order, Caltrans was required to meet their TMDL obligations entirely within their right-of-way, which was difficult to accomplish due to space constraints and in many circumstances provided limited benefit to water quality. The current Order includes new language allowing Caltrans to meet their North Coast Region TMDL obligations outside of their right-of-way. An advantage of implementing projects outside of Caltrans's right-of-way is the potential for these

[1] Total Maximum Daily Load

[2] Caltrans NPDES Order 2022-0033-DWQ (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2022/wqo2022-0033-dwq_att.pdf)

projects to bring water quality benefits above and beyond what could be accomplished in the Caltrans right-of-way alone. For instance, $200,000 spent by Caltrans to provide sediment capture Best Management Practices (BMPs) within their right-of-way may instead be used to improve a rural road and/or provide riparian habitat enhancement, all while preventing a greater level of sediment from reaching receiving waters for the same amount of money—not to mention preservation of valuable Caltrans right-of-way and avoidance of ongoing maintenance needs associated with right-of-way BMPs.

Caltrans is using a multifaceted approach to address sediment and temperature TMDLs in the North Coast region. To achieve compliance with the load reductions, Caltrans funds restoration projects that reduce sediment and/or temperature loads to surface waters in TMDL watersheds. Funding is limited and varies from year to year.

Table 1. Sediment Load Reduction Requirement Tracking

Sediment Impaired TMDL Watersheds	Caltrans Sediment Load Reduction Requirement (tons/year)	All Cumulative Projects to-date Sediment Load Reduction Equivalents (tons/year)	Remaining Sediment Load Reduction Requirement (tons/year)
Albion River	5	–	5
Big River	149	–	149
Eel River, Upper Main	68	–	68
Eel River, Middle Fork	41	5	36
Eel River, Lower Main	280	97.8	182.3
Eel River, South Fork	13,157	4,595.7	8,561.3
Garcia River	150	150	0.0
Gualala River	150	–	150
Mad River	1,970	–	1,970
Navarro River	1,504	–	1,504
Noyo River	83	–	83
Redwood Creek	4,481	4481	0.0
Scott River	87	49.5	37.5
Ten Mile River	4	–	4
Trinity River	5,821	1,388	4,433
Trinity River, South Fork	1,625	–	1,625
Van Duzen River	379	130.2	248.8

Table 2. Temperature Load Reduction Requirement Tracking

Temperature Impaired TMDL Watersheds	Caltrans Riparian Shade Requirements (acres)	All Cumulative Projects to-date Riparian Shade Equivalents (acres)	Remaining Riparian Shade Requirements (acres)
Eel River, Upper Main	127	–	127
Eel River, Middle Fork	17	–	17

Temperature Impaired TMDL Watersheds	Caltrans Riparian Shade Requirements (acres)	All Cumulative Projects to-date Riparian Shade Equivalents (acres)	Remaining Riparian Shade Requirements (acres)
Eel River, Lower Main	37	2.1	34.9
Eel River, South Fork	143	2	141
Klamath River	61	40	21
Navarro River	61	–	61
Scott River	28	20	8
Shasta River	131	41.4	89.6

Process Overview

A team from the Regional Water Board and Caltrans staff cultivate and develop the highest priority sediment and temperature load reduction projects each year. This effort is made to assist Caltrans in meeting their pollutant load reduction requirements through 2033.

Year-round, staff consult with eligible project partners that include government agencies, tribes, and non-profit entities to develop sufficient project information to include in the region's internal Water Quality Improvement Project and Funding Catalog. Necessary project information includes, at a minimum: project name, project purpose, watershed location, planning or construction project, project schedule, partner contact, pollutant(s) addressed, and funding amount needed.

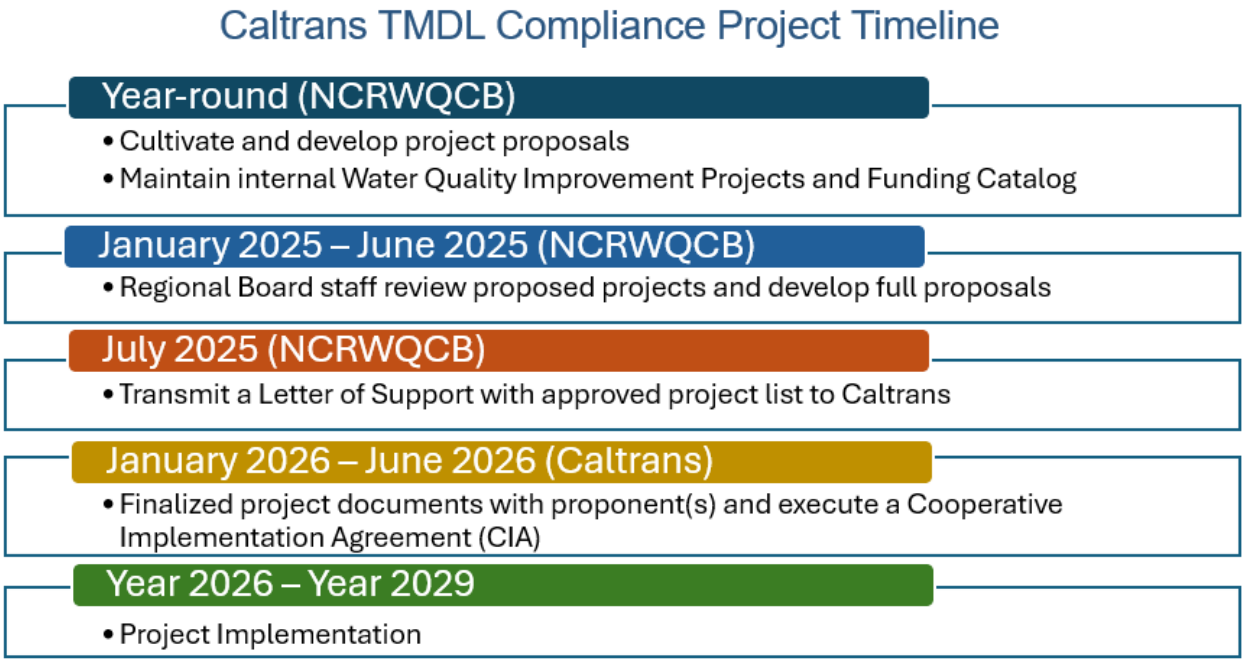
Beginning in January every year, Regional Water Board staff identify a list of the highest priority TMDL compliance projects from the Water Quality Improvement Project and Funding Catalog and ensure a good mix of projects across all affected TMDL watersheds. The staff member that cultivated the project works with the project partner to develop a complete Project Summary Scope document using a Caltrans template.

Once the Project Summary Scope documents are complete, they are transmitted to Caltrans along with a Regional Water Board Letter of Support listing the approved projects and load reduction allocation met with each project.

The following year, Caltrans initiates contact with project partners to finalize Project Summary Scope documents, execute a signed Cooperative Implementation Agreement, and begin project funding.

Regional Water Board staff are available to assist Caltrans and project partners throughout the entire process, but Caltrans ultimately administers the funding and agreement for the following three years as the project is implemented.

A general Caltrans TMDL Compliance Project timeline for 2025 can be found below:



North Coast Regional Board Sediment and Temperature Load Reduction Projects

To date, Regional Water Board staff across three divisions have cultivated, developed and delivered 25 projects, with a total dollar amount of $29,049,215. A representative subset of these projects is summarized below:

Project Title	**Partner**	**Project Description**	**Pollutant Addressed by Project**
Eel River TMDL Implementation and Planning Projects	Mendocino County RCD	Perform a variety of water quality protection efforts including a road sediment source inventory on six miles of roads within the Jack of Hearts Creek watershed, as well as implementation of road storm-proofing treatments on approximately 9.7 miles of road in three locations within the South Fork and Middle Fork Eel River watersheds that address the TMDL goal of sediment reduction to protect water quality.	Sediment

Project Title	Partner	Project Description	Pollutant Addressed by Project
Big Mill Creek, East Fork Sediment Reduction and Habitat Restoration	California Trout	Examine sediment and temperature TMDL contributing factors and the respective impacts to salmonid species within the lower East Fork Scott River through a detailed existing conditions assessment. Project objectives include reducing sediment and increasing riparian health in both the East Fork Scott River and its tributary, Big Mill Creek, as well as restoring volitional fish passage to over two miles of salmonid (Coho) rearing habitat, currently blocked by a perched culvert on Highway 3 crossing over Big Mill Creek.	Sediment/Temperature
Windler Bar Habitat Enhancement Project	Salmon River Restoration Council	Implement engineered designs developed by Michael Love & Associates, in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service and the Karuk Tribe, to enhance and revegetate the Windler Bar complex floodplain, and to enhance Cronan Gulch and Gallia Pond.	Temperature

Project Title	Partner	Project Description	Pollutant Addressed by Project
Lower French Creek Habitat Enhancement and Sediment Reduction Project	California Trout	This project will address sediment and temperature TMDL contributing factors and the respective impacts to salmonid species within lower French Creek. The goal of the project is to facilitate sediment transport through the reach, enhance riparian shading, and increase habitat complexity through installation of large wood structures and live willow stake plantings. The selected alternative consists of alternating vegetated sills constructed using wood piles and horizontal log members, backfilled with alluvium, and staked with live willow. These sills will increase sediment sorting, resulting in a narrow channel with bar formation and increased riparian cover. Excavated material will be added to the floodplain benches, between the existing levees, and large wood structures will be installed across the floodplain benches to focus higher velocities into the low flow channel and improve sediment transport of fine material. Live willow stakes will be planted in linear trenches within the floodplain bench to add hydraulic roughness.	Sediment/Temperature

Project Title	Partner	Project Description	Pollutant Addressed by Project
Shasta Valley Tailwater Reduction Planning Project	Shasta Valley RCD	This project will locate and quantify the volume and impact of selected high-volume tailwater returns on temperature and dissolved oxygen levels, both of which are pollutants listed in the Shasta River TMDL. Project objectives include increasing riparian health and reducing temperature spikes and dissolved oxygen incursions due to the unmitigated return of warm nutrient-rich tailwater returning to the creek from irrigation.	Sediment/Temperature
Scott River Watershed Planning, Prioritization, Design and Implementation Project	Scott River Watershed Council	This project will holistically evaluate the fundamental hydro and geo-fluvial degradation of the entire Scott River, from the headwaters to the confluence of the Klamath River. A detailed existing condition analysis will include sediment, temperature, and biostimulatory impairments that have led to the current TMDL listings in order to develop a landscape scale plan for solutions to address them. This project will produce the first ever holistic management action plan that will establish a sufficient “river process space” and the necessary restoration and water management actions for the mainstem Scott River to provide floodplain reconnection, groundwater recharge, and increased riparian corridor health.	Sediment/Temperature

Project Title	Partner	Project Description	Pollutant Addressed by Project
Red Mountain Road Storm proofing	Bureau of Land Management	Road upgrading work along 15 miles of Red Mountain Road in Mendocino County, California. The road traverses through three tributaries of the South Fork Eel River, with the bulk of the road mileage in the East Branch, South Fork Eel River. The road provides access to rural private residences, and recreational access to several tracts of public lands including the Red Mountain Wilderness Area.	Sediment
Bee River Mill Floodplain and Stream Restoration Program	CA State Parks	Project design will incorporate integrated, holistic, process-based approaches to restore geomorphic function, enhancing floodplain connectivity, reducing sediment delivery to streams, and reducing stream temperature. The Bee River Mill project combined with the other watershed restoration initiatives will reduce sediment delivery and improve overall watershed health.	Sediment/Temperature
Indian Creek Sedimentation Reduction Project	Redwood Forest Foundation	Treat 111 road-related erosion sites with the potential to deliver sediment to the stream system, including (1) 20 sites recommended for decommissioning treatment long 2.6 miles of road in Manus Creek, (2) 40 sites recommended for upgrading (n=27) and decommissioning (n=13) along 4.9 miles of road in Sebbas Creek, and (3) 51 sites recommended for upgrading along 7.4 miles of road within Parker Creek.	Sediment

Project Title	Partner	Project Description	Pollutant Addressed by Project
Water Quality Enhancement in the Blue Creek Watershed	Yurok Tribe	Within Yurok tribe boundary, Flood plain restoration riparian corridor revegetation project. 10 miles up from hwy 101 on Klamath River to tributary. Blue Creek is designated a Salmon sanctuary by the tribe and is closed to fishing to tribal and non-tribal members.	Temperature
Safe Harbor Flow Augmentation Adaptive Management Project	Montague Water Conservation District	Monitoring program and analytical assessments are designed to quantify cold water sources in the managed reach, assess potential management actions to preserve and enhance these areas, and update management criteria to integrate the best available science related to the environmental dynamics governing cold-water ecosystem function in general and Coho salmon specifically.	Temperature
Prairie Creek Road Decommissioning	Redwoods Rising (National Park Service, Redwood National Park, Save the Redwoods League)	Remove 10 miles of abandoned logging roads in Prairie Creek (Redwood Creek tributary). All 10 miles of roads and stream crossings will be fully removed and recontoured to match existing topography. This will protect restored areas from landsliding and allow for pre-existing hydrologic flow paths to convey water downslope in their original alignment.	Sediment
Trinity River Sediment Reduction Project	Trinity County RCD	Conduct road maintenance activities identifying and improving crossings to reduce potential sediment delivery at spring, swale or stream crossings. All Forest BMPs will be utilized and all disturbed areas near or draining to watercourses will be seeded and mulched after treatment.	Sediment

Project Title	Partner	Project Description	Pollutant Addressed by Project
Lower Eel River Salmon Habitat Restoration Priorities (SHaRP) and Conceptual Designs	Humboldt RCD	Identify five priority projects in the mainstem Eel River and advance conceptual 10% designs for three of the priority sites. Selected sites will serve as pilot actions to increase pool depth, improve sediment transport, create riparian shade and reduce water temperature.	Sediment/Temperature

Eel River TMDL Implementation and Planning Projects

Photos of Road storm-proofed stream crossing sites as well as controlled chronic hydrologic connectivity and sediment delivery which included installing roadbed drainage improvement structures and road shaping.

Left: Pre-implementation – View from the left outboard edge of the road looking upslope toward the utility pole located near the natural channel alignment. Right: Post-implementation – View from the left outboard edge of the road looking upslope at the new channel alignment.

Left: Pre-implementation - View from upstream of the crossing looking downstream toward the old culvert inlets. Right: Post-implementation – View from upstream of the crossing looking downstream toward the new culvert inlet.

Currently, Regional Water Board staff are working to identify new projects to include in the Water Quality Improvement Project and Funding Catalog. There are ample Caltrans TMDL compliance funding dollars available and the North Coast Region encourages those interested in applying or discussing project ideas to contact Carrieann Lopez at (707) 576-6745 or, by email, at Carrieann.Lopez@waterboards.ca.gov.

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Projected List of Future Regional Water Board Agenda Items

The following is a list of Regional Water Board agenda items that staff are planning for the next two Board meetings. **This list of agenda items is intended for general planning purposes and is subject to change.** Questions regarding the listed agenda items should be addressed to the identified staff person.

June 12-13, 2025 – Santa Rosa, CA

- Russian River Watershed Association Update *(Valerie Quinto)* **[I]**
- Commercial Vineyards GDWRs and EIR *(Brenna Sullivan)* **[A]**
- Rescission of Sonoma West Holdings NPDES Permit *(Matt Herman)* **[A]**
- 2026 Board Meeting Schedule *(Valerie Quinto)* **[A]**
- 2025 Basin Plan Remediation *(Michelle Fuller)* **[A]**
- Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) *(Lance Le, Lisa Bernard)* **[A]**

August 14-15, 2025 – Santa Rosa, CA

- Regional Board Program Priorities for Fiscal Year 25-26 *(Valerie Quinto)* **[I]**
- Gualala TMDL Action Plan Workshop *(Lance Le)* **[W]**
- Glass Mountain KGRA WDR Rescission *(Chris Watt)* **[A]**
- Enforcement Update *(Jeremiah Puget)* **[I]**
- Recycled Water in Region 1 Information Item *(Tina Low)* **[I]**
- Rescission Iron Gate Hatchery NPDES Permit *(Justin McSmith)* **[A]**
