
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

FOR THE

NORTH COAST REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD'S PROPOSED FEDERAL LANDS PERMIT

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) staff will hold a public hearing to consider adoption of the proposed *Waste Discharge Requirements for Nonpoint Source Discharges Related to Certain Land Management Activities on Federal Lands in the North Coast Region*, Proposed Order No. R1-2024-0012 (Proposed Federal Lands Permit) and Certification of Final Environmental Impact Report for the General Waste Discharge Requirements for Nonpoint Source Discharges Related to Certain Land Management Activities on Federal Lands in the North Coast Region, Resolution No. R1-2024-0032 (Proposed FEIR). The Public Hearing to consider adoption of the Proposed Federal Lands Permit and Proposed FEIR will be held during the North Coast Water Board's regularly scheduled August 15-16, 2024, meeting in Eureka, California.

This Notice of Public Hearing includes 1) a brief background on the Proposed Federal Lands Permit; 2) how to review the Proposed Federal Lands Permit and Proposed FEIR; and 3) details and participation information on the August 2024 North Coast Water Board meeting.

I. Quick Information

- You can review the Proposed Federal Lands Permit and Proposed FEIR approximately ten days prior to the August Board meeting on the North Coast Water Board's **August Board Meeting** webpage here: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/.
- Members of the public have an opportunity to provide oral comments at the North Coast Water Board August meeting at the Eureka City Hall in Eureka, California. Please find additional information on the steps for commenting in Section IV below.

II. Background

The Proposed Federal Lands Permit proposes to regulate certain land management activities from the three largest federal agencies in the North Coast Region – the United States Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and National Park Service (NPS). The North Coast Water Board has

HECTOR BEDOLLA, CHAIR | VALERIE QUINTO, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

regulated the discharge of nonpoint source pollutants to surface waters on federal lands through three iterations of a Waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements permit (Waiver) since 2004. Since the issuance of the first Waiver in 2004, many lessons have been learned and environmental conditions have changed. An increasing annual fire regime, new state and federal policies, and other factors affect the North Coast Water Board's approach to federal land regulation in the North Coast Region. These considerations, in part, prompted the development of the Proposed Federal Lands Permit and a new supporting environmental analysis (i.e., the Proposed FEIR).

The Proposed Federal Lands Permit proposes to cover discharges of waste to surface waters from timber harvest, vegetation and fuels management, roads and trails, grazing, emergency actions, fire recovery, and recreational facilities management on federal lands in the North Coast Region. Activities not covered under the Proposed Federal Lands Permit include mining, application of herbicides or pesticides, discharges of hazardous or human waste, third parties conducting activities on federal lands not covered by this permit, and land disturbance activities unrelated to silvicultural operations that disturb one or more acres.

The Proposed Federal Lands Permit relies on permit conditions, existing federal best management practices, and the standards and guidelines contained in federal agency guidance documents to demonstrate compliance with water quality standards. Key requirements of the Proposed Federal Lands Permit include the annual treatment of sediment sources across each Administrative Unit¹, retention of natural shade within designated riparian zones, compliance with monitoring and reporting conditions, and implementation of best management practices designed to prevent and minimize discharges of pollutants to surface waters.

Please refer to the Staff Summary Report and other Proposed Federal Lands Permit and Proposed FEIR supporting documents for further information on the proposed project. These documents may be viewed approximately ten days prior to the August Board meeting at the following webpage for the August Board meeting:
https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/.

III. Availability of Documents and Information

The Proposed Federal Lands Permit and Proposed FEIR may be reviewed at the North Coast Water Board offices during normal business hours or at the August

¹ The term "Administrative Unit" refers to an individual federal agency management unit, such as a USFS National Forest, BLM Field Office, or NPS National Park or Monument.

Board meeting webpage below. Documents will be available approximately 10 days before the public hearing.

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/

IV. Public Hearing

The North Coast Water Board will hold a public hearing on August 15, 2024, that may continue to August 16, 2024, to consider adoption of the Proposed Federal Lands Permit and certification of the Proposed FEIR.

The proposed adoption hearing will be held during the following North Coast Water Board meeting:

Board Meeting Date: **August 15-16, 2024**
Board Meeting Start Time: **09:00 a.m.**

Physical Location: **531 K Street, Room 208**
Eureka, CA 95501

Link to Meeting Agenda:
https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/

Video and teleconference options: The meeting may be viewed live at: <https://cal-span.org/>. If you wish to comment on the item from a remote location, please complete the virtual speaker card available here: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_CmmDidWjRm2779yC5H30uQ

Additional information about the North Coast Water Board meeting, including meeting procedures, can be found at the North Coast Water Board's webpage.

Oral comments will be accepted at the public hearing. The time limit for public oral comments will be 5 minutes; however, additional time may be provided, upon request, at the discretion of the North Coast Water Board Chair. A timer may be used, and speakers are expected to honor the time limits. Where speakers can be grouped by affiliation or interest, such groups will be expected to select a spokesperson and not be repetitive.

V. Prehearing Submission of Written Comments

The noticed written comment period for these items has closed. Pursuant to the Notice of Opportunity for Public Comment and Notice of Board Workshop, interested persons were previously invited to submit written comments on the Draft Federal Lands Permit and Draft Environmental Impact Report by 5:00 pm on May 7, 2024.

Written materials submitted after the close of the written comment period will not be accepted and will not be incorporated into the administrative record absent a ruling by the Board Chair.

VI. Accessibility and Language Services

For directions to the North Coast Water Board meeting location or for individuals requiring special accommodations please contact Ms. Deidre Wilkerson, Executive Assistant, at (707) 576-2066 or Deidre.Wilkerson@Waterboards.ca.gov at least five days prior to the meeting. Parking for the meetings is available onsite. TTY/TDD/Speech-to-Speech users may contact the California Relay Service at 1-800-735-2929 or voice line at 1-800-735-2922.

VII. Potential Future Changes to the Noticed Items

Any changes regarding the noticed items will be posted on the North Coast Water Board's webpage and noticed through the email distribution list. Any person who wants to receive future notices and information about the Federal Lands Permit program should sign up for the email distribution list by accessing the North Coast Water Board e-mail subscriptions webpage at https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.html and subscribing to the "Forest Activities on Federal Lands" email list.

VIII. North Coast Water Board Contact Information

Please direct questions about this public notice or the Proposed Federal Lands Permit and/or Proposed FEIR to RB1-Federal@waterboards.ca.gov.