



Stream and Wetlands System Protection Policy

Public Scoping Meeting

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board November 2006

Meeting Outline

- Scoping Overview
- Policy Need
- Scientific Concepts
- Proposed Amendment Scope
- Public Comments

The background of the slide is a landscape photograph showing a body of water on the left, tall grasses in the foreground, and a cloudy sky. A large, solid blue rectangular overlay covers the majority of the image, with the title text centered within it.

Scoping Overview

Purpose of Scoping

To introduce the proposed project to the public and obtain comments on:

- Reasonable alternatives that should be evaluated
- Significant or potentially significant environmental impacts
- Measures to mitigate any significant environmental impacts

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Checklist

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems



Policy Need

Why Do We Need a Stream Policy?

- More explicitly acknowledge connection between physical integrity of stream and wetlands systems and water quality
- Expand consideration of cumulative effects
- Improve success of wetland and riparian area mitigation
- Provide more consistent and predictable permitting outcomes
- Advance policy to reflect best practices and science

Why Do We Need a Stream Policy?

- Regional Water Board identified the policy as a high priority in its 2004 Triennial Review of the Basin Plan
- Regional Water Board cited the policy as a future implementation measure to achieve temperature objectives in the Scott and Shasta TMDLs
- State Water Board supported development of the policy in its resolution approving the Scott TMDLs
- U.S. EPA grant is supporting development of the policy in the North Coast and San Francisco Bay Regions



Scientific Concepts

The Stream and Wetlands System



WETLANDS



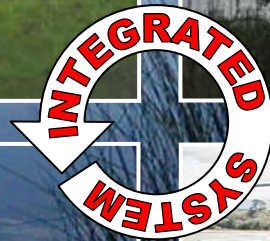
FLOODPLAINS



STREAM CHANNELS



RIPARIAN AREAS



The Stream and Wetlands System



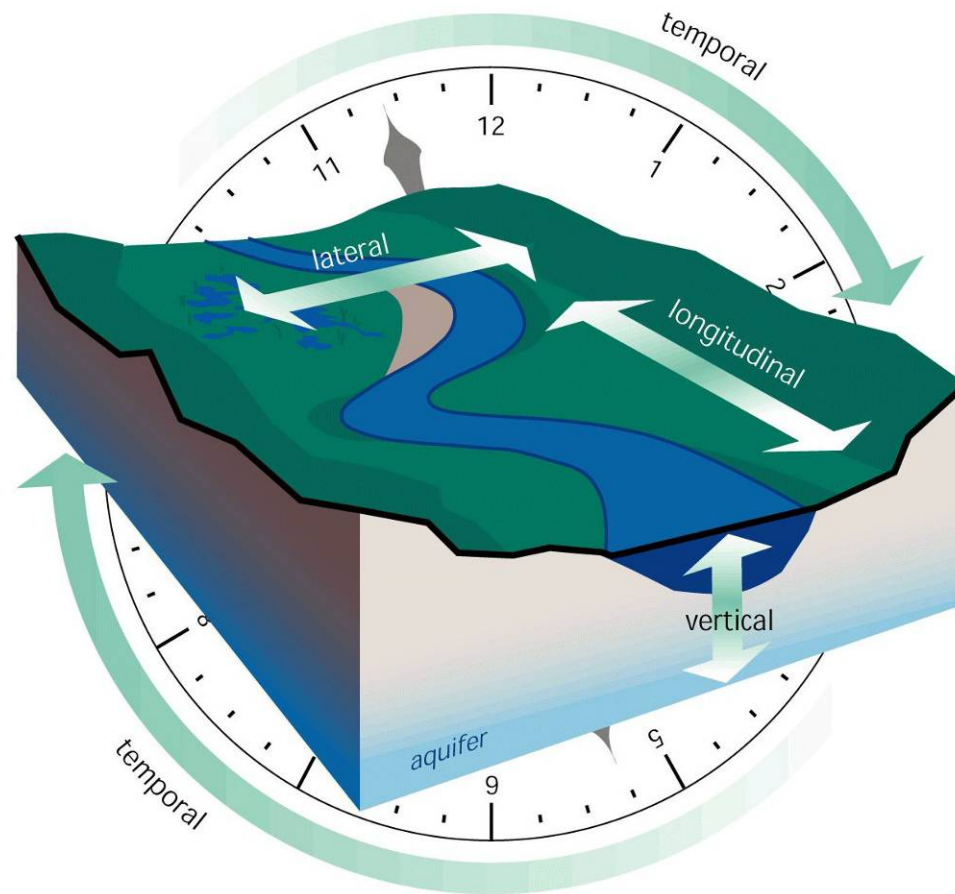
LAKES AND RESERVOIRS

Stream and Wetland System Functions

- Water Filtration
- Temperature and Microclimate Control
- Streambank Stability
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat
- Flood Peak Attenuation
- Groundwater Recharge
- Large Woody Debris Input
- Energy and Nutrient Cycling
- Sediment Transport and Storage



Stream and wetland systems are dynamic in space and time





Proposed Amendment

Summary of Project Scope

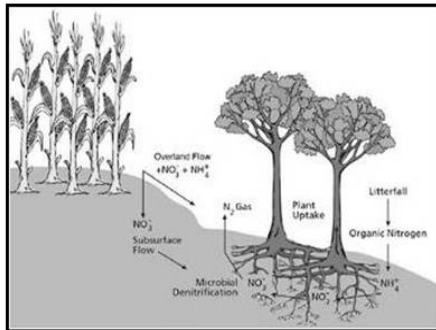
Staff proposes to develop a Basin Plan amendment that will:

- Protect *beneficial uses* associated with stream and wetland systems
- Establish new *water quality objectives*
- Include an *implementation plan* to protect stream and wetland systems

Beneficial Uses

Protect beneficial uses associated with stream and wetland systems, including:

Water Quality
Enhancement



Flood Peak Attenuation/
Flood Water Storage



Wetland Habitat



(these uses were adopted by the Regional Water Board in 2003)

Water Quality Objectives

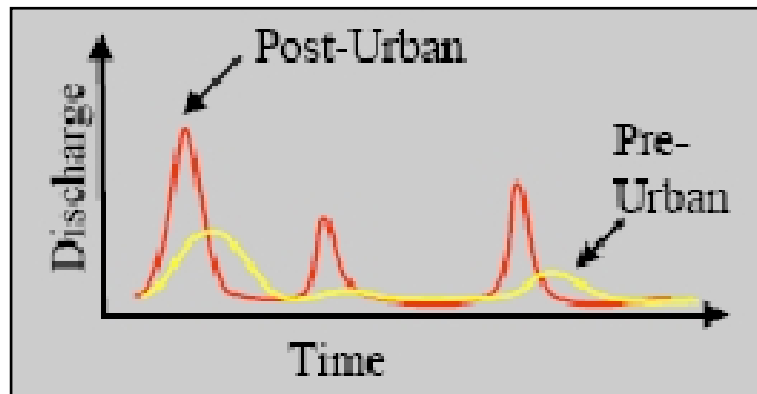
Establish new water quality objectives that protect the dynamic structure and function of stream and wetland systems:

- Hydrology
- Active Channel
- Floodplain
- Riparian Vegetation
- In-stream Habitat



Hydrology

Manage or maintain watershed infiltration capacity, and increase where possible, to reduce flood peak flows, increase stream base flows, and provide hydrologic conditions that support wetlands and riparian areas



Active Channel

Manage or maintain active channel shapes, slopes, and planforms to protect the dynamic balance between water discharge, valley slope, and sediment load that prevents excessive erosion and deposition of sediment



Floodplain

Protect floodplain functions, such as storage and conveyance of high flows; sediment storage; nutrient cycling; pollutant filtration; wildlife habitat; recharge of wetland and riparian areas; reduction of erosive forces; adequate space for natural adjustments of the active channel; and groundwater recharge



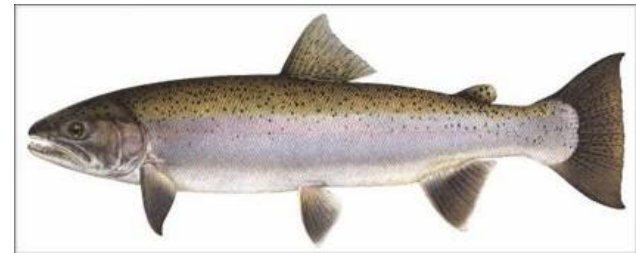
Riparian Vegetation

Establish, manage, or maintain riparian vegetation to the degree necessary to moderate stream temperatures; provide cover, food, and habitat for aquatic and terrestrial communities; filter pollutants; store sediment; and prevent destabilizing erosion



Instream Habitat

Provide substrate characteristics, food supplies, and water levels necessary to support all life stages of aquatic fauna



Implementation Plan

Discharges Regulated under the Policy

To protect beneficial uses and achieve water quality objectives, the policy will regulate discharges that impact stream and wetland systems

Types of activities that may be regulated include:

- In-channel activities
- Wetland disturbance
- Riparian area disturbance
- Floodplain development
- Stormwater and runoff management
- Others

Implementation Plan

Guidance on Policy Application

- Streams: identify functions and beneficial uses of streams (including intermittent and ephemeral)
- Wetlands: clarify differences between state and federal wetland jurisdiction and provide methodology to identify wetlands that do not meet federal criteria
- Riparian Areas: provide methodology to identify the riparian areas that provide water quality functions and support beneficial uses

Implementation Plan

General Policy

Provide flexibility for different watershed conditions through a reasonable planning and review process:

1. Avoid impacts to stream and wetland systems if possible
2. Minimize unavoidable impacts through appropriate management measures
3. Mitigate remaining impacts to protect beneficial uses

Implementation Plan

Nonpoint Source Policy Compliance

The State Water Board requires that all nonpoint source discharges be regulated under:

- Prohibitions;
- Waste Discharge Requirements; or
- Conditional Waivers of Waste Discharge Requirements

Implementation Plan

Potential Implementation Mechanism: Prohibitions

Prohibit certain types of discharges to stream and wetland systems

Potential Examples:

- No discharge of stormwater that leads to destabilizing erosion
- No clearing of riparian vegetation that results in discharge of heat (solar radiation) to waters and leads to adverse increase in temperature

Implementation Plan

Potential Implementation Mechanism: Performance Criteria (including WDRs)

Integrate performance criteria into existing
Regional Water Board permits and programs:

- WDRs
- 401 certifications
- THP reviews
- CEQA reviews
- WDR waivers
- NPDES permits
- TMDL implementation
- Grants

Implementation Plan

Potential Implementation Mechanism: Performance Criteria (continued)

Potential Examples:

- Establish a functioning riparian corridor
- Prevent excessive erosion and deposition in stream channels

Implementation Plan

Potential Implementation Mechanism: Conditional Waiver of WDRs

- Allow local agencies, dischargers, or watershed groups to develop alternative implementation plans that meet stream and wetland system protection goals
- Activities covered under a plan approved by the Regional Water Board would receive a conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements

Public Participation Opportunities

Project Task	Target Date (subject to change)
Meetings with Interested Stakeholders	Ongoing
Public Scoping Meetings	May 2006 ✓
Public Scoping Meetings	November 2006 ✓
Public Staff Report Workshops (Release of Draft Amendment Language)	April to May 2007
Public Review and Comment Period	May to June 2007
Public Adoption Hearing	September 2007

For Further Information

Contact Bruce Ho at (707) 576-2460 or
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Visit the Policy website at:
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/
programs/basinplan/swspp.html](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/programs/basinplan/swspp.html)

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Public Comments

CEQA Scoping Environmental Factors

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
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Potentially Impacted Programs

- Basin Plan
- WDRs
- 401 certs
- TMDLs
- CEQA review
- Prohibitions
- WDR waivers
- NPDES permits
- THP review
- Grants

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