

## Shasta River TMDL Update for Ranchers

The Shasta River is listed as impaired under the Federal Clean Water Act due to elevated stream temperatures and low dissolved oxygen levels. The Shasta River TMDL contains specific actions for landowners to take to reduce stream temperatures and to increase dissolved oxygen levels so salmon and steelhead trout can once again thrive in the watershed. The TMDL has many requirements for land owners and managers operating within the Shasta River watershed whose activities can impact water quality. The requirements specific to ranching include protecting sensitive areas near streams by limiting livestock access, planting trees to provide shade and maintaining a sufficient vegetative buffer to prevent fine sediment and nutrients from entering streams. For irrigators, it is important to prevent tailwater return flows from entering streams, since introducing harmful nutrients and warm water can cumulatively affect temperature and dissolved oxygen levels. Water diverters should employ management practices to conserve water and to increase dedicated cold water instream flows. The Regional Water Board encourages landowners to develop ranch management plans and to obtain assistance from the Shasta Valley RCD and Natural Resource Conservation Service or the Nature Conservancy.

### **Reporting Requirements**

For irrigators with tailwater discharges or landowners conducting grazing adjacent to streams, the TMDL requires annual progress reporting, beginning January 2008. Water diverters must submit reports by January 2009 and again by January 2010. These reports must be submitted to the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board and can be submitted individually or collectively.

The Regional Water Board is developing a checklist to assist landowners with their reporting requirements and is working with the Department of Fish and Game to combine reporting requirements with those required under the pending Incidental Take Permit.

### **Conditional Waiver for Ranchers**

Under California's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program (NPSP), ranching and other nonpoint source activities that result in the discharge of pollutants or waste (such as sediment, nutrients or increased water temperatures) must be regulated under a permit (Waste Discharge Requirements or a waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements). The TMDL includes a conditional waiver for landowners who chose to participate in ongoing collaborative programs and implementation of the Shasta River TMDL. Under the NPSP, those who choose not to participate may have to apply for an individual permit by submitting a Report of Waste Discharge and a filing fee to the Regional Water Board.

For Additional information regarding the Shasta River TMDL contact Andy Baker at (707) 576-2690 or [abaker@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:abaker@waterboards.ca.gov) or visit the Water Board website at:

<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/programs/tmdl/shasta/shasta.html>