

# Gualala TMDL Implementation Permit & Action Plan Development

## April 2025 Update

You are receiving this email because you have signed up on the North Coast Water Board's email distribution list to receive regular updates on the Gualala River Watershed Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Permit and Action Plan development projects. These projects are separate but related efforts to improve stream health and water quality in the Gualala River watershed.

Second Quarter 2025 Update:

### **Watershed Assessment and Recovery Unit**

The North Coast Water Board's new Watershed Assessment and Recovery Unit (WARU) – formed to support the recovery of sediment and temperature impaired watersheds in the North Coast Region, with an initial focus in the Gualala River watershed – has launched a new webpage that can be found at: [https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/waru/](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/waru/). The WARU team will use this webpage to post updates on the development of a permitting program for private, rural roads in the Gualala River watershed.

The WARU team has recently filled one of two remaining positions with the hiring of Matt Graves, Engineering Geologist formerly in the North Coast Water Board 's Planning Unit. The team will be fully staffed this month with the addition of its fourth staff member.

### **Permit Development**

In developing a permit to address sediment pollution from rural roads in the Gualala River watershed, WARU staff are currently focusing on (1) contract development, (2) community outreach, (3) environmental analysis development, and (4) permit framework development.

1) Contract development: Staff are developing two contracts to support the evaluation of current watershed conditions, such as land use, road networks and densities, and forest landscapes, outreach and engagement activities, and implementation of the forthcoming permit.

2) Community outreach: Staff are in the process of initiating outreach with landowners, interested parties, California Native American Tribes, and other members of the community. The North Coast Water Board's contractor will also support ongoing outreach and public engagement.

3) Environmental analysis development: Staff are working on an environmental study to meet the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This law ensures that government agencies consider how projects, such as permits, might affect the environment before they are approved. The study evaluates how projects could impact things like water quality, cultural resources, wildlife, and noise levels. The public can be involved in this process by reviewing and commenting on draft reports when available. The first chance for public input will be this summer when an initial study of potential environmental impacts of permit issuance will be available for a 30-day review period.

4) **Permit framework development:** By the end of June of this year, the North Coast Water Board will draft a “proposed permit framework” that outlines high-level concepts guiding development of the permit. This is the first step in developing a draft permit.

WARU staff have developed a flyer that describes key information related to the project. The flyer can be found at:

[https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/waru/pdf/flyer\\_0425.pdf](https://waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/waru/pdf/flyer_0425.pdf)

### **Action Plan Development**

North Coast Water Board staff are currently drafting the Gualala River TMDL Action Plan and the Staff Report supporting the Action Plan. The Action Plan will implement the Gualala River Sediment TMDL, which was established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). The North Coast Water Board will issue the draft Action Plan and Staff Report for public review and comment in June 2025. A public workshop will be scheduled for August 2025 and an adoption hearing is expected in December 2025.

### **Future Quarterly Updates**

North Coast Water Board staff will continue to provide quarterly updates throughout the development of the projects. Please forward this email and/ or direct interested individuals or groups to subscribe at the following link for timely project information:

[https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=r1\\_tmdl\\_gualala\\_river\\_watershed](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?topic_id=r1_tmdl_gualala_river_watershed)

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to know how to get further involved, please feel free to contact the following staff:

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