

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
SAN FRANCISCO BAY REGION

STAFF SUMMARY REPORT: Nicole Fairley
MEETING DATE: April 14, 2021

ITEM: 5.B

Sonoma County Water Agency, Stream Maintenance Program, Sonoma County –
Amendment of Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Quality Certification Order No. R2-2020-0034 to add the Sonoma County Water Agency, Stream Maintenance Program

DISCUSSION

The attached Tentative Order (Appendix A) would amend Order No. 2020-0034, waste discharge requirements and water quality certification for stream maintenance programs in Napa, San Mateo, and Contra Costa counties, to incorporate the Sonoma County Water Agency's (Sonoma Water's) Stream Maintenance Program (program).

The Board adopted an order in July 2019 to authorize the Napa County Flood Control and Water Conservation District's program (Order No. 2019-0023). The Napa Order provides a multi-year authorization for certain routine stream maintenance activities and was written to allow other routine stream maintenance programs to be added via amendment. In December 2020, the Board amended the order to add the San Mateo and Contra Costa programs (Order No. 2020-0034). This item would add Sonoma Water's program.

The Tentative Order would authorize Sonoma Water to perform routine stream maintenance activities, consistent with their Stream Maintenance Program Manual, and would continue without changing the previous authorization for Napa, San Mateo, and Contra Costa's programs. Although the programs are similar in that each has been designed to perform maintenance in a manner most protective of beneficial uses, each program has been tailored to address local conditions and needs as described in the program's Manual.

Management of sediment and vegetation in streams, including flood control channels, is a primary program activity. Each program's Manual describes authorized routine stream and related maintenance activities, including: vegetation management, sediment removal, culvert maintenance or replacement, and other minor maintenance, conducted to provide flood protection and maintain the functional integrity and operational capacity of the streams and other program elements. A key aspect of each program is to maintain channel conveyance capacity and other facility functions based on quantitative assessments, while protecting natural resources with avoidance and minimization measures. This stream maintenance approach is expected to result in long-term benefits to riparian and aquatic habitat by identifying those areas where routine maintenance is necessary, and areas where stream habitat can be enhanced or restored, and using quantitative analysis to better frame needed maintenance and identify opportunities for restoration.

While each program that would be authorized by the Tentative Order is designed to minimize impacts resulting from maintenance activities, some impacts will be unavoidable. Each program will mitigate for these impacts through a variety of approaches including invasive plant management, riparian restoration through planting or other in-stream enhancements, and coordinating with local watershed management partners to implement stream restoration and enhancement projects. The Tentative Order will improve efficiency by reducing the number of separate permits needed for maintenance while allowing the counties to better plan and implement necessary maintenance activities and develop more-comprehensive and sustainable mitigation projects.

The Tentative Order was circulated for a 30-day public comment period ending on March 19, 2021. Staff received no comments on the Tentative Order.

APPENDICES:

Attached:

A. Tentative Order

Available on FTP Site:***

- B. Order Att. A: Napa County Stream Maintenance Manual and Attachments
- C. Order Att. B: Sediment Monitoring and Reporting Program
- D. Order Att. C: Monitoring and Reporting Schedule
- E. Order Att. D: San Mateo County Routine Maintenance Manual
- F. Order Att. E: Contra Costa County Routine Maintenance Manual
- G. Order Att. F: Sonoma County Water Agency Stream Maintenance Manual

*****To access these appendices on the FTP, go to: <https://ftp.waterboards.ca.gov/>
Login by entering the following information:**

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Go to folder entitled "2021Apr_Item5b_SMP_RMP_TO"