



North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY, BOARD WORKSHOP, AND PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF REVISIONS TO A BASIN PLAN AMENDMENT REGARDING THE RUSSIAN RIVER WATERSHED PATHOGEN TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL)

I. Background

Over the course of the last several years, the North Coast Water Board adopted two resolutions to amend the Basin Plan specific to the Russian River watershed:

- [Resolution No. R1-2019-0038](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/pdf/220120/19_0038_Russian_River_Watershed_Pathogens_TMDL_Amendment_Resolution.pdf)
([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/pdf/220120/19_0038_Russian River Watershed Pathogens TMDL Amendment_Resolution.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/pdf/220120/19_0038_Russian_River_Watershed_Pathogens_TMDL_Amendment_Resolution.pdf)), adopted August 14, 2019
 - Editorial amendment to update the *Policy on the Control of Water Quality with Respect to On-Site Waste Treatment and Disposal Practices Specific to the Russian River Watershed, Including the Laguna de Santa Rosa* (Editorial Amendment).
 - *Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load* (Action Plan, 2019)
- [Resolution No. R1-2021-0055](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/pdf/211210/RR_21_0055_Russian_River_TMDL_Resolution.pdf)
([https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/pdf/211210/RR_21_0055_Russian River TMDL_Resolution.pdf](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/pdf/211210/RR_21_0055_Russian_River_TMDL_Resolution.pdf)), adopted December 2, 2021
 - *Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load and a Discharge Prohibition* (Action Plan, 2021).

Both the 2019 and 2021 Action Plans address Russian River watershed fecal indicator bacteria impairments and protections by establishing a total maximum daily load (TMDL), a fecal waste discharge prohibition, and programs of implementation for multiple pathogenic waste sources including; wastewater treatment facilities, sanitary sewer systems, recycled water, land application of biosolids, municipal stormwater runoff, dairies, ranches and hobby farms, homeless encampments, and onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS).

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After concluding that there are benefits to revising the OWTS implementation program, the North Coast Water Board withdrew the Russian River Watershed Action Plan and Editorial Amendment from the State Water Board approval process that was initiated in January 2022. The revisions included: 1) greater reliance upon the *Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation, and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems* (statewide OWTS Policy); and 2) mechanisms to focus upon OWTS across the watershed that are not authorized under the OWTS Policy, such as failing systems, cesspools and holding tanks. This shift in approach would continue to provide a mechanism for OWTS compliance with the current Action Plan's fecal waste discharge prohibition, while focusing resources on the categories of OWTS with the highest risk of pathogen discharge across the watershed, rather than all OWTS within a smaller geographic area. The current Action Plan will retain the cesspool and holding tank prohibitions from the "Policy on the Control of Water Quality with Respect to On-Site Waste Treatment and Disposal Practices Specific to the Russian River Watershed, Including the Laguna De Santa Rosa" (Policy). The remainder of the Policy shall be deleted upon adoption of the current Action Plan.

II. Public Review and Comment Period

Notice is hereby given that the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water Board) opens a **45-day** public comment period regarding proposed revisions to the *Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed and Russian River Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load* and the *Staff Report for the Action Plan for the Russian River Watershed Pathogen Total Maximum Daily Load*. These documents are available on the [Russian River Pathogen TMDL webpage](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/). Strikeout-underline versions of the revised documents will be provided upon request. The North Coast Water Board will conduct a public workshop at the regularly scheduled Board meeting in April 2025 and will consider adopting an amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) reflecting those revisions at the June 2025 Board Meeting.

Comments can be made upon any part of the available documents. However, comments submitted during prior renditions of this TMDL project need not be resubmitted. Written comments must be received no later than **5:00 PM on May 8, 2025**. Send comments by selecting from the following methods:

- Email up to 15 megabytes to NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov and use the subject heading "Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL Comments"
- Follow [electronic submittal guidelines](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf) (https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf) for comments greater than 15 megabytes
- Fax to 707-576-2069

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- Mail or Hand Deliver to: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board,
Attention: Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL Update, 5550 Skylane
Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California 95403-1072

III. Public Workshop

Notice is additionally hereby given that the Regional Water Board will hold a public workshop, during the 45-day public comment period. During the public workshop Regional Water Board staff will present the proposed updates, followed by discussion between the Regional Water Board and staff. Oral and written comments from members of the public regarding on the proposed updates will be accepted. To ensure a productive and efficient workshop in which all participants have an opportunity to participate, oral presentations may be time limited and therefore submission of written comments to accompany oral presentations is encouraged. The workshop will be held during the following Regional Water Board meeting:

Public Board Workshop

Board Meeting Date: **April 1 or 2, 2025**
Board Meeting Start Time: **9:00 A.M.**
Location: **David C. Joseph Board Room**
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

A quorum of Regional Water Board members will be present at the public board workshop; however, no board action will be taken. Although no formal decisions will be made, the Board may provide general direction to staff. The Regional Water Board will consider adopting the proposed updates to the staff report and Russian River Watershed Pathogen TMDL Action Plan, by adopting a Resolution at a subsequent meeting currently scheduled for June 12 or 13, 2025.

Additional information about the workshop, including meeting procedures and information on making presentations, can be found on the Regional Water Board's website.

IV. Public Hearing

Notice is additionally hereby given that the Regional Water Board will hold a public hearing to receive oral public input and comments on the proposed Russian River Pathogen TMDL Action Plan and staff report updates. Following the public hearing, the Regional Water Board will consider adoption of the staff report and Action Plan revisions, by Resolution. The public hearing and consideration of adoption meeting will be held as follows:

Public Hearing and Consideration of Adoption Meeting

Board Meeting Date: **June 12 or 13, 2025**
Board Meeting Start Time: **9:00 A.M.**
Location: **David C. Joseph Board Room**

**5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403**

At this time this board meeting is scheduled to be held at the North Coast Water Board's office in Santa Rosa; video and teleconference participation may also be provided. Please check the Regional Water Board's website for updates to meeting location, date, and format.

Additional information on the hearing and consideration of adoption meeting can be found at the Regional Water Board's website. Any person desiring to receive future notices about changes to the date, time, location, or format of the public workshop and hearing should sign up for the e-mail list, as described below. Updates will also be posted on the Regional Water Board's website.

V. Scope of Public Comments Solicited, Workshop, and Hearing

Interested persons may present relevant written and oral comments and evidence on the Basin Plan amendment (i.e. Action Plan) and Staff Report. Please be advised that comments or evidence concerning the appropriateness of any previously adopted Basin Plan amendment elements are not relevant to this action and will not be responded to other than directing the commenter back to previous responses.

VI. Availability of Documents and Information

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's website:

[Homepage | California North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/)
(<https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/>)

Russian River Watershed TMDLs webpage:

[Russian River | California North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/)
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/russian_river/)

Electronic Submittal Required for Correspondence and Reports to the Regional Board:

[Electronic Submittal Required for Correspondence and Reports to the Regional Board](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf)
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/publications_and_forms/available_documents/pdf/2014/ECM_Letter-Guidelines.pdf)

Email List Subscriptions:

[Email List Subscription Form | North Coast Regional Board \(ca.gov\)](https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.html)
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg1_subscribe.html)

VII. Potential Future Changes to Noticed Items

Any changes regarding the noticed items will be posted on the Regional Water Board's website and noticed through the email distribution list. Any person desiring to receive future notices must sign up for the email distribution list by assessing the Email List

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Subscription Form webpage and subscribing to the “Russian River TMDL” email list.

VIII. North Coast Water Board Contact Information

Please direct questions about these Basin Plan Amendments to Lisa Bernard, Senior Environmental Scientist, Planning Unit Supervisor at (707) 576-2677 or Lisa.Bernard@waterboards.ca.gov ; Charles Reed, Supervising Water Resource Control Engineer, Point Source and Groundwater Protection Division Chief at (707) 576-2752 or Charles.Reed@waterboards.ca.gov, or Nathan Jacobsen, Senior Staff Counsel at (916) 341-5181 or Nathan.Jacobsen@waterboards.ca.gov.

Any person who is disabled and requires special accommodations to participate in the North Coast Water Board’s meetings and hearings should contact Deidre Wilkerson at Deidre.Wilkerson@waterboards.ca.gov at least three days before the scheduled event.