



North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Notice of Preparation

TO: State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Parties, and Organizations

FROM LEAD AGENCY: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A Santa Rosa, CA 95403

SUBJECT: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the Proposed General Waste Discharge Requirements for Commercial Agricultural Operations in the Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds

Notice Date: January 31, 2025

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT SCOPING
MEETING FOR
GENERAL WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR
COMMERCIAL AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS IN THE
SCOTT RIVER AND SHASTA RIVER WATERSHEDS**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN That the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) as the Lead Agency, is planning to prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Div. 6, Chap. 3).

Project Title: General Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) for Commercial Agricultural Operations in the Scott River and Shasta River Watersheds (Scott and Shasta Order).

Project Location: The proposed project is an irrigated lands General WDRs Order which will apply to existing and future specific agricultural operations (a parcel or parcels under the same ownership, each of which has been developed to conduct actions to produce agricultural products including but not limited to livestock, forage, alfalfa, and grain) in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds. The Scott and

HECTOR BEDOLLA, CHAIR | VALERIE QUINTO, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Shasta Order would apply to Agricultural Operations where the total property held by the discharger that is under active cultivation, irrigation, or grazing is greater than 100 acres; or agricultural operations (including tillage, livestock grazing, and cultivation) occur adjacent or within the riparian zone or wetlands; or the discharger is a member of an irrigation district, water user association, or other company organized to convey and deliver water for agricultural beneficial use, including but not limited to unincorporated associations; or discharger's agricultural water is derived from overlying or appropriative groundwater rights; or the method of irrigation results in a discharge of irrigation tailwater, or any parcel within an existing or new Agricultural Operation that is deemed by Regional Water Board staff to discharge waste that could affect water quality.

The attached map (Figure 1) shows the distribution of agricultural operations in the Scott River and Shasta River watersheds.

Project Summary: The proposed project consists of the Regional Water Board establishing General WDRs for specific Agricultural Operations to control discharges of sediment, stormwater runoff, and irrigation tailwater originating from Agricultural Properties located within the project boundaries shown in Figure 1. The General WDRs will also control activities that impact riparian health and function as well as activities that affect controllable anthropogenic factors that impact water quality as described in the Scott River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for sediment and temperature and the Shasta River TMDL for temperature and dissolved oxygen. Agricultural Operations have the potential to discharge pollutants to surface water and groundwater from stormwater and irrigation runoff, the application of pesticides and fertilizer, erosion of sediment, and removal and suppression of riparian vegetation. The proposed Scott and Shasta Order will require Dischargers to assess, plan, and implement a suite of site-specific actions and best management practices (BMPs) targeted towards controlling discharges from Agricultural Operations including their:

- Management and maintenance of streamside riparian vegetation
- Actions taken within the designated Riparian Zone
- Irrigation activities that result in excess applied water discharging to surface water
- Irrigation activities that result in disconnection of surface flow in waterbodies
- Irrigation activities that result in reductions in cold water spring flow and/or instream accretions of groundwater that support surface flow
- Management of bed, bank, and channel that may result in discharges of sediment to surface water
- Management of rural roads that may result in discharges of sediment to surface water

Key elements of the Scott and Shasta Order include the following:

- Irrigation, Nutrient, and Pesticide Management for Surface Water Protection
- Riparian Zone Management for Surface Water Protection
- Sediment and Erosion Control for Surface Water Protection
- Irrigation, Nutrient, and Pesticide Management for Groundwater Protection
- Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

The project is described in more detail under the Project Description section below and in the attached Initial Study.

Purpose of the Notice of Preparation: This Notice of Preparation (NOP) serves to:

- 1) Solicit information on the scope of the environmental analysis for the proposed project,
- 2) Notify the public and regulatory agencies that the Regional Water Board will prepare a draft EIR to assess potential adverse environmental impacts that may result from implementing the proposed project, and
- 3) Describe potential adverse environmental impacts of the project.

SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN COMMENTS

The Regional Water Board is requesting comments from the public and public agencies on the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. For public agencies, the Regional Water Board is interested in your views as to the scope and content of the environmental information, which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities, if any, in connection with the proposed project. Public agency responses and comments, as well as general public comments, must be postmarked or sent electronically within the 30-day comment period listed in this notice. Please send your comments to the Regional Water Board, as directed below, along with the name of a contact person, if you are a public agency. In order to be fully considered, written comments focusing on the issues related to the environmental analysis for the proposed project must be received by **5:00 pm on Monday, March 3, 2025**.

Comments can be sent electronically to Elias.Scott@waterboards.ca.gov

Written comments should be sent to the address below or by fax to (707) 523-0135.

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403 Attn: Elias Scott

SCOPING MEETING

In order for the public and regulatory agencies to have an opportunity to submit oral comments on the scope of the EIR, a scoping meeting will be held during the 30-day NOP scoping period.

The purpose of a scoping meeting is to seek input from public agencies and members of the public on the range of project actions, alternatives, reasonably foreseeable methods of compliance, significant impacts to be analyzed, cumulative impacts if any, and mitigation measures that will reduce impacts to a less than significant level as part of the development of the proposed Scott and Shasta Order; and to eliminate from detailed study issues found not to be important. Scoping may also assist in resolving concerns of affected federal, state, and local agencies, the proponent of the action, and other interested persons. Early public involvement assists Regional Water Board staff in refining the scope of the project and determining the range of environmental information and potential impacts the proposed project might have on the various categories of environmental resources such as water quality or geologic stability.

One hybrid scoping meeting will be conducted in-person meeting and virtually (via Zoom). The meeting will include a presentation about the draft Scott and Shasta Order and potential adverse environmental impacts associated with implementation of the permit. Agencies and the public will have the opportunity to provide oral comments during the CEQA scoping meeting and/or by submitting written comments any time during the 30-day scoping period.

MEETING INFORMATION:

Wednesday February 26, 4:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.

**Miner's Inn Convention Center
122 E. Miner Street
Yreka, CA 96097**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://waterboards.zoom.us/j/98392396608>

Meeting ID: 983 9239 6608

Passcode: 545813

Call-in Number: 1-669-900-9128

Meeting ID: 983 9239 6608

Passcode: 545813

Agencies and the public will be able to provide oral comments directly through the online platform or by calling the number listed above.

Following the meetings, staff will review written and oral comments in preparation of the draft CEQA document, which will be released for public review. All CEQA Scoping comments received will be included in the final administrative record for this proposed Scott and Shasta Order.

Accessibility

Anyone requiring special accommodations, including language interpretation services, are requested to call (916) 322-4265 by **February 12, 2025**. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf users may contact the California Relay Service at (800) 735-2929 or voice line at (800) 735-2922.

Project Description

The project involves the development of General WDRs for the control of discharges of pollutants and anthropogenic controllable factors that impact water quality identified in the Scott River and Shasta River TMDLs, including but limited to sediment, stormwater runoff, riparian vegetation health, irrigation efficiency, and irrigation tailwater discharges from Agricultural Operations in the Scott and Shasta watersheds. The purpose of the project is to facilitate compliance with water quality related requirements for discharges associated with Agricultural Operations to ensure the maintenance, protection, and restoration of beneficial uses related to waters of the state.

The project proposes to regulate discharges from Agricultural Operations to implement the Statewide Nonpoint Source (NPS) Policy, the Statewide Antidegradation Policy, and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan). The proposed Scott and Shasta Order would require implementation of BMPs and/or other treatment technologies to control waste (or pollutant) discharges to surface waters and groundwater; identify, prioritize, and implement BMPs treating sediment, agrochemical, and stormwater discharges; incentivize water conservation measures; and control riparian area vegetation management to achieve compliance with general and category-specific permit conditions. Additional project description information can be found in the attached Initial Study.

Potential Environmental Effects

The attached Initial Study provides an initial evaluation of potential environmental impacts from the proposed Scott and Shasta Order. The environmental analysis may determine that the proposed project would not impact or have significant impacts to many of these areas. However, if any significant adverse environmental impacts are identified through this environmental analysis, feasible mitigation measures to avoid and/or minimize the impacts will be identified and will be required as part of Scott and Shasta Order.

Project Alternatives

A reasonable range of potentially feasible project alternatives, in addition to the no project alternative, will be developed and evaluated in the EIR. The Regional Water Board will consider comments of responsible and trustee agencies and the public provided during the scoping period in the development of project alternatives.

Future Notices

Any change in the date or time of the scoping meeting will be publicly noticed on the Regional Water Board website and through the Project email list. Any persons desiring to receive future notice concerning the proposed Scott and Shasta Order must sign up for the Project email list. Please note, the Regional Water Board will provide future notifications through the Project email list and website.

To sign up for the Project (Scott and Shasta Order) email list, access the [North Coast Water Board Email List Subscription Page](#) at the web address listed below, expand the Total Maximum Daily Load(TMDL)” list and check the box for “Scott River – TMDL” and/or “Shasta River – TMDL”
(https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?qsp=north_coast)

Contact Information

Please direct questions about the Scott and Shasta Order to Elias Scott at (707) 576-2610 or via email at: Elias.Scott@waterboard.ca.gov.


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Date: 2025.01.31
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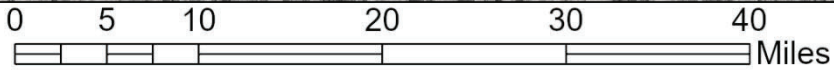
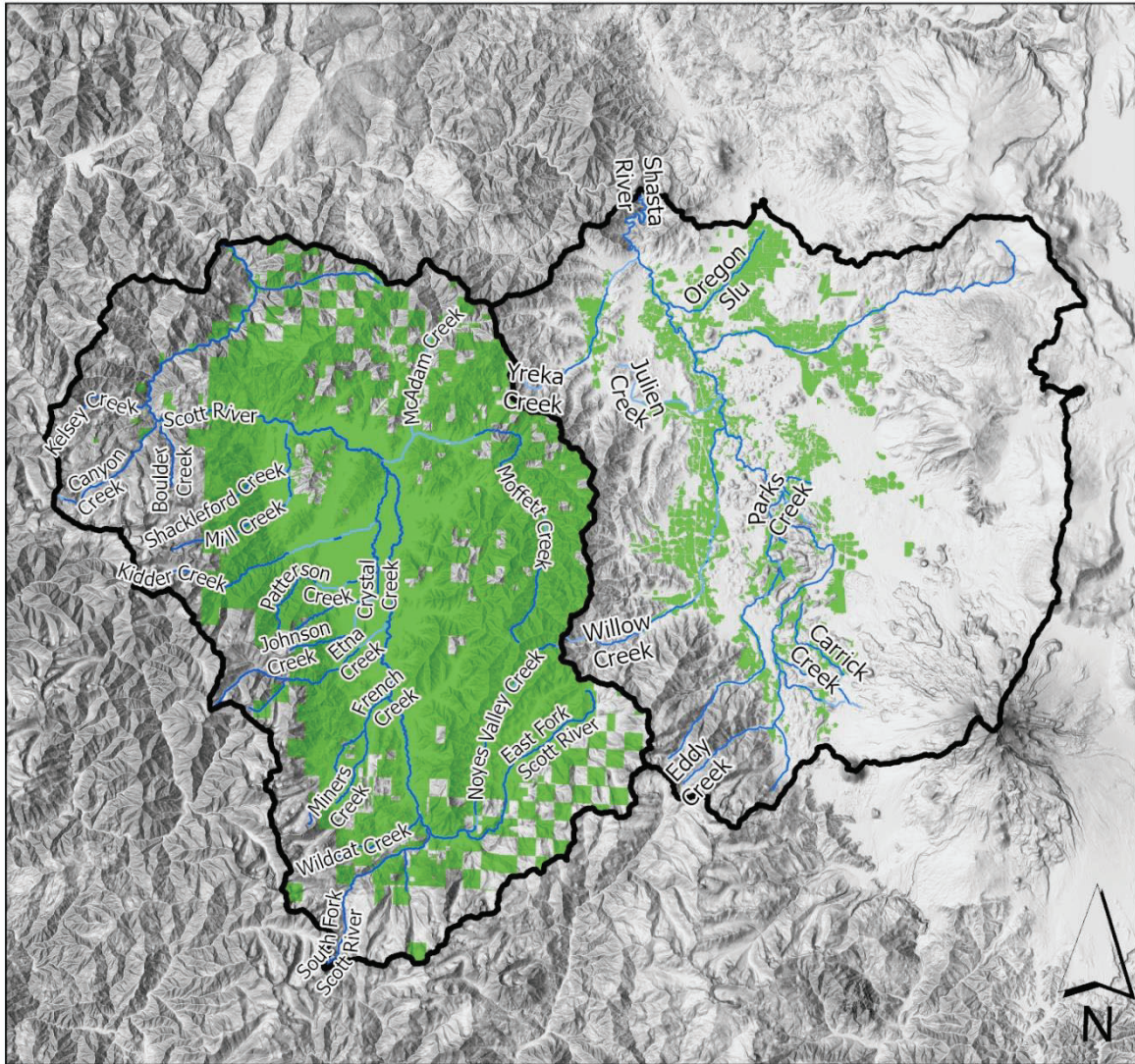
Water Boards

Valerie Quinto
Executive Officer

Attachments:

Figure 1 – Map of the Scott and Shasta Order Coverage Area

Attachment 1 – Initial Study



Scott and Shasta WDR
Project Area

Legend

- Scott Coverage Area
- Shasta Coverage Area

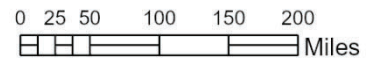


Figure 1: Map of the Scott and Shasta Order Coverage Area.