Print Form

Summary Form for Electronic Document Submittal

Form F

Lead agencies may include 15 hardcopies of this document when submitting electronic copies of Environmental Impact Reports, Negative Declarations, Mitigated Negative Declarations, or Notices of Preparation to the State Clearinghouse (SCH). The SCH also accepts other summaries, such as EIR Executive Summaries prepared pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15123. Please include one copy of the Notice of Completion Form (NOC) with your submission and attach the summary to each electronic copy of the document.

SCH #: _____

Project Title: WDRs for Nonpoint Source Discharges from Timber Harvesting by Humboldt Redwood Co., in Elk River

Lead Agency: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

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Project Location: Upper Elk River watershed, southeast of Eureka (*City*) Humboldt (*County*)

Project Decription (Proposed actions, location, and/or consequences).

The "Project" consists of adoption of draft Order No. R1-2019-0021, Waste Discharge Requirements For Nonpoint Source Discharges and Other Controllable Water Quality Factors Related to Timber Harvesting and Associated Activities Conducted by Humboldt Redwood Company (HRC), LLC In the Upper Elk River Watershed, Humboldt County (HRC's Elk River WDR) by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board). If adopted, the draft Order would revise water quality requirements established by adoption of Order No. R1-2016-0004 in November 2016 for nonpoint source waste discharges and other controllable factors related to timber harvesting and associated activities conducted by Humboldt Redwood Company, LLC (HRC), a timberland management company, in the Upper Elk River (UER) watershed, Humboldt County, California. Revisions to HRC's Elk River WDR are being made to ensure it incorporates the hillslope indicators and numeric targets and load allocation from the Action Plan for the Upper Elk River Sediment TMDL (TMDL Action Plan).
Documents submitted to the State Clearinghouse on March 14, 2019 include:
Draft Order R1-2019-0021 (file name: 190314_R1-2019-0021_draftOrder) and attachments
Subsequent Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study (file names: 190314_R1-0021_subs_MND_IS and 190314_R1-0021_subsMND)
Notice of Conformance (file name: 190312_R1-0021_NOC), Public Notice (file name 190312_R1-0021_NOC)

Identify the project's significant or potentially significant effects and briefly describe any proposed mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid that effect.

The draft Order would provide permit coverage to allow HRC to continue timber harvesting and related activities, such as road construction, reconstruction, maintenance, and use in the Upper Elk River watershed, a sediment impaired waterbody. Any of these activities are known to have the potential to result in discharge of sediment to watercourses and impact aquatic resources as well as create nuisance conditions for downstream communities. The Order incorporates and includes the following mitigation measures to reduce the potential for sediment discharge:

- Measures to Prevent Sediment Discharge;
  - o Forest Management;
  - o Riparian Zones Protection;
  - o Roads Management;
  - o Landslide Prevention;
  - o Wet Weather Restrictions; and
  - o Limiting Timber Harvesting Activities in High Risk Areas
- Inventory and Treatment of Existing Controllable Sediment Sources;
- Watershed Restoration Efforts; and
- Monitoring and Reporting Program.

If applicable, describe any of the project's areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by agencies and the public.

Beginning in 1986 when the Maxxam Corporation acquired the Scotia Pacific Company, Salmon Creek Corporation and Pacific Lumber Company (collectively referred to as Palco) in a hostile takeover, timber harvest rates in Elk River and some other Humboldt County watersheds increased approximately ten-fold. Following over a decade of significantly increased logging and protracted litigation, significant downstream sediment impacts had occurred. Notable impacts include increased flood frequency, loss of domestic and agricultural water supplies, and threatened county infrastructure (i.e. roads and bridges), threatened private infrastructure (i.e. home, buildings, septic systems, and farm land). These impacts damaged property, the environment, and various relationships. The contentious and adversarial nature of the controversy surrounding the effects of the Maxxam logging era have not completely subsided and continue to color discussions regarding environmental regulations in the Elk River Watershed.

Elk River residents, who's properties and lives have been directly and profoundly adversely affected by elevated sediment loads, and environmental advocacy organizations, are strongly opposed to any additional logging until beneficial uses in the impacted reach have been restored. Residents cite the abundance of both anecdotal evidence as well as analysis and conclusions from published reports to advocate for a complete moratorium on logging in the watershed.

In contrast, the two industrial timberland owners, HRC and Green Diamond Resource Company (Green Diamond), maintain that the restrictions on harvesting proposed in the draft Order are unnecessarily stringent and maintain that their current timber harvesting practices conducted pursuant to their Habitat Conservation Plans (HCP) and associated management plans implement appropriate harvest restrictions and Best Management Practices (BMPs), and no additional requirements for water quality can be supported.

It is generally thought that water quality protection from timber harvesting activates in the North Coast Region is improving, in particular with respect to prevention of sediment discharges and increases in water temperature. Improved water quality protection is also likely due to increasing awareness of existing water quality impairments from past activities and acceptance of management practices designed to reduce sediment and temperature impacts by state regulators, foresters, consultants, land owners, land managers, and timber operators.

Provide a list of the responsible or trustee agencies for the project.

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
California Geological Survey
National Marine Fisheries Service
United States Department of Fish and Wildlife
State Water Resources Control Board