



April 13, 2022

Mr. Erik Ekdahl, Deputy Director
Division of Water Rights
State Water Resources Control Board
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000

PROJECT: State Water Resources Control Board Order Dated December 10, 2021
SUBJECT: **TERM 4 WATER QUALITY MONITORING CONSULTATION**

Dear Mr. Ekdahl:

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) submitted a temporary urgency change petition on November 17, 2021, for modifications to water right Permits 12947A, 12949, 12950, and 16596 that would implement an alternative hydrologic index based on Lake Mendocino storage values starting December 11, 2021. On December 10, 2021, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order was issued approving Sonoma Water's petition.

Term 4 of the Order states that "...By April 22, 2022, Sonoma Water shall consult with the North Coast Water Board to discuss possible water quality impacts if critical or dry water supply conditions occur and whether additional water quality monitoring activities should be required to document water quality conditions in the Russian River. If any water quality issues of concern are observed from the continuous monitoring or water sampling required by this Order, Sonoma Water shall initiate earlier or additional consultation with the North Coast Water Board. The North Coast Water Board may also initiate additional consultation to discuss concerns based on available water quality information. Sonoma Water shall submit a summary report of consultation details and a description of proposed monitoring activities to the Deputy Director within one week of the consultation. Any necessary revisions to this Condition may be made following consultation with the North Coast Water Board and approval by the Deputy Director."

On Wednesday, April 6, 2022, Sonoma Water and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Board) staff met to discuss water quality monitoring. Attendees were Don Seymour, Pam Jeane, Jeff Church, Keenan Foster, Todd Schram, and Jessica Martini-Lamb from Sonoma Water; and Alydda Manglesdorf, Rich Fadness, Mike Thomas, Katherine Carter, and Bryan McFadin from the North Coast Board.

In anticipation of continued dry conditions through the remainder of the Order and into the summer dry season, Sonoma Water staff shared its proposal for water quality monitoring in the Russian River at the meeting. Sonoma Water staff proposed monitoring consistent with that conducted in 2021. Sonoma Water would continue to report water quality conditions recorded at the US Geological Survey (USGS) stream gages (Johnson's Beach, Hacienda, Digger Bend, Jimtown, Cloverdale, Hopland, and East Fork Russian River at Calpella) on the mainstem Russian River. Sonoma Water would deploy datasondes at 5 stations in the Russian River Estuary (Russian River at Patty's Rock, Willow Creek, Russian River at Freezeout Creek, Russian River at Brown's Pool, and Austin Creek) and at 2 stations in the mainstem Russian River (Russian River at Pieta Creek and East Fork Russian River below Coyote Valley Dam).

Sonoma Water staff also proposed to complete weekly grab sampling in the Russian River estuary for nutrients, chlorophyll a, turbidity, and bacteria at the Patterson Point, Monte Rio, and Vacation Beach stations. Mainstem Russian River grab sampling is proposed for the same constituents on a bi-weekly basis at Syar Vineyards, Jimtown, Cloverdale, Hopland, East Fork Russian River, and Calpella.

Bi-weekly algae sampling is proposed to be the same as the 2021 monitoring and occur at the Patterson Point, Syar Vineyard, Jimtown, and Hopland sites. Sonoma Water staff will also share reach-scale observations of cyanobacteria distribution and abundance with Regional Board staff to assist with the Board's coordination efforts.

Sonoma Water staff also proposed continued monitoring in Lake Mendocino. Bi-weekly monitoring would include vertical profiles and grab samples near the reservoir outlet structure, dependent on access to adequate boat launching at low reservoir storage elevations. Monitoring would include vertical profiles for temperature, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, specific conductance, and pH. Grab samples would be collected for nutrients, chlorophyll a, and turbidity in the hypolimnion, metalimnion, and epilimnion.

Water quality monitoring results from datasondes, grab sampling, and vertical profiles would be shared via the weekly hydrologic reports as results become available.

Regional Board staff shared concerns regarding reports of hydrogen sulfide odor in the upper Russian River downstream of Lake Mendocino during monitoring efforts in 2021. The possibility of low reservoir storage levels in Lake Mendocino being the source of the odor was discussed. Regional Board staff expressed their desire to better understand water quality conditions downstream of Lake Mendocino during times of extremely low storage in the reservoir. Sonoma Water field staff will note when hydrogen sulfide odor is observed and the request will also be made to National Marine Fisheries Service and California Department of Fish and Wildlife staff in the weekly TUC coordination meetings. Regional Board staff did not request a change in monitoring approaches, but raised the issue ahead of potential low reservoir storage levels in the later dry season and so that participants in the weekly TUC meetings may anticipate discussing this issue further as needed, with additional monitoring of poor water quality during low reservoir storage levels a possible outcome.

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Sonoma Water staff plan to begin water quality monitoring, including installation of datasondes, in the coming weeks. Sonoma Water and Regional Board staff will continue to meet weekly, along with NMFS and CDFW, and have opportunity to discuss water quality monitoring results.

Please contact me should you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jessica Martini-Lamb". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jessica Martini-Lamb
Environmental Resources Manager

c: North Coast Board – Bryan McFadin, Alydda Manglesdorf, Rich Fadness, Mike Thomas, Katherine Carter
Sonoma Water – Don Seymour, Pam Jeane, Jeff Church, Keenan Foster, Todd Schram