



**Sonoma  
Water**

March 4, 2024

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

**Project:** State Water Resources Control Board Order Dated December 27, 2023  
**Subject:** Term 6 Water Quality Monitoring Consultation

Dear Mr. Ekdahl:

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) submitted a temporary urgency change petition on October 13, 2023, 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 January 1, 2024. On December 27, 2023, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order was issued approving Sonoma Water's petition.

Term 6 of the Order states that "...By March 1, 2024, Sonoma Water shall consult with the North Coast Water Board to discuss potential water quality impacts 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 monitoring required by Term 5, 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 each consultation meeting. If no additional consultation is necessary, Sonoma Water shall submit an explanation to the Deputy Director within one week after the conclusion of the effective period of the changes approved by this Order. Upon consultation with the North Coast Water Board, the Deputy Director may make any necessary revisions to Term 5."

On Monday, February 26, 2024, Sonoma Water and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (North Coast Water 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 Rich Fadness, Mike Thomas, Brendan Thompson, Katherine Carter, and Bryan McFadin from the North Coast Water Board.

Under the current Order, Russian River watershed hydrologic conditions are Normal and are anticipated to remain Normal for next couple of months. Existing water quality monitoring at permanent multiparameter U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) water quality sonde sites is ongoing. Deployment of seasonal multi-parameter water quality monitoring sondes and grab sampling will begin once river flows begin to decline and safe access to monitoring sites is available, likely in April or May.

Sonoma Water staff shared that its proposal for water quality monitoring in the Russian River would be very similar to the 2023 monitoring effort (Sonoma County Water Agency 2023<sup>1</sup>) at the meeting. 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 data sondes 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 (if access is limited due to sedimentation a new nearby location may be selected), 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 2023 monitoring and occur at the Patterson Point, Syar Vineyard, Jimtown, and Hopland sites. Sonoma Water staff continue an additional method added in 2023 at each site to monitor the cover and thickness of cyanobacterial mats that develop in cyanoHAB "generating areas." Sonoma Water staff will also continue to share reach-scale observations of cyanobacteria distribution and abundance with North Coast Water 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. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> Sonoma County Water Agency. 2023. Water Quality Monitoring Plan for the Russian River Estuary Management Project. July 2023.

North Coast Water Board staff mentioned their evaluation of Lake Mendocino turbidity issues, which may result in additional outreach. The group also discussed ongoing coordination regarding water quality conditions that can take place during the biweekly TUC meetings, and that these meetings can be a venue to identify if and when a next consultation meeting between Sonoma Water and North Coast staff is needed under the Order.

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

cc: North Coast Water Board - Bryan McFadin, Brendan Thompson, Rich Fadness, Mike Thomas, Katherine Carter  
Sonoma Water- Don Seymour, Pam Jeane, Jeff Church, Keenan Foster, Todd Schram, Chris Delaney

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