State of California
Regional Water Quality Control Board
North Coast Region

**Minutes of Meeting**
9:00 a.m., Thursday, October 1, 2026
Best Western Miner's Inn and Convention Center
122 E Miner St
Yreka, CA 96097

10:00 a.m., Friday, October 2, 2026
Fall Creek Fish Hatchery
19631 Copco Road
Hornbrook, CA 96044

# Thursday, October 1, 2026

**Video recordings of Board meetings (since 2/2019) are available at:**
Prior Board Meeting Video recordings (https://cal-span.org/)

**Audio recordings of Board meetings (11/2018 and before) are available at:**
Prior Board Meeting Audio recordings
(https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/board_info/board_meetings/)

i. **Pledge of Allegiance:** Chair Hart led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ii. **Roll Call and Introductions:**

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| Board Members present: | Alex Hart, Jake Mackenzie, Hector Bedolla, Dale Romanini, Molli Myers, |
| Regional Water Board staff present: | Valerie Quinto, Nathan Jacobsen Bayley Toft-Dupuy, Claudia Villacorta, Emma Cianfichi, Kason Grady, Justin McSmith, Matt St. John, Eli Scott, Katharine Carter, Chris Watt, Lisa Bernard (Zoom) Josh Curtis |

iii. **Board Member Reports:** No Board Member Report was made.

iv. **State Board Liaisons Report and Executive Officer Reports:** State Board Chair Joaquin Esquivel provided an update on the State Water Board's ongoing work to update the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The Sacramento/Delta component of the update is currently in final consideration, with adoption scheduled for October 28-29. The public comment period closed on September 18, and staff are reviewing comments before final Board action. The update completes more than a decade of work on revising Bay-Delta water quality standards.
Chair Esquivel noted that the plan includes two compliance pathways:

- A regulatory pathway based on unimpaired flow requirements.
- A voluntary agreement pathway centered on the Healthy Rivers and Landscapes Proposal, which combines additional water flows with significant habitat restoration efforts.

He emphasized that the approach may serve as a model for addressing water management challenges in other watersheds through a combination of regulatory standards and collaborative watershed solutions.
Chair Esquivel highlighted a co-management agreement signed on September 11 for the Clear Lake watershed. The Memorandum of Understanding brings together 12 state agencies, seven tribes, and two local governments to support shared watershed management. He noted the agreement as an important example of advancing co-management and co-governance with tribes while recognizing tribal sovereignty and the importance of collaborative stewardship of natural resources.
The State Water Board will host webinars on October 19 and October 26 regarding groundwater recharge and water rights. Topics will include:

- Procedures for obtaining temporary groundwater recharge permits.
- Opportunities for stakeholder input regarding challenges faced by water right holders and groundwater recharge project proponents.

Chair Esquivel noted the discussions are particularly timely as the state prepares for a potential El Niño year and seeks opportunities to increase groundwater recharge while protecting water quality, water quantity, and existing water rights.
Chair Esquivel reported ongoing water right curtailments in the Scott and Shasta River watersheds due to critically dry conditions. He noted concerns raised by tribes and advocacy groups regarding reduced streamflows, particularly in the Scott River, where extremely low snowpack contributed to significant drying of portions of the river. He

emphasized the need for continued work to better understand the relationship between groundwater pumping and streamflow depletion, and to balance water needs among agricultural users, aquatic resources, and tribal interests.
The State Water Board is scheduled to consider a Utility Wildfire General Order at its October 20 meeting. The proposed order is intended to implement requirements associated with 2018 legislation on wildfire mitigation planning by utilities. The order would function as both a Clean Water Act Section 401 certification and a waste discharge requirement for qualifying activities.
Chair Esquivel reported on progress toward improving access to safe drinking water throughout California, noting substantial reductions in the number of residents lacking access to clean drinking water. He explained that the State Water Board has launched a statewide Wastewater Needs Assessment to identify communities lacking adequate sanitation infrastructure and to inform future investment decisions.
Key points include:

- Assessment of communities dependent on septic systems that may impact groundwater quality.
- Identification of wastewater and sanitation needs statewide.
- Development of data-driven priorities for future infrastructure investments.
- An advisory group meeting is scheduled for October 30, with a final report anticipated in the coming year.

Chair Esquivel provided an update on the State Water Board's harmful algal bloom (HAB) work. A previously broader biostimulatory project has been refocused specifically on understanding HAB occurrences and their drivers.
The initiative aims to:

- Improve understanding of factors contributing to harmful algal blooms.
- Support development of water quality standards related to HABs.
- Address increasing HAB frequency associated with warming climate conditions.

Upcoming engagement opportunities include meetings with:

- Tribal representatives on October 15.
- Environmental and environmental justice organizations on October 23.
- Stormwater and wastewater dischargers on November 2.

Chair Esquivel concluded by recognizing the Regional Water Quality Control Board's leadership and partnership, particularly its work with tribes and early efforts to establish tribal beneficial use definitions. He expressed appreciation for the region's continued innovation and collaboration in addressing water quality and watershed management challenges.

- Executive Officer Valerie Quinto provided an update regarding turbidity issues associated with outflows from Coyote Valley Dam, which forms Lake Mendocino on the Russian River. Quinto reported that, on September 9, a draft investigative order was issued to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The purpose of the draft order is to require the Corps to provide information already required under the applicable Biological Opinion and to submit that information directly to the Regional Water Board.
- In addition, the draft order would require:
- Development and submission of a plume transport and dispersion work plan and study.
- Installation of one additional continuous turbidity monitoring location, supplementing the seven continuous turbidity monitoring sites currently required under the Biological Opinion.

Staff noted that the draft order is currently available for public review and comment, with the public comment period ending October 9.

v. **Board Chairs Report** No Chair's report was made.

vi. **Public Forum:** Comments were received from the following members of the public:

- Sean White
- Robert Klamt

Specific comments can be reviewed on Cal-Span's Prior Board Meeting Video recordings (http://cal-span.org/).

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes: July 23rd, 2026 and August 6th, 2026

**Motion:** Vice Chair Mackenzie moved to adopt the July 23rd, 2026 and August 6th, 2026 Board Meeting minutes; Board Member Bedolla seconded the motion; Chair Hart initiated a roll-call vote:

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| Bedolla | aye |
| Guisti | (absent) |
| Romanini | aye |
| Myers | Hãã (aye) |
| Mackenzie | aye |
| Hart | aye |

**Motion passed unanimously**

## Uncontested Items

Uncontested items may be removed at the request of any Board member or person. If an item is removed from the uncontested calendar for discussion, it will only be voted on at this meeting if no significant changes are made to the agenda item. Otherwise, the item will be continued to a subsequent board meeting to allow input from interested persons.

2. Rescission of Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R1-2023-0019 for the Nordic Aquafarms California, LLC and Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District (Justin McSmith)

   **Motion:** Vice Chair Mackenzie moved to adopt Resolution No. R1-2023-0019 for the Nordic Aquafarms California, LLC and Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District; Board Member Bedolla seconded the motion; Chair Hart initiated a roll-call vote:

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|---|---|
| Bedolla | aye |
| Giusti | (absent) |
| Romanini | aye |
| Myers | Hãã (aye) |
| Mackenzie | aye |
| Hart | aye |

**Motion passed unanimously**

## Information Items

3. Update on Outstanding National Resource Waters Project (Matt St. John)

   Climate Specialist Matt St John, CalTrout representative Redgie Collins and Pew Charitable Trust representative Andy Maggi presented an update on the Outstanding National Recourse Waters Project. The presentation included a project background, antidegradation policies and Outstanding National Resource Waters, Outstanding National Resource Waters in CA and across the U.S., Cedar and Elder Creek watersheds, anticipated components of the North Coast Outstanding National Resource Waters Project, why Outstanding National Resource Waters for North Coast Waters, and project milestones.

Staff responded to comments and questions from the Board.

Comments were received from the following members of the public (affiliations are listed as provided by the commenter):

- Angelina Cook- CA Sport Fishing Protection Alliance (CSPA)
- Regina Chichizola- Communities United for Water Protection
- Andy Colonna- CA Sport Fishing Protection Alliance (CSPA)
- Amber Jamieson- Environmental Protection Information Center
- Nick Joslin- Mt. Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center

4. North Coast Water Board and the Public Trust Doctrine (Nathan Jacobsen)

Nathan Jacobsen, Office of Chief Counsel, presented regarding the North Coast Water Boad and the Public Trust Doctrine. The presentation included an overview of the Public Trust Doctrine, history, purpose and scope, application of the Public Trust Doctrine and recent developments.

Staff responded to comments and questions from the Board.

Comments were received from the following members of the public (affiliations are listed as provided by the commenter):

- Regina Chichizola- Communities United for Water Protection

## Action Item

5. Public Hearing on Order No. R1-2026-0048 to consider for adoption the Short-Term Renewal of Order Nos. R1-2018-0018 and R1-2018-0019 Scott River and Shasta River TMDL Conditional Waivers of Waste Discharge Requirements (Eli Scott)

Chair Hart disclosed that she has recused herself from Items 5 and 6, left the dais, and Vice Chair Mackenzie began chairing the meeting.

Eli Scott, Senior Environmental Scientist, presented Order No. R1-2026-0048 Renewal of Order Nos. R1-2018-0018 and R1-2018-0019 Scott River and Shasta River TMDL Conditional Waivers of Waste Discharge Requirements. The presentation included a watershed overview, impairments, TMDL's, Action Plans, past programmatic approaches, need for renewal and proposed order, public review process, summary of public comment and responses, and staff recommendation.

Staff responded to comments and questions from the Board.

Comments were received from the following members of the public (affiliations are listed as provided by the commenter):

- Craig Tucker- Karuk Tribe
- David Webb- Friends of the Shasta River
- Priscilla Bear- Tribal peoples
- Tenayah Norris Gursaw- Communities United for Water Protection (CUWP)
- Sammi Jerry- CUWP
- Joe Jerry- Tribal member
- Angelina Cook- CA Sport Fishing Protection Alliance (CSPA)
- Daisy Schadlich- Save CA Salmon
- Ethan Brown- Larry Walker Assoc.
- Samuel Gensaw III- Yurok
- Bob Johnson- Johnson Ranch
- Scott Murphy
- Keiko Gomez- Tribal member
- Sari Sommarstrom
- Amber Jamieson- Environmental Protection Information Center
- Regina Chichizola- Communities United for Water Protection
- Nick Joslin
- Vivian Helliwell- Friends of the River and Fishing Vessel Corregidor
- Andy Colonna- CA Sport Fishing Protection Alliance (CSPA)

This order was amended to change the renewal to read in finding 21 to “as a result, this renewal of the 2018 Scott order and 2018 Shasta order will be for a renewal period of three years with the anticipation that they’ll be terminated consistent with the enrollment deadline of the adopted general WDR for similar activities in these watersheds”. The herby ordered was amended to read “herby ordered that the Scott River TMDL conditional waiver of waste discharge requirements and the Shasta River TMDL conditional waiver of waste is charge requirements are renewed until October 7$^{th}$, 2029.”

**Motion:** Board member Myers moved to adopt Order No. R1-2026-0048 Renewal of Order Nos. R1-2018-0018 and R1-2018-0019 Scott River and Shasta River TMDL Conditional Waivers of Waste Discharge Requirements. Board Member Bedolla seconded the motion; Vice Chair Mackenzie initiated a roll-call vote:

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|---|---|
| Bedolla | aye |
| Giusti | (absent) |
| Romanini | aye |
| Myers | Hãã (aye) |

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| Mackenzie | aye |
| Hart | (absent/recused) |

**Motion passed unanimously**

# Workshop

6. Workshop on Draft Waste Discharge Requirements for Agricultural Activities in the Scott and Shasta Watersheds and the associated Draft Environmental Impact Report (Eli Scott)

   Eli Scott, Senior Environmental Scientist, and Chris Watt, Senior Engineering Geologist, presented a Workshop on the Draft Waste Discharge Requirements for Agricultural Activities in the Scott and Shasta Watersheds and the associated Draft Environmental Impact Report. The presentation included in introduction a review of the draft Scott and Shasta Order, and review of the draft environmental impact report.

   Staff responded to comments and questions from the Board.

   Comments were received from the following members of the public (affiliations are listed as provided by the commenter):

   - Sarah Schaefer- Quartz Valley Indian Reservation
   - Matt Parker- Siskiyou County
   - David Webb- Friends of the Shasta River
   - Ryan Walker- Siskiyou County Farm Bureau
   - Sammi Jerry- CUWP
   - Brandon Fawaz- Siskiyou County Farm Bureau
   - Gary Black
   - Theodora Johnson
   - Regina Chichizola- Communities United for Water Protection
   - Amber Jamieson- Environmental Protection Information Center
   - Nick Joslin
   - Andy Colonna- CA Sport Fishing Protection Alliance (CSPA)

# Information Items

7. Executive Officer’s Report: No report at this time.

8. Board Member Requests for Future Agenda Items and Other Items of Interest *(Valerie Quinto)*

   Board Member Bedolla requested that the Board continue receiving updates regarding Coyote Valley Dam and ongoing coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

   He also requested follow-up information regarding concerns about aerial forest spraying, including clarification on whether spraying activities are being conducted by authorized entities with the necessary permits or by unauthorized contractors.

   Board Member Bedolla asked for information on the guidance and recommendations being provided by the Water Board to water treatment facilities in preparation for anticipated El Niño conditions. Specifically, he expressed interest in understanding what precautionary measures facilities are being advised to take to address potential impacts from increased rainfall, including whether wastewater treatment operators are adjusting operations or reducing storage levels in ponds and reservoirs where appropriate.

## Closed Session

9. The Board met in closed session to:

   d: Discuss significant exposure to litigation or initiated litigation in the following matters (Gov. Code, § 11126, subd.(e)); (Gov. Code § 11126, subd. (e)(2)(B)(i)):

   a. Humboldt Redwood Company LLC v. North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board; State Water Resources Control Board, Petition for Writ of Mandate and Complaint; Humboldt County Superior Court, Case No. CV 1901082 (Nov. 18, 2019.)
   b. Green Diamond Resource Company v. North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board; State Water Resources Control Board Real Party in Interest, Petition for Writ of Mandate and Complaint; Humboldt County Superior Court, Case No. CV 2000678 (July 8, 2020.)
   c. Humboldt Redwood Company and Green Diamond Resource Company v. California State Water Resources Control Board and North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, Humboldt County Superior Court, Case No. CV2000678, (September 24, 2021).

   There is no action to report on closed session.

**Meeting adjourned at 5:40 P.M.**

# Friday, October 2, 2026 – 10:00 a.m.

10. Field Trip to CA Department of Fish & Wildlife's Fall Creek Hatchery

    Board Members (Alex Hart, Jake Mackenzie, Hector Bedolla, Dale Romanini and Molli Myers), staff and members of the public visited the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife's Fall Creek Hatchery to observe and discuss the hatchery. The field trip was organized by staff member Justin McSmith.

11. Arrangements for Next Meeting and Adjournment

    9:00 a.m., Thursday, December 3rd, 2026, and
    9:00 a.m., Friday, December 4th, 2026

    Regional Water Quality Control Board
    David C. Joseph Room
    5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A
    Santa Rosa, CA 95403

**Meeting adjourned at 12:00 P.M.**