

Gualala Roads Assessment Order & Sediment TMDL Action Plan

Second Quarter 2026 Update

GUALALA ROADS ASSESSMENT ORDER

Recent Public Meetings

North Coast Water Board staff and the Sonoma Resource Conservation District (Sonoma RCD) recently hosted two community meetings to provide information on the developing Gualala Roads Assessment Order. Presentations addressed components of a typical road assessment, paths to completing assessments required by the order, and updates on the technical work conducted by the Sonoma RCD.

A selection of questions raised by meeting attendees (in **bold**) and North Coast Water Board responses (in *italics*) are included below. This summary does not capture all community discussions; it is intended only to give high-level responses to a selection of key concerns. For answers to additional questions, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) on the [Gualala Roads Program web page](#) or contact project staff identified in the Contact Information section below.

The responses below outline order concepts and do not represent final decisions. Concepts may change as staff continue internal deliberations and further input is received from the public. The North Coast Water Board will make final decisions only at adoption. Before then, draft order language will be available to the public once the draft order is released for review.

Q: Who will the order apply to?

A: The Gualala Roads Assessment Order will apply to landowners in the Gualala River Watershed who own 1,000 acres or greater.

The North Coast Water Board retains the authority to issue separate, individual Water Code section 13267 informational orders to other landowners if the North Coast Water Board's Executive Officer determines that roads on their properties pose a risk to water quality.

Q: When will landowners be required to complete road assessments and implement treatments?

A: Assessment requirements for landowners in the Gualala River Watershed will be included in the Gualala Roads Assessment Order. Treatment requirements will be included in a later regionwide roads order.

A compliance schedule for completing road assessments and road management and treatment plans will be included in the Gualala Roads Assessment Order. Staff are considering a timeframe of approximately three years for assessments and road treatment plan submission, with flexibility for landowners to request an alternative timeline for Executive Officer approval. Landowners in the Gualala who accept North Coast Water

Board-funded contract support will be subject to the same compliance schedule as those who conduct assessments independently.

Compliance schedules for the future regionwide roads order will be included in that order. Development of the regionwide roads order will occur through a separate public process, which is expected to begin this summer.

Q: What criteria will be used to determine who may serve as a “qualified professional” when conducting assessments for landowners?

A: North Coast Water Board staff are considering what criteria will be used to determine who may serve as a “qualified professional” when conducting assessments for order compliance. A balance is being sought between flexible requirements and demonstrable experience in sediment and erosion control. These details will be made available this summer when the draft order is circulated for public review.

Similar orders issued by the North Coast Water Board require plans designed to prevent and minimize sediment delivery to be developed by professionals who possess qualifications such as licensure as a Registered Professional Forester, Professional Geologist, or Professional Civil Engineer.

Q: How much contract funding is available to support road assessments for landowners?

*A: The North Coast Water Board has secured \$5 million in contract funding to support Gualala landowners. These funds are being used to (1) develop technical reports that will recommend assessment methodologies, (2) conduct community outreach, (3) provide technical trainings to landowners on road improvement techniques, and (4) conduct road assessments. To date, approximately \$3 million has been allocated for road assessment support. **Based on a preliminary analysis, staff expect the currently contracted funds noted above will be able to cover most of the assessments and report development for landowners subject to the order.***

Q: How will the \$5 million of contract funding be used to educate landowners?

A: The Sonoma RCD is contracted to conduct a series of technical trainings to guide and support landowners in erosion and sediment control concepts and implementing road maintenance techniques to reduce erosion and sediment delivery to streams. The Sonoma RCD and North Coast Water Board are currently identifying a timeline for providing these technical trainings. Details will be provided when available.

Q: Will landowners be provided a template for completing assessments on their own?

A: The Sonoma RCD is contracted to develop an Evaluation Methodology report for the North Coast Water Board. This report will recommend a road assessment protocol and will be available for landowner use. Similarly, the [California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual, Part X](#) provides example data forms and direction on conducting effective road assessments. In addition to these protocols, staff expect the order to allow landowners to propose an alternative assessment protocol for Executive Officer approval.

Timeline

A draft Gualala Roads Assessment Order will be made available for public review in summer 2026 in advance of a December 2026 adoption hearing of the North Coast Water Board. Specific dates for the review period and adoption hearing will be shared when available.

Upcoming Public Engagement Opportunities

North Coast Water Board staff continue to hold recurring staff office hours that serve as unstructured meetings during which members of the community are encouraged to share any questions or comments they may have about Gualala Roads Assessment Order. Details for upcoming office hours will be provided when available.

A third community meeting will be held at the Lake Sonoma Visitor Center on Thursday, June 18th, 2026, from 10:00 am – 12:00 pm. Additional details will be provided to email list subscribers when available.

GUALALA RIVER SEDIMENT TMDL ACTION PLAN ADOPTION

The North Coast Water Board adopted the Gualala Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan in February 2026. The Action Plan will be considered for approval by the State Water Resources Control Board in early 2027.

FUTURE QUARTERLY UPDATES

North Coast Water Board staff will continue to provide quarterly updates throughout the development of the projects. Please forward this email and/or direct interested individuals or groups to subscribe at the following link for timely project information:

https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/CAWRCB/subscriber/new?topic_id=r1_tmdl_gualala_river_watershed

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to know how to get further involved, please feel free to contact the following staff:

General Inquiries:

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Gualala Roads Assessment Order

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Gualala TMDL Action Plan

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You are receiving this email because you have signed up on the North Coast Water Board's email distribution list to receive regular updates on the Gualala River Watershed Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Action Plan and Roads Assessment Order development projects. These projects are separate but related efforts to improve stream health and water quality in the Gualala River Watershed.