

Gualala TMDL Action Plan Development January 2025 Update

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 Implementation Order Development projects.

First Quarter 2025 Update:

Action Plan Development

North Coast Water Board staff are currently drafting the Gualala River TMDL Action Plan and the Staff Report supporting the Action Plan. The Action Plan will implement the Gualala River Sediment TMDL, which was established by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA). The North Coast Water Board will issue for public review and comment on the draft Action Plan and Staff Report by June 2025.

Implementation Order Development

The North Coast Water Board has created a new unit – the *Watershed Assessment and Recovery Unit* – in the Planning and Stewardship Division. The purpose of the unit is to support the recovery of sediment and temperature impaired watersheds in the North Coast Region, with an initial focus on developing and implementing a permitting program for rural roads in the Gualala River Watershed. The new unit was facilitated by a budget change proposal submitted to the California legislature in 2023 to request three new staff positions – a Senior Engineering Geologist to oversee the unit and two Engineering Geologists – and five million dollars in contract funds to support program development and implementation in the Gualala River Watershed. The budget change proposal was approved in June 2024 and the State Water Resources Control Board approved the creation of the unit and transfer of two existing staff into the unit in August and October 2024, respectively.

Seasoned North Coast Water Board staff Maggie Robinson, Engineering Geologist formerly in the Southern Nonpoint Source and Forestry Unit, and Lance Le, Water Resources Control Engineer formerly in the Planning Unit, transitioned into the unit in October 2024. Devon Rabellino, formerly an Engineering Geologist in the Northern Nonpoint Source and Forestry Unit, was hired as the new supervisor for the unit in November 2024. Hiring of the two new Engineering Geologists is underway with a fully staffed unit expected soon. Staff in the unit will focus on 1) drafting a permit that will require the inventory, assessment, and prioritization of road treatments to control sediment sources, 2) engaging with interested parties and landowners and consulting with California Native American Tribes, 3) developing and managing a contract to apply funds to support watershed conditions evaluations and permit implementation, and 4) supporting the development of the Sediment Total Maximum Daily Load Action Plan for the Gualala River Watershed.

In spring 2025, staff will begin landowner and interested party engagement, issue consultation invitations to California Native American Tribes with ancestral territory in the Gualala River Watershed, and prepare a proposed permit framework document. In spring or summer 2026, staff will hold a public workshop during the public review period for the draft permit and supporting

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental analysis. In fall 2026, staff will propose the permit and CEQA environmental analysis to the North Coast Water Board for adoption.

Please contact Devon Rabellino at Devon.Rabellino@waterboards.ca.gov or (707) 576-2701 for questions related to the Watershed Assessment and Recovery Unit and its work.

Gualala River Watershed Monitoring Data Assessment

To assess instream aquatic habitat conditions in the Gualala River watershed since development of the Gualala River TMDL in 2001, North Coast Water Board staff conducted a statistical analysis of available instream monitoring data collected by the Gualala River Watershed Council (GRWC). The Gualala River Watershed Monitoring Data Assessment includes all data collected related to sediment and instream aquatic habitat conditions. The report, along with other relevant resources, can be found on the Gualala River TMDL project webpage here:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/tmdls/gualala_river/

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/CAWRRCB/subscriber/new?topic_id=r1_tmdl_gualala_river_watershed

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

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