

SONOMA CREEK SEDIMENT TMDL PROJECT PLAN

Waterbody: Sonoma Creek
Pollutant: Siltation/Sediment
Beneficial Uses: Cold freshwater habitat (COLD), fish migration (MIGR), preservation of rare and endangered species (RARE), fish spawning (SPWN), warm freshwater habitat (WARM), water contact recreation (REC1), noncontact water recreation (REC2)
Water Quality Objectives: Turbidity, sediment, suspended material, and settleable material
Receiving Water: San Pablo Bay
Watershed Location: North Bay, Sonoma County
Watershed Area: 170 square miles
TMDL Completion Date: June 2006
Contact: Sandia Potter, phone: (510) 622-2426, e-mail: smp@rb2.swrcb.ca.gov

Major Milestones, Products, and Completion Dates

Milestone/Product	Fiscal Year	Completion Date
Conduct First Public Meeting	02-03	November 2002
Management Measure Analysis	02-03	February 2003
Limiting Factors Studies Report	02-03	December 2003
Study Plan for Sediment Budget	03-04	September 2003
Sediment Budget Analysis	03-04	June 2004
Linkage Analysis & Numeric targets	03-04	April 2004
Preliminary TMDL Project Report	04-05	September 2004
Final TMDL Project Report	05-06	September 2005
Basin Plan Amendment	05-06	June 2006

Approach:

The Sonoma Creek TMDL will focus on defining current water quality problems related to native fish populations. Once the water quality problems and beneficial use impairments are better understood, the TMDL will focus on implementation to correct the impairment.

The initial phase of the TMDL effort has focused on stakeholder education and involvement and on securing funding to conduct necessary watershed assessment. We are currently processing contracts to conduct a limiting factors analysis. The Sonoma Ecology Center was awarded a Proposition 13 Grant to conduct a sediment budget analysis, and to implement several stream restoration and erosion control projects.

Problem Statement. We will identify physical, chemical, and biological factors influencing the decline of native fish populations in Sonoma Creek. The Problem Statement will explore the potential role of erosion and sedimentation in the decline in native fish populations and will identify sources of sediment and aspects of habitat reduction. Data collection and analysis will focus on characterizing channel and habitat conditions with respect to factors limiting populations of threatened and/or endangered native aquatic species.

Source Analysis. A sediment budget analysis will be conducted to define sediment sources, quantify impacts to aquatic habitat and flood conveyance, and prioritize sites for erosion control measures. The sediment budget will quantify and characterize natural and human sources of sediment and describe

sediment transport within the watershed. Analysis will include the identification of upslope sediment sources, such as roads, mass wasting, and historic and current land use practices.

We are also currently mapping the location of various beneficial uses throughout the watershed and conducting an inventory of current land use practices.

Linkage Analysis /Numeric Targets/Allocation. A linkage analysis will be performed. Numeric targets will be established to determine the amount of pollution reduction required to meet water quality objective. An allocation plan may be developed to define total permissible loads and may be according to land use type and/or major dischargers, or may require an overall percent reduction of nonpoint source pollution.

Implementation Plan/Monitoring Evaluation. The TMDL Implementation Plan will be based on the *Plan for California's Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program* and will include specific measures to control nonpoint source pollution from public and private land. Existing management measures in the city of Sonoma and Sonoma County, as well as the Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District, Sonoma County Grape Growers Alliances, and other industry groups will be inventoried and evaluated. Gaps in local regulation of waterways and water quality will be identified. The implementation plan is likely to include stream protection provisions for Sonoma Creek and its tributaries, which could be covered by, or incorporated into, the current Sonoma County General Plan Update.

The implementation plan will identify actions for various parties to undertake to better protect water quality and encourage nonpoint source pollution controls, stream protection, and riparian and wetland restoration and monitoring to determine when management measures are effective. The TMDL efforts are being coordinated with activities of the Watershed Division, including certifications under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, urban stormwater permits, construction-related National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits, and regulation of waste dischargers, including septic systems.

Issues:

Funding. Although we have a funding plan to complete watershed assessment and water quality monitoring in accordance with the overall TMDL schedule, there are some uncertainties in the availability of funds and timing of completion of studies. The project plan indicates that the sediment source assessment will be funded under Phase 2 of Proposition 13, these funds have not yet been allocated.

Land Access. We will continue to face the challenges of securing landowner acceptance and land access

Stakeholder Participation:

The first public meeting for the Sonoma Creek TMDL was held on November 20, 2002 in Sonoma. A diverse group of about 75 stakeholders attended the meeting, including concerned citizens, landowners, city and county staff, and the press. We conduct periodic stakeholder meetings in conjunction with Sonoma Ecology Center and Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District staff. These meetings are attended by a range of local and regional agencies, business interests, and landowners. Our role is to oversee the TMDL process; provide technical review; facilitate and provide funding; prepare TMDL reports and proposed Basin Plan amendments; and support local watershed efforts to improve water quality and habitat. We also attend meetings of the FishNet 4C (Fishery Network of the Central California Coastal Counties) to coordinate with other federal and state agencies, such as California Department of Fish and Game and National Marine Fisheries Service.

Periodically, Regional Board staff invites stakeholders to presentations about the status of the TMDL. As schedules permit, we also meet with stakeholder groups within the watershed, such as farmers, city and county officials, and other groups.