



North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

January 13, 2026

John Green
Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District
2776 Sullivan Road
Sebastopol, CA 95472
John@GoldridgeRCD.org

Subject: Notice of Applicability (NOA) for Coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board Order for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for Restoration Projects Statewide Order WQ 2022-0048-DWQ

File: Greene and Sweetwater Habitat Enhancement Project
CW-903626; WDID No. 1B25170WNSO

Dear John Green:

This letter is to certify coverage of the Greene and Sweetwater Habitat Enhancement Project (Project) under the Order for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for Restoration Projects Statewide (Order); Order WQ 2022-0048-DWQ.

Background

On November 17, 2025, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received a Notice of Intent (NOI) from John Green, Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (Applicant) to comply with the terms of, and obtain project coverage under, the Order for the Project.

Pre-consultation Meeting and Public Notice

A pre-consultation meeting occurred on March 28, 2025. The Regional Water Board provided 21-day public notice of the application pursuant to Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3858 on December 10, 2025, and posted information describing the Project on the Regional Water Board's website. No comments were received.

Project Location

The Project is located along Green Valley Creek, within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit 114.11 at 38.44903° N, 122.889999° W.

HECTOR BEDOLLA, CHAIR | VALERIE QUINTO, EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Project Description

The Project will construct in-channel and off-channel habitat features to improve the quantity and quality of accessible habitat for salmonids. The project elements are designed to build on existing habitat with limited accessibility and to prioritize connectivity of habitat features throughout varying flow levels.

The objectives are to: create side channels at varying elevations to connect a range of winter flows from Green Valley Creek to off-channel wetlands for salmonid utilization, providing refugia and rearing habitat for juvenile salmonids and hydrologically connected migration corridors for out-migrating salmonids; improve edge habitat and in-channel rearing and refuge habitat for juvenile salmonids over a range of winter flows by creating inset floodplains, alcoves and tree islands, and installing in-channel log structures to improve channel and hydrologic complexity; revegetate disturbed areas with a mix of herbaceous and woody native species to increase the dominance of native plant species and create diverse habitat for juvenile fish, freshwater shrimp, and other native aquatic organisms, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals; maintain and/or improve habitat for California freshwater shrimp and other native aquatic organisms, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals by removing nonnative vegetation, planting native riparian and wetland species, and including small woody debris in log structures; and expand the extent of seasonal herbaceous wetland throughout the side channels and alcoves.

The work on the Sweetwater property is intended to improve connectivity between the creek and off-channel pond and wetland area for salmonid utilization with the pond being accessible the majority of the wet season. The features will work with existing habitat created on the adjacent Greene and CDFW-owned properties, and the flows are connected at the northwestern edge of the Sweetwater Pond. Construction of large wood structures in the channel will enhance flow conditions and create higher quality in-channel rearing habitat. A low elevation floodplain bench will increase complex edge habitat volume and quantity at a range of winter and spring flows. Removal of non-native vegetation and planting native vegetation will increase the dominance of native riparian and wetland species throughout the project site. In addition to habitat enhancement elements, an existing access road will be retained and expanded to maintain access to the existing well and pump on site. A culvert will be constructed below the access road to maintain an existing stormwater swale that conveys water into Sweetwater Pond.

A 400-foot-long, four- to five-foot deep inlet channel will be excavated between Green Valley Creek and the western edge of Sweetwater Pond, to create a low elevation swale connecting flows between the creek and pond. The width of the swale ranges from 16 to 40 feet at the top of bank with side slopes ranging from 2:1 to 5:1. A narrower, steeper swale section provides a pinch point in the channel to restrict water volume during high-flow events. A V-shaped inlet channel will concentrate flows and facilitate fish passage even as streamflow levels drop. The swale will extend into the pond footprint, designed to maintain depths of six inches to two or more feet within the pond for multi-week periods during extended precipitation events. When full at winter base flow, the pond provides approximately two acres of off channel habitat and will be accessible to salmonids during frequent storm events. Floodwaters overtopping the pond will flow north onto the Greene and Iron Horse property floodplains, as they do currently.

Where the inlet channel meets Green Valley Creek, a 50-foot long, 30-foot-wide alcove will be excavated, to connect the inlet channel and creek to a downstream floodplain and to provide low-velocity refugia at all flow levels. The alcove width at the bed will be about ten feet. The pool and alcove depth will be approximately 1.5 feet during spring outmigration flows and three to five feet deep during frequent winter storm events. The alcove extends across the Green Valley Creek channel to a crossover channel between Atascadero and Green Valley Creek to create a 20-foot-long alcove on the east bank. Upstream of the alcove, an engineered log jam will be constructed to pinch flows in the creek channel and direct flows toward the inlet channel opening. As flows recede in Green Valley Creek, water will flow out of the pond, down the access channel, and back into the alcove. The receding flow will produce a current that will be a cue to juvenile salmonids to retreat from the pond back into the creek. Water entering Green Valley Creek from the pond will bring nutrients and food materials to the alcove and improve foraging opportunities in the creek.

A large inset floodplain will be constructed immediately downstream of the inlet channel. Downstream of the alcove, a 150-foot-long and 100-foot-wide section of channel bank will be excavated to create a low inset floodplain. An overflow swale will be cut through the floodplain and run 280 feet downstream from the alcove, around a tree island, and reconnect to Green Valley Creek within an existing pool. A winter baseflow connector channel will cross the inset floodplain upstream of the tree island and connect to a pool and engineered cross-channel log jam in Green Valley Creek. Downstream of the tree island, where the overflow swale reconnects to Green Valley Creek, a large wood habitat structure will be installed to provide complex cover and habitat in the existing downstream alcove. The inset floodplain will provide up to 0.3 acres of accessible vegetated wetland habitat at winter base flows.

Large wood structures and log jams will be constructed in the channel where side channels connect to direct flows and enhance channel complexity and habitat. Upstream of the Sweetwater Pond inlet channel, an engineered log jam will be constructed to pinch flows in the Green Valley creek channel and direct flows towards the inlet channel. Downstream, where the baseflow connector channel crosses the floodplain, a cross-channel log jam will be installed to back water the upstream alcove and Sweetwater pond inlet channel during winter baseflows to elevate and stabilize water depths. It will also create a plunge scour pool with complex wood habitat provided by rootwads and slash wood. At the downstream end of the tree island, where the overflow swale reconnects to the main Green Valley Creek channel, a large wood habitat structure will be installed to provide complex cover and habitat in the alcove. Log structures will be ballasted with log anchors vibrated into the channel and floodplain sediment 15 or more feet and anchored with one-inch threaded steel rod and washers. Additional logs and rootwads will be added to structures to provide stability and complex cover for juvenile salmonids and California freshwater shrimp.

Surrounding Sweetwater Pond are access routes used to access the well pump and power south of the pond. These areas will be utilized during construction for access to the construction sites. The access along the north boundary of the pond will be decommissioned after construction and restored with native vegetation and erosion control. The access area along the south end of the pond will be retained to provide year-round access to the well and related infrastructure. This area will be utilized for placement of spoils from project elements described above and will be revegetated with native seeding and

plantings. A four-foot diameter 47 feet long corrugated metal culvert will be installed in a swale along the well pump access route to maintain stormwater drainage to Sweetwater Pond. The culvert will be placed on class 2 aggregate base bedding material to provide a stable crossing. A 12-in layer of natural bed will be installed within the culvert using six to 12-inch rock with alluvial interstitial fill.

The habitat improvement activities on the Greene and CDFW-owned properties will connect Sweetwater property elements to the downstream Iron Horse project elements. Two wetland side channels will be constructed at varying elevations to connect a range of winter flows from Green Valley Creek to inset floodplains. Installation of large wood structures and excavation of alcoves will create in-channel rearing and refuge habitat for juvenile salmonids. An existing depression in the off-channel floodplain will be excavated to create a seasonal pond connected to the downstream side channel. A floodplain swale will be constructed to connect the seasonal pond to the Sweetwater Pond during high flows. Disturbed areas will be revegetated with a mix of herbaceous and woody native species to increase the dominance of native plant species and create diverse habitat for native wildlife species.

A side channel complex at the upstream end of the Greene property will connect with Green Valley Creek in four locations with tree islands between the side channel and creek. The side channels will be excavated and bordered by wider inset floodplains that will inundate above the approximate winter base flow and are intended to provide areas for high flow refuge and foraging during frequent flood events. An alcove will be constructed at the downstream end of the complex, connected to the side channels at a higher elevation so winter base flows do not flow through the alcove, allowing them to provide additional high flow refugia. The side channel elevation is designed to provide habitat benefit even in dry years. Side channel inlets will be excavated to provide floodplain connection at lower flows, resulting in more frequent floodplain inundation and longer duration of flows connected with the floodplain. Side slopes of the channel and tree islands will vary from 2:1 to 8:1 and will be planted with a mix of native grasses and forbs to provide edge habitat. The side channel and alcove areas will be planted with native sedges and rushes to reduce velocities and provide foraging areas. Clusters of native shrubs and individual trees will be planted at strategic locations on side slopes and along the top of bank to provide additional cover and habitat diversity.

Like the upstream area, another side channel network will be constructed near the northern property boundary that will connect to Green Valley Creek in three locations. The side channels and floodplains are intended to provide habitat for the same winter base and frequent high flow events as described above. This area also includes an alcove at the downstream end with a similar design that allows frequent high flows to flow through the alcove while providing refugia during winter base flows. Just upstream of the side channel complex, the Green Valley Creek channel will be widened by approximately 15 feet for approximately 40 feet along the creek before tying into existing banks. The widened area will provide dense herbaceous vegetation cover for refuge and feeding opportunities for juvenile salmonids and cover for California freshwater shrimp during winter base flows. During higher flows, it is anticipated that deposition will occur, creating a small riffle and/or channel depth heterogeneity. The widened area is located approximately 60 feet

downstream of a cross-channel log jam and is designed to correspond to the tail-out of the scour pool created by the log structure.

A quarter-acre pond will be excavated in the existing depressional area on the site. The pond will be excavated to provide a maximum depth of approximately 2.5 feet and is designed to hold water for an extended period, creating a wetland area with enhanced forage production. The pond will connect to the downstream side channel network, the existing swale network on the northwestern edge of the floodplain, and a newly constructed swale connecting to Sweetwater Pond. A broad swale will be excavated to direct frequent high flows from Sweetwater Pond through the Greene property floodplain and into the shallow off-channel pond before entering Green Valley Creek and the network of swales flowing to the Iron Horse property. The swale will vary in width between eight and 20 feet and will be planted with native wetland sedges and rushes. An outlet to the downstream side channel complex is designed with an elevation lower than the existing valley edge swale network, allowing out-migrating juvenile fish the opportunity to re-enter Green Valley Creek or continue down the swale network during higher flows. The pond is designed to be inundated by frequent storms multiple times a year at just above winter base flows. The pond will receive water from the upslope Sweetwater Pond and the connection to the downstream side channel complex before Green Valley Creek flows reach the top of bank.

Large wood structures will be built at key locations within the side channels to further enhance habitat value over a range of flows. Three main types of structures will be constructed: pinch jams, cross channel jams, and habitat structures. Several variations exist depending on the structure location and objective. Log structures will be constructed using redwood or other long-lasting wood for the key logs and rootwads. Slash and small wood material will be sourced from salvage riparian trees and branches to create more complex shelter habitat and encourage racking of additional woody debris.

Pinch jams will be placed at locations where the side channels connect with the creek to direct flows and provide cues for juvenile fish to enter habitat features. The jams are oriented to protrude a short distance into the creek and create a narrow area at the mouth of side channels to restrict flow into the channel. In some locations, double pinch jams are designed to provide additional roughness and further restrict flow. The design is intended to create areas of higher velocity in the middle of the channel and areas of recirculating flow, or eddies, at side channel entrances. Habitat structures will provide additional cover for in-channel refugia and foraging habitat and built at the inlets of each alcove and several areas within side channels. At the outlet of each alcove, habitat jams will be placed on either side to encourage scouring of the alcove pool, provide dense forage areas for use in a range of flows and provide additional woody cover. Located in the side channels, habitat structures are intended to provide large areas of velocity refugia and feeding opportunities.

Two cross channel jams will be constructed: one incorporated into a pinch jam in the upstream side channel complex and the other located in the main creek channel approximately halfway between the side channel complex areas. Each structure will be partially buried in the channel banks and bed and will extend between three and five feet above the thalweg elevation. Slash material will be incorporated at lower densities than other structures to allow for ample interstitial voids for adult migration. The upstream structure is intended to provide scour at the mouth of the side channel of the upstream side

channel complex. The downstream structure is designed to create scour and help build a downstream riffle where the channel will be widened above the downstream side channel complex.

Protection Measures

The Project will implement Protection Measures GPM-1 through GPM-15; WQHM-1 through WQHM-4; IWW-1 through IWW-8; and VHDR-1 through VHDR-5, as described in the Order.

Benefits to Waters of the State

The Project will result in the restoration or enhancement of approximately 6.9 acres of wetland and riparian habitat.

Project Size and Impacts to Waters of the State

The total Project size is approximately 9.3 acres and 1,620 linear feet. Implementation of the Project will result in impacts to approximately 5.2 acres and 1,620 linear feet of jurisdictional waters of the state.

Project Associated Discharge

Approximately 1,900 cubic feet of native soil, 276 cubic yards of woody material, 66 rootwads, two culverts, two acres of native planting materials, large wood anchoring hardware, dewatering materials (coffer dam, plastic, sand bags, diversion pipeline, sump pump), and erosion control materials will be discharged to waters of the state.

Project Time Frame

Start Date: June 2026

Completion Date: October 2026

Work Season: June 15 through October 15, with the option for variance or extension with written approval from the Regional Water Board.

Agency Permits

The Applicant has applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act section 404 permit and has applied to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a Restoration Management Permit.

Notice of Applicability & CEQA Compliance

Regional Water Board staff has determined that the proposed activities as described in the NOI may proceed under the Order for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for Restoration Projects Statewide; Order WQ 2022-0048-DWQ.

The Regional Water Board determined that the Project conforms to the requirements of CEQA through the Environmental Impact Report for Implementation of Restoration Projects Statewide (SCH # 2019100230) and filed a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse on January 13, 2026, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

Receiving Water: Green Valley Creek, within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit 114.11

Project Impacts: Approximately 5.2 acres and 1,620 linear feet

Project Size: Approximately 9.3 acres and 1,620 linear feet

Latitude/Longitude: 38.44903° N, 122.889999° W

Expiration Date: **January 13, 2031**

Application Fee and Billing

A complete Application Fee of \$1,123 (Category D – Ecological Restoration and Enhancement Projects), was received for the Project on November 19, 2025. This NOA will be subject to annual billing while the Project is constructed and monitored, per the fee schedule that is current at the time of annual billing. Currently the Annual Fee is \$563; however, it may increase in the future. Find the fee calculator at:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/fees/water_quality/docs/dredgefillcalculator.xlsm

Annual fees will be automatically invoiced to the Applicant. The Applicant must notify the Regional Water Board once the Project is complete with a final report in order to request to terminate annual billing. Notification should be sent to the staff listed at the bottom of this Order and to Northcoast@waterboards.ca.gov.

Reporting and Notification Requirements

As required in section XIII.B of the Order, Project proponents with projects authorized under this Order shall follow notification and reporting requirements described in section XIII.B and those found in Attachment D of this Order. This Order and its associated monitoring and technical reporting provisions are also adopted pursuant to California Water Code sections 13383 and 13267, subdivision (b)(1). The requirements for the content of the reports and notification types required under this Order are detailed in Attachment D, including specifications for photo and map documentation. Written reports and notifications must be submitted using the Reporting and Notification Cover Sheet located in Attachment D, which must be signed by an authorized representative who meets the signatory requirements specified in Attachment E. Please include the project name and WDID number with all future inquiries and document submittals. Document submittals shall be made electronically to NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov.

The Order for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for Restoration Projects Statewide; Order WQ 2022-0048-DWQ can be found at [Order for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification and Waste Discharge Requirements for Restoration Projects Statewide](#).

Please contact Jake Shannon at (707) 576-2673 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Warmerdam
on behalf of



Digitally signed by Jonathan Warmerdam

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Valerie Quinto
Executive Officer

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