U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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CA funds watershed restoration projects with Federal Nonpoint Source Program Grant funds

California Water Boards award project to protect water quality in Tomales Bay, Marin County, used for recreation and oyster production

SAN FRANCISCO – California Water Boards will use $4.4 million of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to fund projects in seven counties around the State. EPA's annual Clean Water Act (CWA) 319 grant assists the Water Boards to implement programs to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution.

The Marin Resource Conservation District was awarded over $700,000 by California Water Boards for their *Conserving Our Watersheds* (COW) Program to help ranchers within the Point Reyes National Seashore to implement management practices to prevent nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment and bacteria from livestock operations from getting to Tomales Bay. Tomales Bay in Marin County supports oyster production and recreational activities including kayaking and fishing. Since 2009, CA's NPS Program has awarded $2.75 million for the *Conserving Our Watersheds* (COW) Program to help ranchers in the Tomales Bay watershed install conservation practices on agricultural lands. The Marin Resource Conservation District supports the everyday work of ranching and farming in Marin County, by providing private landowners and agricultural producers with project planning and permitting assistance; technical and engineering expertise; construction contractors; and maintenance and monitoring assistance.

"The COW Program, which promotes and supports water quality improvements within Marin County's watershed boundaries will reduce runoff of sediment, nutrients, and bacteria from livestock operations into Tomales Bay," **said EPA Pacific Southwest Acting Regional Administrator Deborah Jordan.**

Other NPS project awards from the EPA funding include supporting post-wildfire recovery in Mark West Creek (Sonoma County) and Carpinteria Creek (Santa Barbara County), and riparian restoration in the Little Shasta River (Siskiyou County), Tenmile Creek (Mendocino County), the Euer Valley (Nevada County) and the Napa River (Napa County).

"Federal investment in nonpoint source solutions means the Water Board can support the Tomales Bay project and similar projects that are making water safer for our communities," **said Joaquin Esquivel, Chair, California State Water Resources Control Board.** "When federal, state, and local leadership are aligned, opportunities to protect California's most vulnerable watersheds expand exponentially."

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Since 2004, the Water Board's Nonpoint Source Program has awarded over $65 million of EPA grant funds for local projects that reduce nonpoint source pollution in waters of the State of California. The projects make waters safer for people and wildlife by preventing sediment erosion from rural roads and wildfire-impacted areas, controlling pollution from grazing and livestock operations, supporting farmers to plant cover crops on farms and vineyards to improve soil health, and restoring stream habitat affected by legacy timber activities.

In December, EPA approved California's 2020-2025 Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan. States with EPA-approved programs to manage nonpoint source water pollution can apply for EPA grant funds to support their programs. In 2021, California Water Boards are eligible to apply for $9 million of CWA section 319 funds, which will support $4.5 m in projects as well as Water Board staff to implement programs to address priority nonpoint sources of pollution, conducting inspections, and working with stakeholders to find effective solutions for water quality problems.

For more information on California's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution Control Program visit: [HYPERLINK "https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/"]

For more information on nonpoint source pollution visit: [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/nps/basic-information-about-nonpoint-source-nps-pollution"]

For more information on EPA's 319 Grant Program for States and Territories: [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/nps/319-grant-program-states-and-territories"]

For information on Success Stories about Restoring Water Bodies Impaired by Nonpoint Source Pollution: [HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/nps/success-stories-about-restoring-water-bodies-impaired-nonpoint-source-pollution" \l "ca"]

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