

California Regional Water Quality Control Board General Permit for Vineyard Properties FAQ

Where can I find general information about the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, or “Water Board?”

Information on the Napa and Sonoma Creek Vineyard Program for the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board can be found on the Water Boards website. Visit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/agriculture/vineyard/index.html.

The Water Board has developed a Fact Sheet for your convenience. Visit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/agriculture/vineyard/permit_rollout/FactSheetFinal30March2018.pdf

How do I receive notices, updates and deadlines about the General Permit?

For your convenience the Water Board has developed an email notice subscription service for you to receive updates on important information for the Napa and Sonoma Creek Vineyard Program.

To subscribe to receive the email notices, follow the instructions at this link:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/reg2_subscribe.html

- Make sure you scroll down on the webpage to select one or more email lists to subscribe to.
- Make sure to check the box next to **Vineyard Program (Napa River & Sonoma Creek)**

What is the General Permit?

In July 2017, the Water Board adopted a General Permit for vineyard properties in the Napa River and Sonoma Creek Watersheds. The General Permit regulates pollutant discharges, such as sediment, nutrients, pesticides, and storm runoff; from parcels developed to include a 5-acre-or-larger vineyard in the Napa and Sonoma watersheds.

I am unsure if I need to enroll in the General Permit. How do I know if I am required to enroll?

All vineyard parcels subject to the General Permit – regardless of slope in the planted area – must achieve performance standards for soil erosion in the farm area, and for discharge of nutrients and pesticides.

Hillslope vineyard parcels – those where the average slope of the planted area is greater than 5 percent – also must achieve performance standards for vineyard storm runoff and for sediment discharge from unpaved roads.

The Water Board has an Interactive Map and spreadsheet where you can easily determine if the vineyard parcel you own or manage is subject to the General Permit.

To access the map visit:

<http://www.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?webmap=8b5d5ba54637476d93104725fd3bc3d4&extent=-123.2606,37.9542,-121.2597,38.7233>

And [click here](#) to download the excel spreadsheet.

When do I need to enroll in the General Permit?

If you own or manage an **Existing Vineyard**: Owners/operators of existing vineyard properties who have parcels planted to 5 acres or larger are required to enroll by July 31, 2018.

If you own or manage an **Existing Vineyard** within 2017 wildfire perimeters: Where any part of an existing vineyard property is located within the mapped perimeter of the North Bay wildfires, the Board has extended the deadline of enrollment by one year to July 31, 2019.

If you own or manage a **New Vineyard**: Owners/operators of new vineyard properties – those planted subsequent to the adoption of the General Permit in July 2017 – are required to enroll one year prior to the vineyard planting or by July 31, 2018, whichever date is later.

How do I enroll in the General Permit?

You can enroll in the General Permit online. Enrollment is now open. See above for deadlines.

Follow this link, <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/enoi/> to enroll online.

If for any reason you do not wish to enroll online, or have trouble using the internet you can manually enroll with the Water Board staff. Please contact Mike Napolitano at (510) 622-2397.

What is required of me to be in compliance with the General Permit?

To remain in compliance with the General Permit you must:

1. Enroll in the General Permit by the deadline applicable to you, above.
2. Develop a farm plan.
3. Have a Third-Party program verify your farm plan.
4. Implement your verified farm plan.
5. Report annually on progress toward achievement of performance standards.
6. Participate in a group or individual water quality monitoring program.

What is a farm plan?

A farm plan documents your vineyard property's natural features, developed areas, and best management practices (BMP's) to control pollutant discharges and protect water quality.

A verified farm plan is when a Third Party Program has reviewed your plan to conclude upon full implementation, performance standards would be attained.

Who is qualified to help me develop and verify my farm plan?

There are four (4) Third Party Programs available to implement and verify your farm plan.

1. The California Land Stewardship Institute (Fish Friendly Farming)
2. The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA)
3. The Napa County Resource Conservation District (LandSmart Program)
4. The Sonoma Resource Conservation District (LandSmart Program)

What if I have already developed a farm plan, or think I have a farm plan in place already?

If you already have an existing farm plan in place you should still schedule an appointment with one of the Third Party Programs above to learn what else you may need to do to be in compliance.

NOTE: Valley-floor sites with fully implemented farm plans that have been developed working with Fish Friendly Farming or LandSmart likely have achieved performance standards.

NOTE: Hillslope sites with fully implemented farm plans that have been developed working with Fish Friendly Farming or LandSmart likely have achieved vineyard sediment, nutrient, and pesticide control performance standards.

How long do I have to implement my farm plan and verify it?

If you have an **Existing Vineyard**: For most existing properties, a verified farm plan must be completed by July 31, 2020.

NOTE: For vineyard properties within the perimeter of the North Bay wildfires the deadline is extended by one year to July 31, 2021.

If you have a **New Vineyard**: For new vineyard properties – those planted subsequent to General Permit adoption – a verified farm plan must be completed by the date of vineyard planting or by July 31, 2020.

What costs are associated with enrollment in the General Permit?

At this time in 2018, there are no fees associated with enrollment in the Permit fees, which the State Water Board establishes, will be assessed after July 31, 2019.

Thereafter, the State Water Board will assess an annual permit fee, based on planted acreage. As an example, if a fee were required today, a typical vineyard would pay \$1.00 to \$1.50 per planted vineyard acre per year.

What costs are associated with developing, verifying and implementing my farm plan with a Third Party Program?

There are some costs associated with the development, verification and implementation of your farm plan.

Each of the four (4) Third Party Programs charge for their services. The help and expertise of these Third Party Programs is critical to the success of your farm plan, and the SVVGA highly encourages you to learn more about their services.

Costs for development, verification and implementation of your farm plan vary by Third Party Program:

1. The California Land Stewardship Institute (Fish Friendly Farming)
 - a. Plan costs vary based on property size. \$8.00 per acre (acreage includes entire property, not just planted or irrigated vineyard parcel)
 - b. If the site is over 100 acres Fish Friendly Farming will conduct a site specific cost estimate, which will likely be lower than the \$8.00 per acre.
 - c. Private Program
2. The Sonoma Resource Conservation District (LandSmart Program)
 - a. Grant funding is currently available to cover 85% of the total cost of the farm plan. NOTE: Grant funding is limited
 - b. Plan costs vary based on property size. The total cost of a LandSmart plan for a property up to 10 acres ranges between \$4,700 and \$4,900.
 - c. For properties up to 100 acres, total costs range between \$5,800 and \$8,000.
3. The California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA)
 - a. Plan costs vary.
 - b. The Farm Plan template is designed to be completed by the grower, with guidance and resources included throughout. If technical assistance is needed with Farm Plan development, growers can

- hire one of CSWA's Qualified Professionals to help with map development and/or identification of necessary actions to address vineyard erosion, pesticide and nutrient risks, where applicable.
- c. The CSWA Third Party Program includes 24 Water-Board Approved Qualified Professionals, who will be available to verify farm plans and assist with farm plan development (as needed). All are California registered professionals in a discipline associated with erosion and sediment control, for example, a professional engineer, licensed geologist, or certified professional in erosion or sediment control. Please visit this link for more information.

Please contact the following individuals for additional information on program costs and the development of your farm plan:

Anya Starovoytov, Resource Planner for Sonoma Resource Conservation District (RCD)

astarovoytov@sonomarcd.org

(707) 569-1448 ext. 109

Jodi Wilson, Certification Manager for the California Sustainable Winegrowing Alliance (CSWA)

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(415) 356-7544

Laurel Marcus, Executive Director for the California Land Stewardship Institute (Fish Friendly Farming)

laurelm@fishfriendlyfarming.org

(707) 253-1226 ext. 1