

Environmental Compliance, Planning, and Stewardship Program Update

Water Resources Committee
October 27, 2026

Strategic Goal Alignment

Environmental compliance, planning, and stewardship activities may service all divisions at Zone 7 and therefore support many Strategic Plan goals.

GOAL B
Reliable Water Supply and Infrastructure

Provide customers with reliable water supply and infrastructure.

GOAL C
Safe Water

Provide customers with safe water.

GOAL D
Groundwater Management

Manage and protect the groundwater basin as the State designated Groundwater Sustainability Agency.

GOAL E
Effective Flood Protection

Provide an effective system of flood protection.

ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY

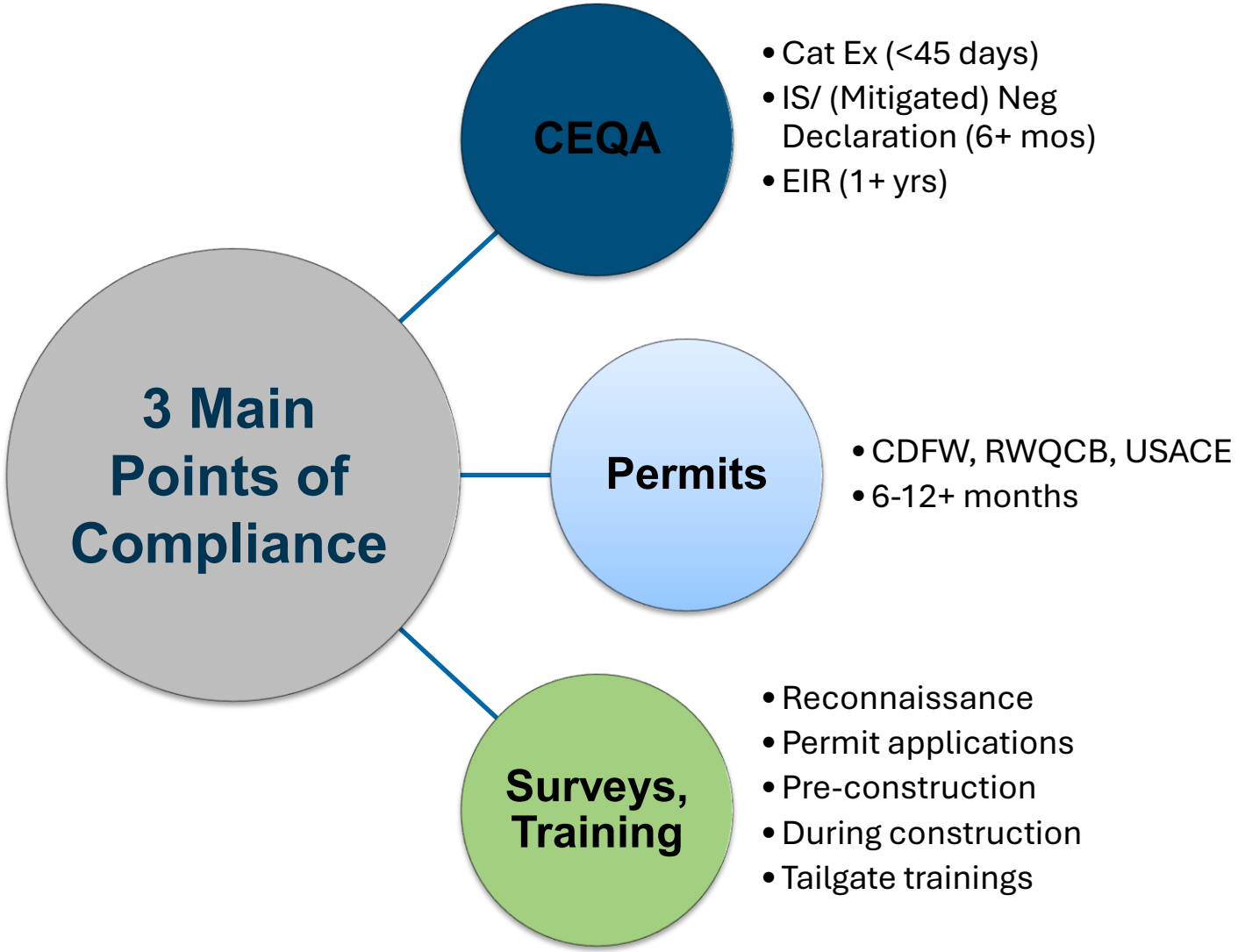
AGENDA

Water Resources Committee
October 27, 2026

1. **Regulatory Setting**
2. Environmental Program Update
   - Compliance
   - Planning
   - Stewardship
3. Process Overview
4. Q&A

ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY

1. Regulatory Setting



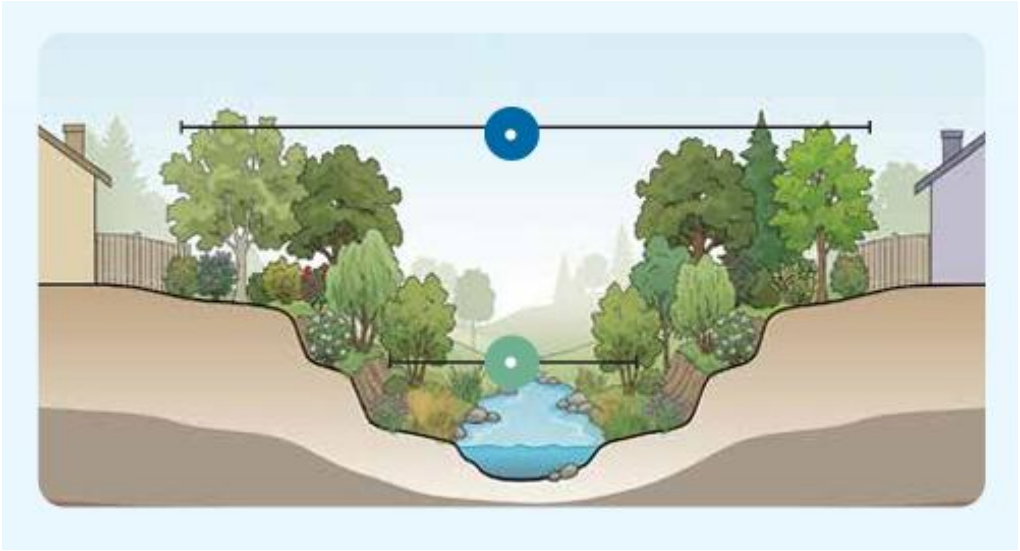
Setting: CEQA

- A public agency must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when it undertakes an activity defined by CEQA as a "project"

- **"Project"** means the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.

- CEQA Guidelines state the basic purposes of CEQA are to:
  1. **inform** governmental decision makers and the public about the… environmental effects of proposed activities.
  2. **identify** the ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced.
  3. **prevent** significant, avoidable damage to the environment… through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when… feasible.
  4. **disclose** to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project… if significant environmental effects are involved.

Setting: Permits



California Department of Fish and Wildlife

1. Bed, channel, banks of a stream, river, or lake – **Section 1602 SAA**
2. All state listed plant and wildlife species – **Section 2082 ITP**

Regional Water Quality Control Board

3. Issued to ensure that project activities will not result in adverse effects to waters of the state – **CWA Section 401**

US Army Corps of Engineers

4. Discharge/dredge of materials to waters of the US & work below the OHWM – **CWA section 404**
5. Consultations with federal resources agencies:
   - **USFWS** (federally listed species) & **NMFS** (federally listed anadromous fish) – **ESA section 7**
   - **SHPO** (cultural resources) – **NHPA section 106**

CWA = federal Clean Water Act
ESA = federal Endangered Species Act
ITP = individual take permit
NHPA = National Historic Preservation Act
NMFS = National Marine Fisheries Service
OHWM = ordinary high water mark
USFWS = US Fish & Wildlife Service
SAA = streambed alteration agreement
SHPO = State Historic Preservation Office

Setting: Surveys, Training

Required (by Permits/CEQA) –

- Permit applications require specialized surveys
- Pre-construction surveys / Bio monitors during construction
- CEQA impact evaluations
- Environmental awareness training for construction workers

Best Practice (Not Required by Permits) –

- Zone 7 annual "refresher" training for staff + specialty trainings
- Reconnaissance surveys to establish the need / scope for CEQA and permits
- Pre-construction surveys / Bio monitors during construction

SEASONAL MATTERS

- **Bird nesting season** = Feb 1 to Aug 31 (no restrictions but surveys/monitoring may be advised or required)
- Generally, we can do **work in and around channels** from May 1 to October 15 (see caveats)
- **Salmonid Restrictions** = Expect no in-channel work before June 15 annually

ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY

AGENDA

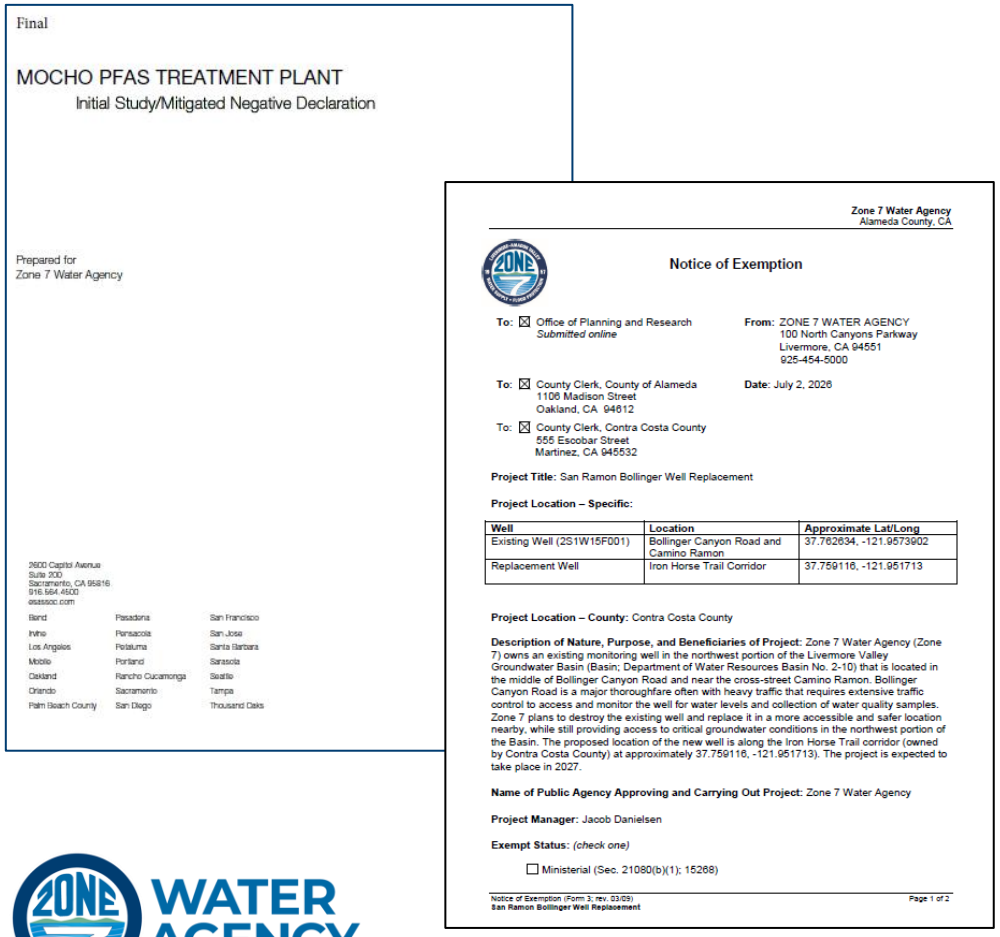
Water Resources Committee
October 27, 2026

1. Regulatory Setting
2. **Environmental Program Update**
   - **Compliance**
   - **Planning**
   - **Stewardship**
3. Process Overview
4. Q&A

ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY

Environmental Compliance

Example CEQA Projects:



Final

MOCHO PFAS TREATMENT PLANT
Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration

Prepared for
Zone 7 Water Agency

2600 Capitol Avenue
Suite 200
Sacramento, CA 95816
916.564.4500
esassoc.com

Bend	Pasadena	San Francisco
Irvine	Pensacola	San Jose
Los Angeles	Petaluma	Santa Barbara
Mobile	Portland	Sarasota
Oakland	Rancho Cucamonga	Seattle
Orlando	Sacramento	Tampa
Palm Beach County	San Diego	Thousand Oaks

Zone 7 Water Agency
Alameda County, CA

Notice of Exemption

To: ☒ Office of Planning and Research
Submitted online

From: ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY
100 North Canyons Parkway
Livermore, CA 94551
925-454-5000

To: ☒ County Clerk, County of Alameda
1106 Madison Street
Oakland, CA 94612

Date: July 2, 2026

To: ☒ County Clerk, Contra Costa County
555 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 945532

Project Title: San Ramon Bollinger Well Replacement

Project Location – Specific:

Well	Location	Approximate Lat/Long
Existing Well (2S1W15F001)	Bollinger Canyon Road and Camino Ramon	37.762634, -121.9573902
Replacement Well	Iron Horse Trail Corridor	37.759116, -121.951713

Project Location – County: Contra Costa County

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: Zone 7 Water Agency (Zone 7) owns an existing monitoring well in the northwest portion of the Livermore Valley Groundwater Basin (Basin; Department of Water Resources Basin No. 2-10) that is located in the middle of Bollinger Canyon Road and near the cross-street Camino Ramon. Bollinger Canyon Road is a major thoroughfare often with heavy traffic that requires extensive traffic control to access and monitor the well for water levels and collection of water quality samples. Zone 7 plans to destroy the existing well and replace it in a more accessible and safer location nearby, while still providing access to critical groundwater conditions in the northwest portion of the Basin. The proposed location of the new well is along the Iron Horse Trail corridor (owned by Contra Costa County) at approximately 37.759116, -121.951713). The project is expected to take place in 2027.

Name of Public Agency Approving and Carrying Out Project: Zone 7 Water Agency

Project Manager: Jacob Danielsen

Exempt Status: *(check one)*

☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268)

Notice of Exemption (Form 3; rev. 03/09)
San Ramon Bollinger Well Replacement
Page 1 of 2

Notice of Exemption ("NOE")

- Most common CEQA compliance for Zone 7 (5-10 annually).
- Small and no-impact projects.
- Do not require Board approval or public outreach.

Initial Study / (Mitigated) Negative Declaration ("IS/MND")

- Less common for Zone 7 (every ~5 years).
- Mid to large projects with potential for environmental impact.
- Requires environmental analysis across a broad range of resource topics.
- Most recently this was completed for the Mocho PFAS Treatment Plant.
- Board approval and public outreach are required.

Environmental Impact Report ("EIR")

- Typically required for very large or complex projects.
- Not common for Zone 7 (the last EIR completed by Zone 7 was twenty years ago).
- EIRs require significant analysis, public outreach, and Board approval.

Example Permitting Projects:

Current permitting efforts relating to the 2022/2023 winter storm events:

- Priority Repairs (3 repair sites)
- USACE Phase 1 Repairs (10 repair sites)
- USACE Phase 2-3 Repairs (34 repair sites)
- Phase 1 Emergency Repairs (50 repair sites)
- Medeiros Bank Stabilizations (3 repair sites)
- Vineyard Pipeline Emergency Action (1 emergency action site)

Additional permitting efforts are also underway:

- Alamo Creek Pilot Project (1 capital improvement project)
- Priority sediment removal projects (9 sites)
- Programmatic permits for routine maintenance

Permitting Roadmap (Generic)*

Task	Month #
1. **Engr/Maint** identifies preliminary project scope a. Location (maximum extent of the work area).	0
2. **Environmental** initiates studies based on preliminary project extent a. Wetland delineation (state and federal) b. Biological Resources reports (USFWS, NMFS) c. Cultural resources report d. CEQA compliance (1 to 12 months)	1-3
3. **Engr/Maint** prepares 30 + 60% design a. Need for project / basis of design (geomorph, etc) b. Design details (drawings and written description) c. Assumptions on dewatering d. Details on impact areas / work limits e. Assessment of any previous repair in the area (existing riprap etc.)	1-6
4. **Environmental** completes impacts assessments and mitigation needs a. Detailed temporary and permanent impacts on state and federal jurisdiction (LF and acres) b. Tree removal inventory c. Anticipated mitigation needs	1-6
5. **Environmental** considers (1) the "USACE Interagency Meeting" to present to all regulatory agencies, and/or (2) an early "RWQCB Pre-application" meeting – especially for unusual or complex projects.	4-5
6. **Environmental** completes environmental studies a. Wetland delineation (state and federal) b. Biological Resources reports (USFWS, NMFS) c. Cultural resources report d. CEQA compliance (1 to 12 months) e. Mitigation Plan	4-6
7. **Environmental** completes RWQCB pre-application meeting if not done previously (materials should be largely complete at this point)	6
8. **Engr/Maint + Environmental** updates materials as needed following agency meetings	7-8
9. **Environmental** files all applications with appropriate fees a. CDFW b. RWQCB c. USACE	8
10. **Engineering** completes 100% designs (note: may be required before receiving final permits)	8+
11. **USACE** consults with federal partners	8-12+
12. **Environmental** monitors for agencies to deem applications complete	8-14+
13. **Environmental + Engr/Maint** responses to agency questions, etc.	8-14+
14. Draft and final permits (requires project impact fee due to RWQCB)	12-20+

*NOTE: Actual process and timing can be highly variable.

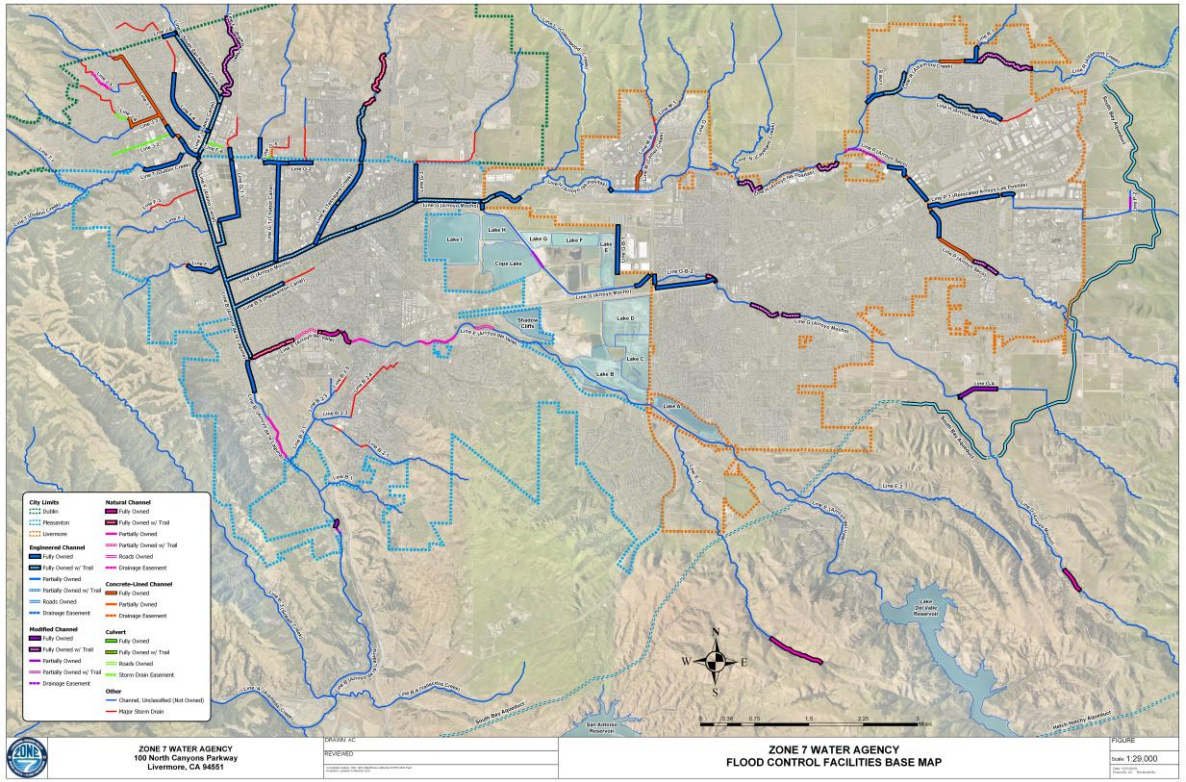
Zone 7 Water Agency 12/3/2025

Planning

Example Planning Projects:

Mitigation Planning + Monitoring

- Most instream work will require environmental mitigation as a **condition of permit approvals**.
- Mitigation is often in the form of **new plantings** within the riparian corridor.
- IP works with the flood engineering and maintenance teams to anticipate and identify **suitable mitigation locations** that don't interfere with operations.
- Permits typically require a **5-, 10- or 15- year maintenance, monitoring and reporting period**.



Stewardship

Example Stewardship Projects:

Residual Dry Matter (RDM) Monitoring

RDM

- The **old herbaceous plant material** left at the end of the grazing/summer season.
- It serves as a **key indicator** of past grazing intensity and future rangeland health.

Lake del Valle Property Annual Survey

- The results are shared with both staff and the grazing tenant and include recommendations aimed at **long-term rangeland health**.

LIVING ARROYOS

BACKGROUND:

- Established in 2013
- Goals include stewardship, education, public outreach, mitigation requirements, watershed benefits

PROJECT TYPES:

- Community volunteer creek cleanups
- “Adopt a Creek Spot” program
- Plantings and associated maintenance/monitoring
- Invasive plant removal
- Watershed signage program

PARTNERS:

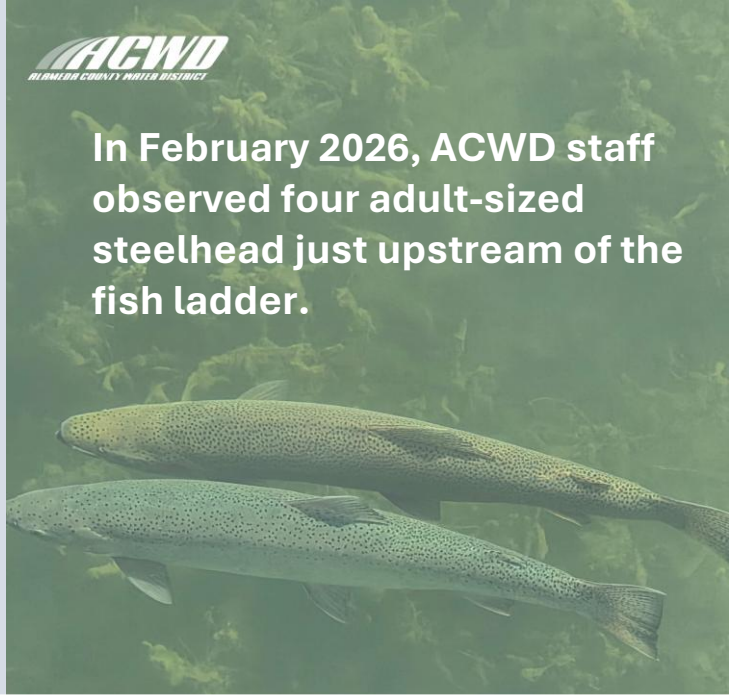
- Zone 7 (Administrator)
- Livermore
- Dublin
- Pleasanton
- Alameda Co. Resource Conservation District (Implementation)

ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY

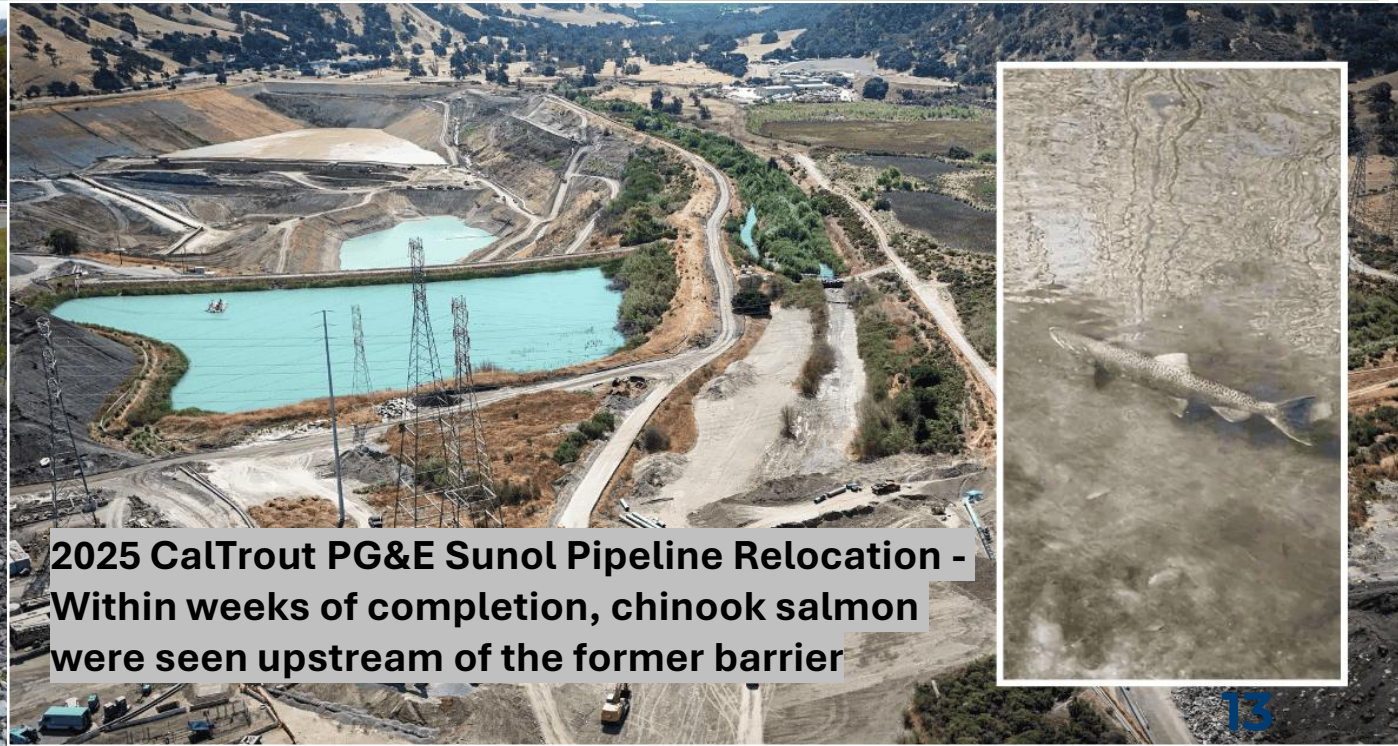
Example Stewardship Projects:

Alameda Creek Watershed Fisheries Restoration Workgroup

- Formed in 1999
- Collaborative effort among agencies and interest groups
- Focus on restoration of steelhead trout to the Alameda Creek watershed
- Current emphasis on monitoring plans
- Quarterly meetings
- Zone 7 serves as Chair







AGENDA

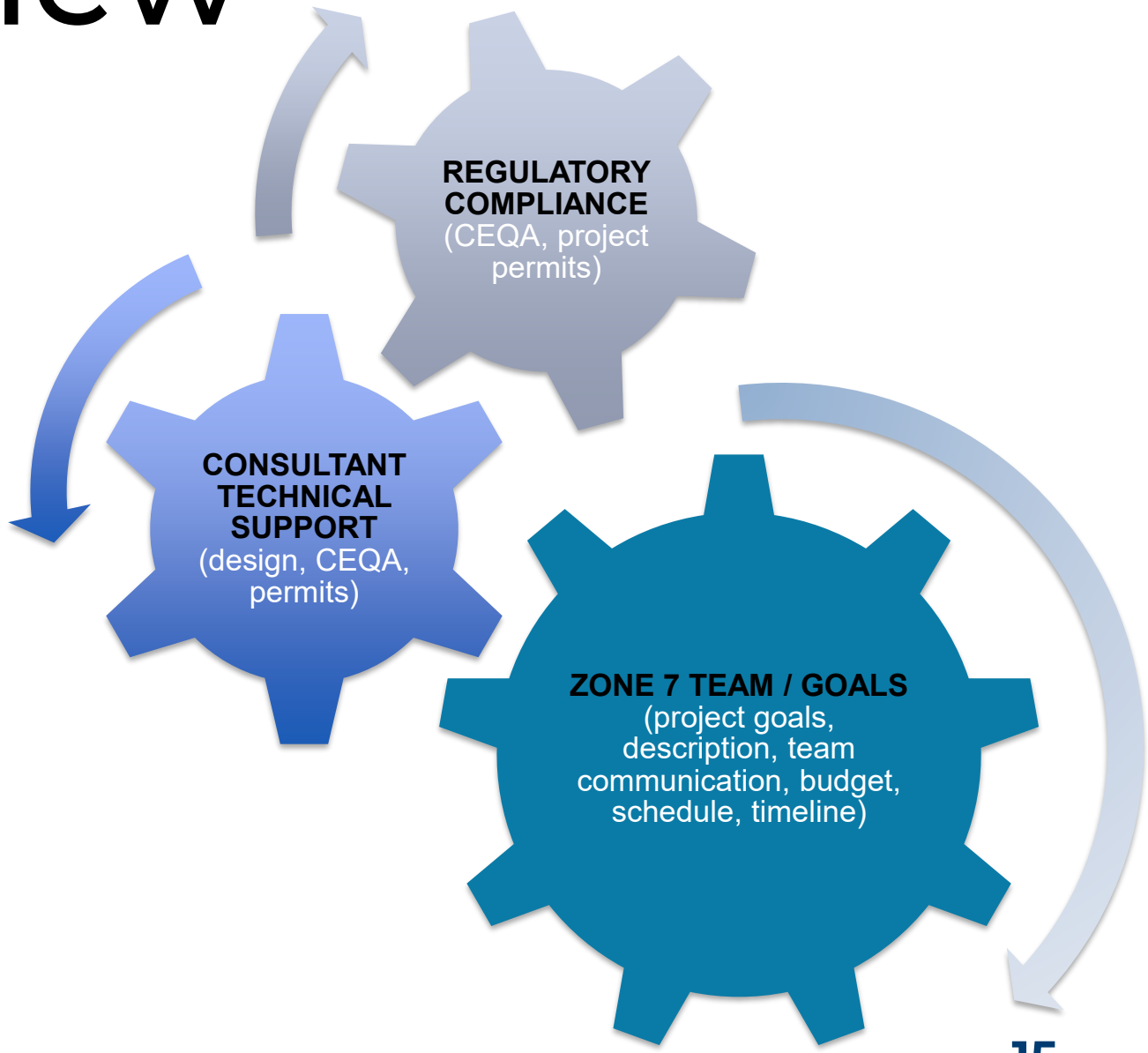
Water Resources Committee
October 27, 2026

1. Regulatory Setting
2. Environmental Program Update
   - Compliance
   - Planning
   - Stewardship
3. **Process Overview**
4. Q&A

ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY

Process Overview

- Regulatory compliance, especially for in-channel projects, is challenging AND continually evolving.
- The process is often not linear; expect to occasionally take one step back before two steps forward.
- 3 keys to success:
  - ✓ Lay a strong technical foundation for project
  - ✓ Good communications among integrated planning / maintenance / engineering staff
  - ✓ Highly qualified consultants (engineering and environmental) to support the process



ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY

AGENDA

Water Resources Committee
October 27, 2026

1. Regulatory Setting
2. Environmental Program Update
   - Compliance
   - Planning
   - Stewardship
3. Process Overview
4. **Q&A**

ZONE 7 WATER AGENCY


ZONE 7
WATER AGENCY
QUESTIONS?