



Fact Sheet

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board General Permit for Vineyard Properties: Permit Fees and a Water Quality Monitoring Plan are Due in 2020

Two Vineyard General Permit requirements take effect in 2020. In March, an annual permit fee will be due to the State Water Board, and in July, a water quality monitoring plan must be submitted to the San Francisco Bay Water Board.

Both requirements can be fulfilled individually— on a property-specific basis— or through a group effort that will be coordinated by the Napa and Sonoma County Farm Bureaus. The group effort makes it simpler and less expensive to satisfy the fee and monitoring requirements¹. The Farm Bureaus representing the owners/managers of the properties that join their groups will: a) collect and transmit the permit fees to the State; and b) prepare and submit a group water quality monitoring plan to satisfy permit requirements. Alternatively, these requirements can be satisfied individually. Group and individual options are outlined below.

Annual Permit Fees

Each fall, the State Water Board, following a public process, adopts a fee schedule that is applicable to agricultural properties that are subject to water quality permits. The Vineyard Permit is a water quality permit. While fees can change from year to year, the relationship between group and individual payment remains similar. Permit fees are assessed based on planted acreage, and whether the farmer is a member of a fee collection group. **The State Water Board’s fee structure provides a substantial price break to farmers who submit their fees through a fee collection group.** Fee collection groups save the State considerable time and effort that otherwise would be associated with fee collection on a property by property basis. The 2019-20 fee schedule that will apply to your planted vineyard acreage, including examples, is:

Enrollment Type	Fee Schedule	20-acre (example)	40-acre (example)
Group	Planted area regardless of size = \$1.08/acre	\$21.96	\$43.92
Individual	If the planted area ≤ 300 acre, then fee = \$27/acre, with a minimum fee of \$550. If planted area > 300 acre, then fee = \$13.50/acre.	\$550	\$1080

¹ The Napa County Farm Bureau will administer a group for properties in the Napa River watershed. The Sonoma County Farm Bureau will administer a group for properties in the Sonoma Creek watershed.

Group Payment Option (examples): For a property where a 20-acre vineyard is planted, if you are a member of a fee-collection group, the fee due to the Water Board would be: 20-acres x \$1.08/acre = \$21.96. For a 40-acre vineyard, the fee would be: 40-acres x \$1.08/acre = \$43.92.

Individual Payment Option (examples): For a property where a 20-acre vineyard is planted, the fee would be \$550. For a property where a 40-acre vineyard is planted, the fee would be: 40 acres x \$27/acre = \$1080.

PLEASE NOTE these examples only compare the permit fee due to the State under the group and individual options. The total cost of permit fee submittal for farmers who join the groups will be higher than is shown in the table because the Farm Bureaus, must **ALSO COVER** their accounting and administrative costs. For specific information about what it would cost to join a Farm Bureau group, contact their staff as listed below.

Water Quality Monitoring Plan

The permit requires two types of quantitative water quality monitoring²:

- Monitoring effectiveness of management practices to control sediment discharges.
- Monitoring the amount of sand in streambed and how this influences habitat suitability.

The permit-required water quality plan is due to the Water Board in July 2020. The permit provides two ways an owner/operator can satisfy these monitoring requirements: 1) individually- on a property specific basis- or 2) by participating in a group water quality monitoring program.

The Farm Bureaus, representing the owners/managers of the properties that join their groups, will develop and implement a group water quality monitoring plan (Farm Bureau Group Program) to satisfy permit requirements by July 2020 deadline. For those who choose the individual option (property-specific monitoring), a plan acceptable to the Water Board also is due July 2020. Details of plan requirements can be found in Attachment E of the General Permit for Vineyard Properties.³ To learn more, please contact Water Board staff as listed below.

Following approval, the water quality monitoring plan must be implemented and a report detailing sampling and results is due in July of 2023.

Because the Farm Bureau Group Program relies on monitoring a representative sample of properties, the cost per property is expected to be significantly lower than it would be under the individual option (where monitoring must be conducted at each property).

² Tier 1 Properties - those where a farm plan has been completed and fully implemented to meet all applicable performance standards - are exempt from these requirements. All other properties are subject to required monitoring of management practices. Where a property is adjacent to, or includes, habitat for salmon or steelhead, streambed monitoring also is required.

³ Attachment E of the Vineyard General Permit:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/water_issues/programs/agriculture/vineyard/final_docs/Vineyard%20General%20WDRs%20-%207-17.pdf

Other advantages of the Farm Bureau Group Program include:

- a) Not having to hire a technical contractor or to learn how to do the monitoring; and
- b) A very high likelihood that the water quality plan will meet permit requirements because Water Board staff have provided regular input/review on the draft water quality monitoring plan that the Farm Bureaus are preparing.

Summary

Two Vineyard General Permit requirements take effect in 2020. In March, for the first time an annual permit fee will be due to the Water Board, and in July a water quality monitoring plan must be submitted. The Farm Bureaus of Napa County and Sonoma County have formed groups to provide a less expensive and simpler way to satisfy these permit requirements.

For More Information About the General Permit:

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

Water Board Staff Contacts:

Graham Brown at 510-622-2426 or graham.brown@waterboards.ca.gov

Mike Napolitano at 510-622-2397 or michael.napolitano@waterboards.ca.gov

Napa County Farm Bureau Contact:

Please call 707-224-5403

Sonoma County Farm Bureau Contact:

Please call Samantha Piehoff at 707-544-5575 or samantha@sonomafb.org