
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

TO: Mona Dougherty, File

FROM: Brendan Thompson

DATE: December 10, 2015

SUBJECT: CALTRANS UNPROTECTED STOCKPILE AREAS, STATE ROUTE 128,
BOONVILLE, MENDOCINO COUNTY

On Wednesday, December 2, 2015, while driving on State Route 128, I observed two areas within the Caltrans right-of-way with uncovered stockpiles. The weather was clear, but a rain event was forecast. A heavy rain event did commence the following day. Approximately 0.04 inches of rain fell later that day, 0.74 inches of rain fell the following day on December 3, 2015, and 0.12 inches of rain fell on December 4, 2015¹.

SR 128, ~PM 29.75, lat/lon 38.995532, -123.355819

The area is a pullout adjacent the westbound SR 128 shoulder, approximately 1,500 feet south of the State Route 253/128 junction in Boonville. It appeared that this approximately 2.5-acre area was being used by Caltrans maintenance crews to stockpile maintenance and construction related materials such as asphalt-concrete grindings, hot-mix asphalt, dirt, and gravel.

Appendix A includes a photo log and observations from the visit. Observations that present a concern to water quality include:

- Many animal carcasses and bones were observed throughout the area, atop and over the other side of the berm that runs southeast to northwest across the pullout area. Animal parts and bones were observed within the drainage ditch that runs along the outside of the berm;
- Dirt stockpiles were uncovered in advance of a significant rain event;
- Dirt stockpiles were pushed into jurisdictional waters and placed in areas where sediment would discharge to jurisdictional waters;

¹ Weather Underground Monthly Calendar, accessed 12/16/2015, at http://www.wunderground.com/history/airport/KUKI/2015/12/16/MonthlyCalendar.html?req_city=Boonville&req_state=CA&reqdb.zip=95415&reqdb.magic=1&reqdb.wmo=99999#calendar.

- A large pile of asphalt concrete grindings was left uncovered where runoff from the stockpile would discharge to jurisdictional waters;
- Pieces of yellow thermoplastic striping were visible within the pile of grindings. Caltrans typically separates this striping from asphalt and disposes of the material separately, due to the presence of lead and possibly other metals.

SR 128, ~PM 44.3 lat/lon 38.887261, -123.168301

At this location, Caltrans stockpiled approximately 15 piles of dirt around the outside bend of a turn on the vegetated shoulder, approximately 200 feet from Rancheria Creek. The piles were without erosion and sediment control and rain was forecast for that evening and into the following day.

Follow-Up

The following day, I contacted Robert Syverson, Caltrans Maintenance Environmental Liaison, via telephone to report my findings from the site visits. He was in the area and indicated he would visit the sites and follow-up with the new Boonville maintenance yard supervisor, Dave Pacheco. It was also raining in Boonville at the time I spoke with him. I asked Mr. Syverson to follow-up with me after he visited the sites, but have not heard back from him as of the date of this memo. I also left a message with Mark Suchanek, Caltrans District 1 Director for Maintenance and Operations, to report my findings. He subsequently left a message on my voicemail the same day thanking me for the notification and noting that Caltrans would investigate.

Appendix A: December 2, 2015, SR 128 Photo Log

Drainage ditch locations and flow directions marked throughout document with a yellow arrow



Photo 1: Looking NW towards Boonville. The stockpile area is linear and abuts SR 128. The entire site is sloped down to the NW and crowned; water running to the right would be directed down gradient by an earthen berm and collect at the bottom of the slope at the foot of the earthen stockpile at the location marked by the yellow "x"; water draining to the left would drain to a roadside drainage ditch. The pile in the foreground is asphalt concrete grindings. There was a drainage ditch on the other side of the berm.



Photo 2: AC grinding stockpile shown in photo 1. Yellow thermoplastic pieces were evident within the pile. It appeared that runoff from the stockpile would drain both to the drainage ditch to the left and to the earthen berm on the right.



Photo 3. Looking southeast and upslope at the area show in photos 1 and 2. This drainage ditch would carry stormwater runoff from the stockpile area off-site. After passing through the stockpile area, this ditch would discharge to a creek approximately 750 feet down gradient.



Photo 4: Taken from approximately the same position as Photo 3, except looking north east. Unprotected earthen stockpiles were placed immediately adjacent to the drainage ditch.



Photo 5: Dirt from the unprotected piles in Photo 4 were spilled into the roadside drainage ditch.



Photo 6: Looking onto and over the outside of the berm, immediately adjacent the area marked with the "x" in photo 1. This dirt spoil pile had been placed at the top and over the berm where it could be washed into the drainage ditch marked with the yellow arrow. This drainage ditch parallels the roadside drainage ditch and discharges into the same creek.



Photo 7: Another dirt/waste pile deposited immediately upgradient of the pile shown in Photo 6. 2 different decomposing animals were embedded in the pile. The pile was placed atop and down the side of the berm into the drainage ditch.



Photo 8: This is the same decomposing animal shown in the upper circle in Photo 7.



Photo 9: Deer carcass downstream of the areas in photos 6-8.



Photo 10: Dirt stockpiles placed on top of and pushed over the creek berm. Just downstream of the areas shown in Photos 6-9.



Photo 11: Deer parts placed into the drainage ditch channel adjacent the berm.



Photo 12: Animal bones several hundred feet upgradient of the areas shown in photos 6-11. Animal bones were present along the entire length of the berm.



Photo 13: Decomposing animal at the foot of the inside of the berm.



Photo 14: More animal bones placed on the berm.

Inspection Memo Attachment B
SR 128 PM 44.3

Appendix B: December 2, 2015, SR 128 Photo Log—Post-Mile 44.3



Photo 1: Looking eastbound. Approximately 18 piles of dirt were placed on the vegetated shoulder at the outside of this curve. There was no erosion controls present and rain was forecast for that evening and the next day. The yellow line indicates the extent of the piles.



Photo 2: Looking eastbound at dirt piles. Rancheria Creek is approximately 200 feet to the right.



Photo 3: Looking westbound at unprotected dirt piles. There was not sediment control placed around the pile perimeter.