

May 19, 2005

**Public Notice for 401 Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

**City of Santa Rosa Public Works
Pierson Connector Ramp Project
WDID No. 1B04170WNSO
Sonoma County**

On December 23, 2004, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the City of Santa Rosa Public Works requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Pierson Connector Ramp Project in Sonoma County. The proposed project causes disturbances to the stream bank associated with Santa Rosa Creek, Santa Rosa Hydrologic Sub Area No. 114.22, Russian River, Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The proposed project consists of the construction of a 10-foot wide connector ramp between the existing Pierson Reach Pedestrian Pathway along Santa Rosa Creek and the proposed bridge for the Joe Rodota Trail near West Third Street, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California. The proposed project area currently consists of a grouted riprap slope along the top of the northern bank of Santa Rosa Creek. The proposed connector ramp will be constructed upslope from the existing Pierson Reach Pedestrian Pathway. The purpose of the proposed project is to connect the existing pedestrian pathway to a pedestrian bridge being proposed by the County of Sonoma.

The proposed pathway will be approximately 150 feet in length and involves removal of the existing grouted riprap and construction of a concrete pathway on the north bank of Santa Rosa Creek. All work will be done upslope from the existing concrete pedestrian pathway, will be conducted during the dry season, and will be limited to the excavation of the grouted riprap bank in order to prepare the site for the connector ramp.

Upon completion of the work, any disturbed soil on the top of the bank will be re-seeded with native grasses to establish ground cover and control erosion on the site. The Pierson Reach of Prince Memorial Greenway is currently being designed to include the removal of the grouted riprap channel, to create a series of riffles and pools and to plant the creek and banks with native riparian vegetation. Construction is planned to begin in 2006. It will involve channel restoration work adjacent to the proposed pedestrian pathway project and will require permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish & Game and the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The proposed project will cover an area of 0.04 acres above the ordinary high water mark and is located outside of Army Corps jurisdiction. The project will not involve a dredge or fill to "Waters of the State" but is located on the bank within the Regional Water Board's jurisdiction. No special status plant species were observed during the site visit of December 2, 2004. Given the location of the site, the project is not likely to adversely affect special-status plant species. Currently listed species with historical occurrences near the project site include Jepsen's linanthus (*Linanthus jepsonii*) and white sedge (*Carex albida*). However, Jepsen's linanthus has not been observed since 1931 and white sedge is no longer present in Santa Rosa Creek. The project is outside the potential range delineated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for the

California tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and the critical habitat listed by the FWS for the California Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*). Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Coho Salmon (*O. Kisutch*), and Steelhead Trout (*O. Mykiss*) are federally listed as threatened species in the Russian River Basin. Since the project is not under jurisdiction of the Army Corps, the City consulted with NOAA and declared that the project is not likely to adversely affect listed fish species or their critical habitat.

The City of Santa Rosa Public Works is requesting that the Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements be issued prior to the proposed start date of June 1, 2005. Construction of the project is projected for 90 working days, with a completion date of no later than October 15, 2005. Construction is not proposed for the rainy season between October 15th and May 15th. In the event that it becomes necessary for construction to occur during this rainy season, the project will be subject to additional conditions to ensure winterization techniques are implemented, and to safeguard water quality.

Compensatory mitigation for this project will include the replanting of riparian trees at a ratio of 4:1 for the loss of the four trees removed. All trees removed on the site will be re-placed with native species and any disturbed soil on the top of the bank will be planted with native grass seed. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The City of Santa Rosa Public Works as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for a Negative Declaration pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). (Resolution No. 24916 July 17, 2001).

An amendment request for the City's existing streambed alteration agreement for the Pierson Pathway (2003) has been sent to the California Department of Fish & Game.

Due to the fact that the proposed project occurs above the ordinary high water level, the project will not involve impacts to Waters of the US, and therefore will not require an Army Corps of Engineers approval.

Regional Water Board staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Kari Wester at (707) 576-6728 or Andrew Jensen at (707) 576-2683, or at A.Jensen@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.