

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

Granite Construction Company – Smith River Aggregate Extraction  
Huffman and Sultan Bars  
(WDID 1A02143WNDN)

Siskiyou County

On April 4, 2005, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Granite Construction Company requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification for the extraction of gravel from the Huffman and Sultan gravel bars in the Smith River. The Huffman and Sultan gravel bars are located upstream of the Highway 101 Dr. Fine Memorial Bridge over the Smith River, approximately ten miles north of Crescent City. The proposed projects will cause disturbances to the waters of the United States associated with the Smith River in the Smith River Plain Hydrologic Subarea No. 103.11.

The Huffman Bar is located immediately upstream of the Dr. Fine Memorial Bridge in Sections 12 and 13, T17N, R1W. The Sultan Bar is located immediately upstream of the Huffman Bar in Section 13, T17N, R1W. Aggregate extraction operations at the Huffman and Sultan Bars have been ongoing since the early 1960s. These aggregate extraction operations are regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Letter of Permission procedure pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 404. In 2003, the ACOE issued a five-year Section 404 permit authorizing the applicant to annually extract aggregate from these gravel bars and to construct summer low flow channel crossings as needed. Historic operations have involved extraction of up to 60,000 cubic yards annually from the Huffman Bar and up to 25,000 cubic yards annually from the Sultan Bar. Actual authorized extraction quantities are determined annually based on replenishment. The entire bank full channel area may be subject to aggregate extraction depending on site-specific conditions and seasonal aggregate recruitment.

Existing haul roads are used to access these gravel bars. The main haul road to the Huffman Bar enters the bar from the left bank and is primarily over exposed, unvegetated areas of the gravel bar or through established routes through riparian vegetation. The haul road may require passage over areas of annual vegetation. Impacts to mature woody vegetation are avoided and there is typically no need to extend haul roads through riparian vegetation. The haul road to the Sultan Bar passes through areas of established riparian vegetation and there is no need to establish any new haul roads to the Sultan Bar. When the river meanders and the gravel bars shift locations, the applicant may install temporary railcar bridge crossings over the main channel following approval by the ACOE. Watering of haul roads is conducted as needed during the dry periods to control fugitive dust.

Aggregate extraction on these bars is typically conducted with rubber-tired scrapers. Scrapers are driven through the area of extraction and remove up to 15 to 17 cubic yards of aggregate on each pass by excavating up to six-inches off the surface. Trenching, alcoves, wetland pits and horseshoe extractions are other extraction methods authorized by the ACOE at times when those methods of extraction are preferred. A large excavator, scrapers and/or dump trucks are used when trenching type excavations are authorized. Aggregate material excavated below the water table is temporarily stockpiled away from the wet channel to prevent runoff from entering the river. When the material is adequately dry it is transported to designated stockpile areas.

After the applicant has removed the aggregate to the approved extraction design lines and grades, the extraction area is regraded as necessary to leave no depressions or berms that may potentially trap fish or cause impacts to surrounding habitats. The applicant's consultant will conduct a site visit at the conclusion of extraction operations and provide any additional recommendations reflecting seasonal extraction plan and reclamation plan conformity. When the final surfaces of the site are graded for seasonal reclamation, the operator may remove the summer crossings and leave the bank-full channel area to the natural reclamation process, which occurs during the high flow events of the following winter. The extraction season typically ends on October 15 unless agencies agree to grant an extension of the season. The applicant will implement mitigation and impact avoidance measures during the aggregate extraction processes including; maintaining vertical and horizontal offset from the live channel to ensure low-flow channel confinement, maintaining sufficient water depth for fish, minimizing impacts to water quality, limiting the number of haul roads providing access to the channel extraction areas, and minimizing the need for temporary stream crossings when practicable.

The California Department of Fish and Game, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act agency, certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration for aggregate extraction operations at the Huffman Bar on October 18, 2003. The California Department of Fish and Game, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act agency, certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration for aggregate extraction operations at the Sultan Bar on August 10, 2000. The applicant applies for Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreements (1600 Agreement) from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G) on an annual basis after receiving approval of their annual extraction plans by the County of Humboldt Extraction Review Team, CDF&G, ACOE, and NOAA Fisheries.

Regional Water Board staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act Authority. This project may be eligible for coverage by the proposed *General Waste Discharge Requirements and Water Quality Certification for Discharges Related to Sand and Gravel Mining, Excavation, and Processing Activities, Including Asphalt and Concrete Operations, on Non-Federal Lands in the North Coast Region* (General WDRs). The Regional Water Board will hold a hearing to consider the General WDRs for adoption on June 21, 2005. The decision to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 or the proposed General WDRs will be made following the Regional Water Board hearing in June. 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 Regional Water Board staff Dean Prat by phone at (707) 576-2801, or email [dprat@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:dprat@waterboards.ca.gov) within 21 days of the posting of this notice.