

May 31, 2005

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

**Shamrock Materials, Inc.
Instream Gravel Bar Skimming in the
Upper Alexander Valley of the Russian River
Sonoma County**

On February 8, 2005, the Regional Water Board received an application from Mr. David Ripple of Shamrock Materials, Inc., (Shamrock) requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the extraction of gravel in the Alexander Valley Reach of the Russian River, Sonoma County. The application, submitted according to administrative regulations and Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 401, covers disturbance to the waters of the United States associated with gravel extraction and associated activities.

Shamrock proposes to mine gravel along approximately 2.5 mile stretch of the Russian River in the Upper Alexander Valley, near Cloverdale, California. The total project area encompasses approximately 98.3 acres of gravel bars, although only a portion of this area will be mined the first year. This project is located approximately between River Mile 59 and River Mile 62 (distance from the Pacific Ocean). Gravel extraction will be accomplished by surface skimming six gravel bars. No operations are proposed in the wetted stream, or below water level. Buffer zones will separate the operational areas from the low-water channel. The project is proposed to begin in June 2005, will progress from north to south, and will not be conducted simultaneously at multiple sites. Seven stream crossings will be utilized, with a maximum of five in place at the same time. In addition to conditions set forth by the Regional Water Board, additional conditions are imposed by the County of Sonoma, California Department of Fish and Game, Army Corps of Engineers, and National Marine Fisheries Service that require extensive monitoring, data gathering and reporting. Sonoma County's Aggregate Resource Management Plan (ARM) requires extensive monitoring, including site inspections, channel cross sections, and annual aerial photographs. On March 28, 2003, in accordance with CWA Section 401 WDID No. 1B840120SON, Mr. Ripple submitted monitoring reports and field cross-sections covering all mining areas and the required upstream and downstream areas outside the mining footprint. The provided monitoring documents included:

1. 2002 Spring and Fall Field Cross-Sections
2. Stream Inventory and Fisheries Monitoring Report for the Russian River, Alexander Valley, CA.
3. Bank Erosion in Russian River near Cloverdale.
4. Fine Sediment Storage in Russian River near Cloverdale.
5. Spawning Gravel Monitoring.
6. Annual Monitoring of Groundwater Recharge Potential in Upper Alexander Valley.

The following measures are proposed to be incorporated in the project to prevent, reduce or eliminate potential impacts, however additional measures may be outlined in the final permit:

- Issuance of future Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) will be dependent on review of all monitoring results. In addition, the Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) permit may be rescinded by the Regional Water Board if violations of the North Coast Regional Water Board's Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) occur.

- Water quality monitoring will consist of turbidity monitoring upstream and downstream of the mining sites during the first flood event that results in flow over the mined areas. The exact monitoring locations and timing will be proposed by the applicant to the satisfaction and approval of the Executive Officer of the Regional Water Board.
- Mining plans and monitoring data submitted to the County of Sonoma PRMD, and the Department of Fish & Game, shall also be submitted to the Regional Water Board.
- The amount of gravel extracted under this certification action shall be based on annual aggregate replenishment rates as outlined in the Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan.
- The extraction sites may be visited and assessed by Regional Water Board staff to document compliance with this certification.
- Extraction activities will comply with all provisions contained in the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region.
- All extraction operations, extraction techniques, reclamation activities, monitoring, project impact minimization measures, and terms of conditions will be implemented as described in the National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion and the Sonoma County Aggregate Resources Management Plan and Environmental Impact Report, November 1994.

A Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was adopted by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors in Resolution 96-0970. The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors is scheduled to be issue a mitigated negative declaration prior to this certification action.

The nearest receiving water is Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The gravel extraction is scheduled to begin in July and end by October 15th of each year. 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. 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 Andrew Jensen at (707) 576-2683, or at ajensen@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.