

June 2, 2005

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

**Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District  
Estero Americano Ranch Restoration  
WDID No. 1B04154WNSO  
Marin and Sonoma Counties**

On November 17, 2004, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Kathie Lowrey of Prunuske Chatham, Inc., on behalf of Ms. Lisa Hulette of Gold Ridge Conservation District (GRRCD), requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for creek and stream restoration activities on multiple private ranch sites within the Estero Americano Watershed in northwestern Marin and southwestern Sonoma Counties. The proposed project will cause disturbances to the waters of the state associated with Bodega Hydrologic Unit No. 115.00, Estero Americano Hydrologic Area No. 115.30.

The proposed project involves restoration activities on private ranches, identified as Ranch numbers 1,2,3,4,8,10,11, and 13, located within the Estero Americano Watershed. The proposed projects are funded by the State Coastal Conservancy. The purpose of this project is to address and correct sedimentation, riparian management, and water quality conditions within Americano Creek and its tributaries, and the Estero Americano, through stream bank stabilization, slide stabilization, riparian enhancement, and exclusionary fencing.

Work as proposed on Ranch 1, located at 680 Gerieke Road, involves the installation of an 18' x 150' grade and sediment control structure in an ephemeral, actively eroding gully, to prevent further down cutting and to trap sediment. The embankment will impound approximately 0.8 acre-feet with a surface area of about 0.25 acres. Fencing will be installed along both sides of the gully to exclude livestock. An existing spring will be restored through replanting and stabilization techniques, and a new spring will be created to supply water to a new stock water trough. Stream banks will be graded to a 2:1 slope, and revegetation is proposed to provide long-term bank stability and wildlife habitat. Work as proposed on Ranch 1 will impact 0.25 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

Work as proposed at Ranches 2-3, located at 30201 and 30501 Highway 1, involves installation of new fencing, planting with willow sprigs and seeding with an erosion control plant blend in an effort to stabilize eroding banks. As originally proposed, this portion of the restoration project included the installation of a 24' x 100' grade control and sediment retention structure in an 18' high by 300' long gully. The installation of such a structure would require a Stock pond Registration, which has been applied for, to impound  $\pm 4.4$  acre-feet with a surface area of  $\pm 0.7$  acres. Regional Water Board staff have advised the Applicant that this portion of the project (the

proposed stock pond) will not be included in the 401 Water Quality Certification for these joint restoration projects, and have further advised the Applicant to submit a separate application for certification of the proposed stock pond. The fencing, stabilization, and vegetation efforts proposed to stabilize the eroding hillsides upstream of the proposed stock pond are eligible for coverage under this proposed Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects). Work as proposed on Ranch 2 would impact 0.7 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

Work as proposed at Ranch 3 will also involve restoration of a 100' long hillside trail that failed during the winter of 2003-04. The down slope, ephemeral gully, immediately above the Ranch 2-3 site, will be cleared of accumulated debris and stabilized using a combination of bio-technical and rock armoring erosion control measures to prevent further down cutting. A rocked ford will be installed on an existing ranch trail. Fence repair will prohibit livestock. Revegetation with an erosion control blend is proposed to provide soil stabilization at the site. Work as proposed on Ranch 3 will impact 0.03 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

Work as proposed at Ranch 4, located off Freestone Flats Road, will involve stabilizing an approximately 490' long, up to 20' deep, eroded ephemeral channel with a series of engineered rock riprap sections, exclusionary fencing, and revegetation with native riparian species. Plunge pools are proposed to be created at the downstream end of each rock structure to provide energy dissipation and wildlife habitat, and a rocked livestock crossing is proposed at the upper end of the repair. Mature riparian vegetation will be left undisturbed. Work as proposed on Ranch 4 will impact 0.36 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

Work at Ranch 8, located at 2114 Middle Road, will involve the fill of a highly unstable, intermittent gully and adjacent sinkholes with compacted local soil. An approximately 450' long section of gully is proposed to be rock-lined and fiber roll check dams will be installed to prevent down cutting and further erosion, which currently discharges sediment into an existing water and sediment control basin. A 10' wide by 20' long, rock-armored swale crossing is proposed for construction at the lower end of the repair on an existing field road. Upon completion, the site shall be seeded with a permanent erosion control plant blend and Juncus plugs shall be installed where feasible. Work as proposed on Ranch 8 will impact 0.75 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

Work at Gully A on Ranch 10, located at 1256 Estero Road, involves the construction of an approximately 200' long, rock-armored swale to convey lateral hillside runoff from an existing County road culvert to an approximately 650' long, uniformly sloped, rock-lined channel. Fiber mat-armored swales are proposed for installation in parallel drainages on both sides to interrupt sheet flow paths. Fabric-lined side swales and fiber rolls are also proposed to direct flow back into the main drainage route. Existing field fencing will remain, and the site will be re-vegetated with native plant species upon completion of restoration. Work as proposed on Ranch 10, Gully A will impact 1.5 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

At Gully B on Ranch 10, a uniformly sloped 440' long, rock-armored channel with fabric-lined 2.5:1 maximum side slopes is proposed downstream from a County road culvert to reduce future erosion potential. The Applicant intends to install a drop inlet structure and several swales and fiber rolls placed on contour to redirect flows to the channel as proposed. Local willow sprigs will be planted along both sides of the channel. Existing field fencing will remain, and new stock fencing and 3 new stock gates are proposed. The disturbed area will be re-vegetated with native plant species to include willow sprigs upon completion. Work as proposed on Ranch 10, Gully B will impact 1.0 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

At Ranch 11, located at 14280 Valley Ford Road, a small, actively eroding upland gully is proposed to be lined with erosion control fabric in the channel to increase scour resistance, improve sediment retention, and provide a substrate to encourage revegetation. The project has been designed to avoid grading. A stock fence is proposed to allow better management of the repaired area. Work as proposed on Ranch 11 will impact approximately 0.1 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

Work at Ranch 13, located at 12528 Petaluma Valley Ford Road, will consist of tire removal from a 1,300' gully, and subsequent restoration and stabilization. The tires were installed in the 1950's to provide erosion control, and have since been deemed hazardous by the California Integrated Waste Management Board. The 1,300' stretch, titled Gully A, will be stabilized with a series of 10 check dams at varying intervals along a 2 percent slope, establishment of a vegetated grass waterway that will be re-graded with compacted fill, armored with erosion control fabric, and seeded with native grasses. Plunge pools are proposed for creation at the downstream end of each rock structure for energy dissipation and wildlife habitat. A rocked livestock crossing and 3,000ft of exclusionary fencing will be installed around the treatment area. Disturbed areas outside the channel will be re-graded to 2:1 slopes and planted with native vegetation.

Legacy tires will also be removed from a 300' long gully on Ranch 13, titled Gully B, with minimum disturbance, and existing trees will be left intact to the greatest extent possible. Disturbed or eroded banks will be laid back to 2:1. All disturbed areas will be seeded and mulched. Disturbed areas on steeper slopes, potentially erosive areas, and the bottom of the channel will be lined with geotextile fabric. A 200' long livestock exclusion fence will be installed. Work as proposed on Ranch 13 will impact approximately 1.8 acres and 0.9 acres, respectively, of jurisdictional Waters of the State.

The project affects approximately 7.39 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. as delineated by the Army Corp of Engineers.

The Applicant is requesting that the Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements be issued so they can meet the proposed start date of June 2005. Construction is projected to take several months, suggesting a completion date of approximately October 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 is not required for this project as impacts will be temporary, and the intent of the projects is to restore habitat and channel stability. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control, and conducting work during low-flow or dry conditions.

The Gold Ridge RCD Board of Directors, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that the projects qualify for CEQA exemptions pursuant to CEQA.

- Ranches 1, 2, 8—NOE dated April 29, 2004  
Section 15303, Class 3—*New construction or conversion of small structures* Section 15330, Class 30—*Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release of Hazardous Substances*
- Ranch 3—NOE dated October 25, 2004  
Section 15303, Class 3—*New construction or conversion of small structures* Section 15330, Class 4—*Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release of Hazardous Substances*
- Ranch 4—NOE dated October 25, 2004  
Section 15303, Class 3—*New construction or conversion of small structures* Section 15330, Class 33—*Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release of Hazardous Substances*
- Ranch 10—NOE dated May 25, 2004  
Section 15303, Class 3—*New construction or conversion of small structures* Section 15330, Class 30—*Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release of Hazardous Substances*  
Section 15304, Class 4—*Minor Alterations to Land*
- Ranch 11—NOE dated May 25, 2004  
Section 15303, Class 3—*New construction or conversion of small structures* Section 15330, Class 4—*Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release of Hazardous Substances*
- Ranch 13—NOE dated July 19, 2004  
Section 15303, Class 3—*New construction or conversion of small structures* Section 15330, Class 4 and Class 30—*Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release of Hazardous Substances*

The Applicants have obtained United States Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permits as follows: Ranches 1, 2, and 3 are covered under NWP # 27—*Stream and Wetland Restoration* and NWP # 43—*Stormwater Management Facilities*, while Ranches 4, 8, 10, 11, 13 are covered under NWP #27—*Stream and Wetland Restoration*. The RCD has applied for a 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement (CDFG 1600) from the California Department of Fish and Game (Notification no. 1600-2004-0845-3).

Regional Water Board staff is proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and 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 notice. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Andrew Jensen at (707) 576-2683 or at [AJensen@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:AJensen@waterboards.ca.gov) within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

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