

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

Eureka Sand and Gravel Company – Mad River Aggregate Extraction
Christie, Johnson/Spini & O’Neill Bars
(WDID No. 1B05068WNHU)

Humboldt County

On April 6, 2005, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Eureka Sand and Gravel Company (applicant) requesting Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for aggregate extraction operations on the Mad River between the City of Arcata and the City of Blue Lake in Humboldt County. The proposed projects will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Mad River in the Mad River Hydrologic Unit No. 109.00.

Eureka Sand and Gravel’s Mad River aggregate extraction operations consist of three separate gravel bars that cover a total of approximately 265 acres. The Christie Bar is approximately 175 acres located south of Glendale. The Johnson/Spini Bar is located immediately downstream of the Highway 299 bridge over the Mad River and the O’Neill Bar is located just downstream of the Johnson/Spini Bar. The Johnson/Spini Bar and O’Neill Bar total approximately 90 acres. Aggregate extraction operations at the Christie Bar, Johnson/Spini Bar, and O’Neill Bar typically cover up to 15 acres, 10 acres and 2.6 acres respectfully. The total volume of aggregate authorized for extraction from all these bars combined is up to 78,925 cubic yards annually. The actual volume removed and the specific area of extraction within each gravel bar varies from year-to-year.

Previous aggregate extraction operations on these bars have been regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Letter of Permission (LOP) procedure pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 404. The LOP expired in 2004 and the ACOE issued a five-year individual Section 404 permit consistent with the LOP that authorizes the applicant to annually extract up to 78,925 cubic yards of aggregate from these gravel bars and to construct summer low-flow channel crossings as needed. Aggregate excavation from the dry gravel bars is conducted with scrapers, dozers, excavators and loaders. The extraction season is typically from June 1 to October 31. Summer crossing installation and use is allowed between June 31 and September 15. Summer crossings consist of railroad flatcars on concrete block and clean gravel-fill abutments. Summer crossings are located to avoid potential fish spawning, holding and rearing habit. Appropriate crossing locations are typically shallow low-velocity waters located away from riffle crests and pools. Temporary stockpiling of excavated material within the limits of the extraction area is allowed through October 15 when stockpiles must be removed above Ordinary High Water. The applicant hauls the excavated material to an aggregate processing facility on upland property adjacent to the Christie Bar near Glendale that also has a concrete batch plant and truck shop. The applicant also operates a concrete batch plant and truck shop adjacent to the O’Neill Bar near Arcata.

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 bankfull 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: maintenance and inspection of equipment, maintaining vertical and horizontal offsets from the live channel to ensure low-flow channel confinement, maintaining sufficient water depth for fish, minimizing impacts to water quality, limiting the number wet crossings, limiting the amount of haul roads providing access to the channel extraction areas, and use of clean washed gravel and concrete blocks for construction of temporary crossings.

The applicant conducts aggregate extraction operations under conditions of the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for aggregate removal from the Mad River. The California Department of Fish and Game, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act agency, certified Supplemental Program EIRs for the Johnson/Spini and O'Neill Bars on August 12, 2004, and the Christie Bar on August 26, 2004. 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 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.