

June 9, 2005

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

**California Department of Transportation
Route 1 Realignment From PM 10.7-11.3
WDID No. 1B05027WNME
Mendocino County**

On March 10, 2005, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the realignment of a portion of State Route 1 to the east, from post mile (PM) 10.7 to 11.3. The proposed project will cause disturbances to the waters of the state associated with Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit No. 113.00, Garcia River Subunit No. 113.70.

The project proposes to correct a failing portion of Route 1 by realigning the highway further inland. The realignment will be located approximately four miles south of Point Arena between PM 10.7 and 11.3. The purpose of the project is to reduce the threat to the highway from coastal erosion and reduce annual maintenance costs.

The project involves the excavation and placement of soil, gravel, and pavement within 0.53 acres of jurisdictional wetlands in order to realign a portion of Route 1 that is currently threatened by coastal erosion. Beginning at PM 10.7, the centerline of the road will be realigned toward the east by approximately 45 yards. The project will end at PM 11.3, where the segment will recombine with the existing road. The proposed roadway segment will consist of two 12 foot traffic lanes and two four foot paved shoulders, for a total width of 32 feet. The project will also include the removal of the temporary bridge and the obliteration of the existing pavement that will be bypassed by the new segment. Other project features consist of vista turnouts, culvert installation, and improved driveway access. The project will require the use of heavy equipment including graders, excavators, dump trucks, paving machines, rollers, and cement trucks. When complete, topsoil from the new alignment will be spread over the old alignment and contoured to match the natural topography.

The project permanently affects 0.52 acres of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) jurisdictional wetlands 0.02 acres of Waters of the State. A wetland delineation has been prepared by Steve Hansen, Caltrans Biologist and has been confirmed by the ACOE.

Caltrans is requesting that the water quality certification and/or waste discharge requirements be issued so that construction can begin during the summer of 2005. Construction is expected to take one year to complete. Any construction involving jurisdictional waters will be done between June 15th and October 15th. If it is not feasible to begin construction during the summer of 2005, all construction will be delayed until the following year. 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 required for this project and will consist of wetland creation on-site within the abandoned highway alignment, and off-site within the area bordered by Highway 1 and the scenic overlook turnoff near PM 10.3/10.4. The on-site mitigation will include 1.56 acres of at least single parameter wetland and 0.68 acres of wetland that will achieve all three parameters – soils that function as hydric soils, seasonal wetland hydrology, and hydrophytic vegetation cover. For the off-site mitigation, Caltrans proposes to construct a shallow distribution ditch along the contour of the highway culvert outlets. Water from the distribution ditch will sheet-flow over much of the 4.2 acre site providing seasonal wetland hydrology. Upon completion of the mitigation proposal at this site, it is expected that 3.0 acres will achieve all three parameters and an additional 0.2 acres will achieve at least one wetland characteristic. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and erosion control as well as the following special provisions:

- The design of the project will include gradual grade transitions (slope rounding) at hinge and catch points of earthwork slopes, as well as flatter slopes, 1:1.5 or flatter with 10 foot maximum, to reduce potential slides and soil erosion.
- The proposed project will follow existing topography to minimize excavation/embankment requirements that could increase the potential for unstable soils.
- Disturbances near unstable coastal bluffs will be avoided to prevent any material from falling over the bluffs to the beach or ocean below.
- California native grasses will be applied via hydroseeding at all locations with exposed soil and slopes to prevent soil erosion and help preserve the natural landscape character.

Caltrans, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH No. 2003072128), pursuant to CEQA.

Caltrans has applied to the ACOE for a 404 Individual Permit (File Number 26544N) and a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (CDFG 1602) from the Department of Fish and Game.

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 Mona Dougherty at (707) 570-3761 or at mdougherty@waterboards.ca.gov or staff member Michelle Jensen at (707) 576-6711 or at mjensen@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.