

**July 13, 2005**

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

City of Arcata – Gannon Slough, Campbell and Beith Creek Riparian  
Enhancement/Restoration Project  
WDID No. 1B05040WNHU

Humboldt County

On April 12, 2005 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the City of Arcata Environmental Services Department requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Gannon Slough, Campbell and Beith Creek Riparian Enhancement and Restoration Project in Humboldt County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Humboldt Bay and the Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00.

Campbell and Beith Creeks are small creeks that flow from the headwaters of Fickle Hill through residential sections of Arcata and into the low-gradient, diked former tidelands that drain to Gannon Slough. Gannon Slough is fed by runoff from both forested and urbanized areas of the Grotzman, Fickle Hill, Beith, and Campbell Creek watersheds. The Campbell Creek project reach is located south of Samoa Boulevard and east of Highway 101. The total Campbell Creek watershed is 560 acres with 387 acres of the watershed draining to the project site and the balance entering Campbell Creek downstream of the site. Upstream of the project site is a series of concrete box culverts that convey creek flows through the Highway 101 cloverleaf. The Beith Creek project reach is located south of Samoa Boulevard. The entire 731-acre Beith Creek watershed drains to the project site. Beith and Campbell Creeks flow directly into Gannon Slough. Gannon Slough flows through four California Department of Transportation tidegates and through a culvert under Highway 101, before entering Humboldt Bay. The proposed project has four elements:

1. Repair a non-functioning tidegate separating Gannon Slough from Humboldt Bay and upgrade to a side-hinged gate to provide access for anadromous salmonids;
2. reroute and restore a 910-foot channel of Campbell Creek and restore the riparian habitat; increase canopy cover and large woody debris habitat for Coho salmon, steelhead and cutthroat trout;
3. enhance the floodplain and fish habitat along an 850-foot reach of Beith Creek; and
4. restore riparian habitat in Campbell and Beith Creeks; work includes planting native trees and installing livestock exclusion fencing.

Gannon Slough drains through a tidegate structure that leaks and creates brackish conditions upstream. The tidegate repair will involve replacing the top hinged gate with

a side-hinged mount. The new tidegate will have an auxiliary door with a maximum aperture of two feet, which adjusts vertically. This auxiliary door feature will allow greater tidal exchange between Gannon Slough and Humboldt Bay without flooding adjacent lands. Activities in the tidegate installation area will include placement of backfill and riprap, at slack low tide, to a height that will prevent tidal waters from entering the area. Vehicles and other equipment involved in the project will be restricted to the existing ranch road. The applicant estimates that the tidegate project will take three days to complete.

The 910-foot segment of Campbell Creek slated for restoration has a denuded riparian area and a channel choked with emergent vegetation. This narrow reach lacks complexity and offers limited habitat potential for fish and wildlife. Within the freeway right-of-way, the channel becomes a 25-foot wide and 10-foot deep ditch. The ditch flows to a culvert beneath the freeway, where the remainder the water from the Campbell Creek watershed converges, before flowing downstream to the tidegate. The applicant proposes to eliminate an existing drop between the culvert outlet and the natural creek channel by placing a low profile two log weir flush with the downstream channel bed, thereby stabilizing the new channel and preventing scour damage to proposed new weirs to be placed downstream. Channel realignment work will create 910 feet of new channel, with six meanders and six straight reaches. The new channel will be approximately 30 feet wide at the top and 20 feet wide at the bottom. The applicant proposes to anchor approximately six logs to the bank to provide cover for fish. The applicant will use a total of 160 cubic yards of fill to create a spillway, jump pools and meanders in the channel. The spillway, armored with riprap to prevent erosion, will provide a resting area for salmon, steelhead and trout. In order to route stream flow into the channel, the applicant proposes to block off the existing ditch with a diagonal plug of fill. This fill will serve as a high flow spillway. The spillway will be armored with small riprap to prevent erosion. The applicant proposes to remove 400 cubic yards of fill from the Beith Creek flood plain area, serving both to enhance Beith Creek and to mitigate for the fill used in the Campbell Creek realignment. The applicant estimates that it will take approximately two months to complete the project. All habitat improvements will be conducted in accordance with the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual*.

As noted above, the proposed restoration activities in Beith Creek will involve removing 400 cubic yards of fill from the channel. Fill removal will widen the channel, reduce the flow velocity, and allow the stream to meander. This restoration project will also increase existing wetland area by 0.4 acres. An excavator will remove the fill and load dump trucks adjacent to the excavation area. The dump trucks will then haul excess fill material to an approved location.

The applicant will conduct the proposed excavation and enhancement phases of the project during the dry season. The applicant does not expect eggs and larvae of the aquatic species in the area to be present during project activities. The applicant has scheduled installation of exclusion fencing for the late summer to decrease potential impacts to vegetation. Revegetation is scheduled for the winter dormancy period from

late December to January. Project activities will be completed under a restoration plan and design approved by the Department of Fish and Game. Species of concern that may be present in the project area are Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, steelhead, tidewater goby, western lily, Humboldt Bay owl's clover, Point Reyes bird's beak, and Lyngbye's sedge.

The total area of wetlands to be permanently filled is 0.037 acre for the Campbell Creek realignment. Compensatory mitigation measures include the creation of a restored Beith creek channel and restored riparian wetland habitat. Beith Creek is a bermed ditch that contributes to urban flooding and lacks the riparian cover and complexity necessary to be suitable habitat for salmonids. The existing riparian habitat is highly disturbed, actively grazed, fragmented and narrow. The removal of 0.4 acres of fill from the Beith Creek flood plain will restore 0.4 acres of wetland. This wetland area in the Beith Creek floodplain will serve as the mitigation for the proposed wetlands fill in the Campbell Creek watershed. The restoration of wetland on the Beith reach will provide a wider, lower velocity meandering channel, facilitating the reestablishment of fish and wildlife habitat. Beith and Campbell Creeks will be further enhanced and protected by the proposed livestock exclusion fencing and revegetation with native trees and shrubs. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices. The applicant will install silt fencing in order to prevent sediment delivery to streams, and will seed and mulch all areas of bare soil for erosion control.

The applicant has applied to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for authorization to perform the proposed restoration project, pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 404. The applicant has also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600 Permit) from the California Department of Fish and Game. The California Coastal Commission approved the proposed project with conditions. The City of Arcata, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, is preparing a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project. The CEQA document will address potential impacts to species of concern. The initial study indicates that the project will not have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat nor substantially interfere with the movement of native resident fish, migratory fish, or wildlife species. A North Coast Information Center assessment concluded that there was a low probability of cultural site discovery. The applicant has incorporated mitigation measures into the project plan, should any cultural resources be found.

Regional Water Board staff are 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 Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 or at [dprat@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:dprat@waterboards.ca.gov) within 21 days of the posting of this notice.