

September 7, 2005

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

**Sonoma County Water Agency  
Santa Rosa Creek Diversion Channel Sediment Removal Project  
WDID No. 1B05093WNSO  
Sonoma County**

On July 7, 2005, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Ron Benkert, on behalf of the Sonoma County Water Agency (Applicant), requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for annual maintenance of a cement lined flood control channel in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to the waters of the state associated with Santa Rosa Creek, near Spring Lake, Santa Rosa Hydrologic Subarea No. 14.22, Middle Russian River Hydrologic Area No. 114.20, Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The proposed project is located near Montgomery Drive and Melita Creek Drive, in Santa Rosa Creek, Santa Rosa, Sonoma County. The project as proposed involves the removal of approximately 2,448 cubic yards of sediment from the cement-lined channel utilizing heavy equipment for dredging operations and hauling away of spoils. Sediment and debris would be hauled to the approved Grossi Disposal site (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers File No. 29238N) at 6652 Petaluma Hill Road in Rohnert Park, Sonoma County. The Applicant has stated that the channel is currently at capacity, and the purpose of the project is to restore the flood control channel to its original design flood protection capability.

The original application proposed to construct a berm across a side channel to redirect flows downstream. After consultation with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), the Applicant has abandoned this portion of the project. A stretch of sediment and vegetation has begun establishing itself near the portion of the channel where the Applicant had intended to install the artificial berm. This naturally occurring feature will likely serve the same purpose while also allowing for some habitat creation, thereby avoiding the need to place non-native materials in the channel for berm construction. The Applicant has withdrawn the plans to place the man-made berm in Santa Rosa Creek, below the diversion, and it is therefore not included in consideration of potential water quality certification.

The project affects 0.39 acres of jurisdictional Waters of the State over an approximate 1.00-acre land area.

The Sonoma County Water Agency is requesting that the water quality certification and/or waste discharge requirements be issued before the end of the dry season of 2005, and remain in force for a period of five years. Construction is projected to take approximately one week, and will be conducted annually for five years, between August 1<sup>st</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup> of each year.

Compensatory Mitigation is required for this project. To mitigate for the impacts associated with this project, the Applicant is proposing to plant fifty 4-6 foot trees consisting of twenty maples, twenty live oaks, and ten valley oaks along Santa Rosa Creek downstream of Stony Point Road. Trees will be planted manually and maintained and irrigated for a period of three years. Upon achievement of success criteria, this planting proposal should provide a canopy to a degraded riparian corridor. Establishing such a canopy will serve to shade the area, promoting growth of shrubs and grasses that require shaded environments, and serving to enhance the riparian corridor. The water quality benefits of such a riparian corridor along Santa Rosa Creek include reduced bank erosion and therefore reduced turbidity levels in the watercourse, reduced water temperatures and thereby enhanced aquatic habitat value of the creek, and filtration of nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrates.

Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and erosion control as described in the Bay Area Storm Water Management Agencies Association's (BASMAA) Flood Control Best Management Practices manual. Other measures include conducting work during low-flow or dry periods, and dewatering the channel if necessary using a vacuum pump truck for ponded water or a cofferdam and bypass pipe system for flowing water.

The County of Sonoma, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for categorical exemptions Section 15301 (h)(i) *Existing Facilities* (Notice of Exemption dated November 4, 1988), pursuant to CEQA.

The Applicant intends to conduct this work under their existing blanket Streambed Alteration Agreement with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG Permit No. III-334-82, approved April 30, 1992). Application is also pending (Corps file no. 29560N) with the U.S. Army Corps for Nationwide Permits 3—*Maintenance*—and 33—*Temporary Construction, Access, and Dewatering*.

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.

The related documents and comments received are on file and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.