

**Public Notice for Section 401 Water Quality Certification  
and/or Waste Discharge Requirements**

CDOT – Highway 3, Stuart Fork Bridges  
WDID No. 1B05110WNTR

Trinity County

On August 1, 2005, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Ed Espinoza, representing the California Department of Transportation (applicant) requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification to replace an existing bridge over East Fork Stuart Fork Creek and to implement various safety improvements on a bridge over Trinity Lake at Stuart Fork Creek. Both bridges are located on Highway 3 near Trinity Lake in Trinity County, California. The proposed projects will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Stuart Fork Creek, East Fork Stuart Fork Creek, and Trinity Lake in the Upper Trinity River Hydrologic Area No. 106.40.

The Stuart Fork Bridge spans impounded water in Trinity Lake when the lake levels are high, and a creek channel in the summer and fall when the lake levels are typically lower. The primary purpose of the proposed Stuart Fork project is to address several safety concerns. Proposed activities associated with the Stuart Fork project include seismic retrofitting the existing bridge, cutting back the slope of a road cut on the northeast end of the bridge to improve sight distance, replacing the existing railing and curb, removal of the existing asphalt concrete overlay, and replacement of the overlay with polyester concrete. The proposed activities at Stuart Fork will not require access into or disturbance of the lake or creek bed.

The East Fork Stuart Fork Bridge spans a perennial stream. The primary purpose of the proposed East Fork Stuart Fork project is to increase the limited hydraulic capacity under the existing bridge by replacing the bridge in the same alignment with a longer and wider bridge. The proposed bridge replacement project requires access onto both creek banks down to the water's edge to allow for construction of new abutments and removal of the old abutments. The existing abutments will be excavated to a depth of two feet below ground. Existing rock slope protection will be removed and replaced around the new abutments. The applicant anticipates that excavation dewatering will not be required. If dewatering becomes necessary, the applicant will pump water directly into a truck and use the water for dust or soil moisture control.

The applicant proposes to conduct both projects between February 1, 2006 and January 1, 2008. Construction activities near the creeks and the lake are proposed to be conducted between May 15 and October 15. The proposed project does not require removal of mature vegetation and will not affect any wetlands. The applicant's project description indicates that only limited vegetation removal and light grading of existing access roads will be required. The applicant indicates that the proposed Stuart Fork project will not result in any permanent or temporary impacts to waters of the United States. The East Stuart Fork project will result in no temporary impacts to waters of the United States and will result in approximately 0.16-acre and 72 linear feet of permanent impacts to the banks of the stream channel. Compensatory mitigation is not proposed for either project. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes the use of Best Management Practices for waste handling, sediment and turbidity control, and heavy equipment and concrete use near waterways.

The applicant has applied to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for authorization to perform the project under Nationwide Permit No. 13, pursuant to Clean Water Act, Section 404. The California Department of Transportation, as the lead agency for CEQA, determined that this project will have no significant effect on the environment and is categorically exempt from CEQA (Class 2). The applicant has applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600 Permit) from the California Department of Fish and Game.

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.