

June 22, 2006

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

Trinity County Resource Conservation District – Lowden Fields Wetland Enhancement  
WDID No. 1A06059WNTR

Trinity County

On May 8, 2006, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (hereinafter Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. John Condon, on behalf of the Trinity County Resource Conservation District (applicant), requesting Federal Clear Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification for the proposed Lowden Fields Wetland Enhancement Project. The proposed project will cause disturbances to Snipe Gulch in the Douglas City Hydrologic Subarea No. 106.31.

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District is proposing to restore degraded wetlands on property that was previously drained to allow for agriculture. The purpose of the proposed project is to enhance wildlife habitat and water quality in the Trinity River watershed. The proposed project involves minor excavation and grading to divert water from an existing ditch into a wetland enhancement area and to control the amount of water that flows through the wetland.

Surface water currently enters the degraded wetland area from an ephemeral creek that typically flows from January to May. Seasonal shallow groundwater and rainfall creates a wetland pool complex in the existing depressions within the degraded wetland area. As water travels through the wetland pool complex, it meters out at several locations and eventually enters existing ponds and the tailings piles adjacent to the project and the Trinity River. The source of water that will be used to enhance the wetland area currently flows down an existing ditch and through an 18-inch culvert under Old Lewiston Road. Water in the ditch eventually drains into the Hamilton Ponds on Grass Valley Creek.

Activities related to the proposed project include installation of a culvert and flashboard riser dam in an existing drainage ditch that is approximately 6 feet wide and 3 feet deep. The proposed flashboard dam would consist of a 4-foot high flashboard riser attached to a 3-foot diameter culvert that will be placed in the ditch and covered with approximately 20 cubic yards of earthen fill material. The flashboard riser will allow variable flows through the ditch system and variable depths and flow rates through the wetland enhancement area.

The proposed project will permanently impact approximately 80 square feet of waters of the United States for construction of the flashboard dam. The proposed project would enhance approximately 15 acres of degraded wetland habitat. The proposed project will be implemented as soon as possible after the applicant obtains the necessary permits. The project is expected to take two days to complete. Compensatory mitigation is not required. Noncompensatory

mitigation measures for this project include the use of Best Management Practices for heavy equipment use and for sediment and turbidity control.

The applicant has received authorization (File No. 29270N) to perform the project under Nationwide Permit No. 27 from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, pursuant to Clean Water Act, Section 404. The Trinity County Resource Conservation District, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from CEQA (Class 1, Section 15301 and Class 4, 15304) and filed a Notice of Exemption on May 8, 2006. The applicant applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600 Permit) from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G). CDF&G informed the applicant that they could implement the project without a 1600 Permit.

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 written comments submitted during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

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