

July 13, 2006

**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 May 15, 2006 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 a Phase II of the Beith Creek component of 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.

Beith Creek is a small creek that flows 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 Beith Creek watershed drains 731 acres into the project area and Gannon Slough. The project site located near the confluence with Gannon Slough is south of Samoa Boulevard. Gannon Slough flows through four California Department of Transportation tidegates and through a culvert under Highway 101, before entering Humboldt Bay. The purpose of the proposed project is to restore natural stream characteristics and flood plain connection to a 1,454 foot reach of Beith Creek in order to increase and improve habitat for federal and state listed Coho salmon and federally listed steelhead in Gannon Slough and its tributaries. The proposed project will restore complexity, riparian cover and a natural channel configuration to the channel. The proposed project area is part of the Jacoby Creek/Gannon Slough Enhancement area that is bordered by the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Humboldt Bay Wildlife Refuge. Beith Creek is a narrow confined channel that lacks sinuosity, meanders, riparian cover, and is disconnected from the historic floodplain by two berms. Earlier restoration efforts in the Gannon Slough area included tidegate modifications which, when completed, will return tidal flow to a portion of the Beith Creek reach. Last year, the applicant restored a segment of Beith Creek upstream of the proposed project. The applicant proposes to:

1. Remove and set back the berms in Beith Creek that block the historic floodplain access and excavate approximately 3.6 acres of seasonal wetland adjacent to Beith Creek
2. install log/boulder structures;
3. restore 2.5 acres of native riparian cover; work includes planting native shrubs and trees, installing 2900 linear feet of single strand electric livestock exclusion fencing and removal of non-native Himalayan blackberry bushes;

The applicant proposes to remove 10,177 cubic yards of fill from the two berms that presently cut off the floodplain from Beith Creek which will allow the stream to meander and have a wider high flow channel, resulting in an increase of .24 acres of wetland area, and a reduction in stream velocities. Approximately 5,177 cubic yards of the removed fill will be used to reinforce the berm that surrounds the adjacent seasonal wetland. The balance of the dredge spoils, approximately 4,868 cubic yards, will be transported to an approved site at McDaniel Slough area and Reclamation District levees. The applicant proposes to excavate an existing 3.6 acre seasonal wetland area located adjacent to Beith Creek which will expand the inundation period for the wetland. The purpose of this component is to benefit water fowl and associated wildlife. The seasonal wetland is not connected to Beith Creek, and the applicant does not indicate any intent to connect the wetland in the future.

Equipment (excavators, backhoe, and dump trucks) will be operated from the side of the stream and seasonal wetland; equipment will not be operated in the channel. The applicant proposes to use sediment fencing downstream of the project activity to prevent sediment from being introduced into the channel. Vehicles and other equipment involved in the project will be restricted to the existing ranch road. The proposed project activities will occur from August 1 through October 31, the dry season.

The log/boulder structures will be installed along Beith Creek in 4-6 sites. Structures will consist of approximately two 1 cubic yard boulders and three 1 x16 foot diameter redwood logs. The applicant proposes to anchor the logs at least five feet into the bank, attaching the log to the boulders with cables wrapped around the logs and secured to the boulders. The applicant proposes to utilize a temporary dam of hay bales and plastic for dewatering the area only if the installation site of the log/boulder structure cannot be isolated from the creek. If the work area does not require dewatering, then sediment will be controlled with hay bale dams around the log attachment sites and a silt fence downstream of installation sites; all sediment structures will be removed after activities are completed. The applicant proposes to inspect the creek area and to relocate any fish or aquatic organisms downstream of installation sites. All habitat restoration will be conducted in compliance with the techniques in the *California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual*.

The applicant proposes to install 2900 linear feet of single strand hot wire fencing to create a setback on both sides of Beith Creek, in order to protect a total of 2.56 acres of riparian area. The wire will be secured to 7-foot metal posts driven into the ground to a depth of 30 inches and spaced a maximum of 10 foot apart. Two gates will allow creek access. Native riparian vegetation including red alder, willow, Sitka spruce, poplar, and myrtle will be planted in late December 2006 and January 2007. The riparian corridor involves approximately 1454 feet on both sides of Beith Creek. Plants will be clustered at 10 to 15 foot spacing to create a natural vegetated area. The applicant will monitor plant viability and replanting will be done as needed. Fencing activity will be done in the late summer while revegetation occurs in the winter dormancy period. All disturbed soil areas will be reseeded with appropriate annual grasses.

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. Project activities are scheduled when Migrating

Aleutian Canada geese are no longer in the area. Low flows are estimated to be less than 1 cubic foot per second (cfs) during the dry season. Silt fences both upstream and downstream as well as isolation from the creek will be used when work is in or near the creek. All project activities are scheduled between July 1 and October 31<sup>st</sup> in order to avoid and/or minimize adverse impacts to all species and reduce soil compaction and sediment transport. The total temporary impacts for the proposed project are estimated to be 3 acres; there are no permanent impacts.

The project does not require compensatory mitigation. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices. The applicant will install hay bale dams and silt fencing in order to prevent sediment delivery to streams, and will seed and mulch all areas of bare soil for erosion control. Equipment will not be operated in the stream. City staff shall be on site during final grading to assure that the area is recontoured according to design specifications. Refueling of equipment will be done only in upland areas. Although the site is a potential habitat for anadromous species, including Coho, Chinook salmon, and steelhead, eggs and larvae of aquatic species will not present during the proposed project activities. The United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) has determined that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, Essential Fish Habitat or any list salmonid species.

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 an amendment to the existing Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600 Permit) from the California Department of Fish and Game (#R1-05-0095). The City of Arcata, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has applied for an amendment to the Negative Declaration (SCH# 2005062054), pursuant to CEQA Article 11, Section 15162. 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 propose 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 and ends at 5:00 p.m on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Diana Henriouille at (707) 576-2350 or Catherine Woody at (707) 576-6723 or within 21 days of the posting of this notice.