

August 7, 2006

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

**Sonoma County Water Agency  
2006 Bank Stabilization Projects  
Sonoma County (WDID No. 1B06080WNSO)**

On May 23, 2006, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ken Schwarz of Jones & Stokes, on behalf of the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the 2006 Bank Stabilization Projects, Sonoma County. The proposed projects cause disturbances to Waters of the State within numerous water courses associated with Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00, in Sonoma County.

The proposed projects are located in Sonoma County, California, at 28 different locations, primarily within Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park and Petaluma. The purpose of these projects is to remediate bank failures along the Sonoma County Water Agency's flood control channels. All of these projects are designed to stabilize the stream banks through restoration of the original bank gradient with no new material or new hardened "points" impeding flow. In addition, projects have been designed to maximize environmental benefits (i.e. sediment reduction and riparian habitat enhancement), while minimizing impacts to environmental resources.

The proposed project involves the use of bioengineered bank stabilization techniques. In addition, the minimum possible amount of hardscape (i.e., rip-rap keyed into the toe of stream banks) has also been integrated into the projects designs to provide the structural integrity needed for successful erosion control. Planting of native vegetation to repaired areas will be used as an integrated stabilization technique.

Compensatory mitigation for this project includes revegetation of the riparian vegetation that is removed or disturbed. Additional revegetation will be used as part of the stabilization projects. Revegetation includes: seeding with native grasses, application of erosion control fabric, and planting of graduated size native herbs, shrubs and trees. Weeding will occur at least twice a year. Watering will be weekly, or as necessary, for the first 3 years. Tree protection will be installed if necessary. Vegetation will be monitored for 3 years with 80% survival at end of monitoring period. A monitoring report will be submitted annually during the monitoring period summarizing the number of surviving plants, proposed remediation of any issues that have arisen (loss of plants, herbivory), and the overall success of the revegetation effort.

The Sonoma County Water Agency, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined the project qualifies for Categorical Exemption, Section 15301 – Existing Facilities, pursuant to the CEQA guidelines. The Sonoma County Water Agency has prepared a Notice of Exemption, Section 15301 – Existing Facilities, pursuant to the CEQA guidelines (Resolution No. 05-1129-3).

The project is scheduled to end prior to October 15, 2006. Staff is 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, ending August 28, 2006. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653, or at [SBargsten@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:SBargsten@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.

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