December 6, 2006

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

Trinity County Department of Transportation – Lewiston Road at Dark Gulch Culvert Repair
WDID No. 1A06124WNTR

Trinity County

On August 28, 2006, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Janice Smith, representing Trinity County Department of Transportation (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to removal of mud and debris that is plugging the inlets of two corrugated metal culverts located on Dark Gulch at Lewiston Road in Lewiston, Trinity County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Dark Gulch in the Douglas City Hydrologic Subarea No. 106.31. Dark Gulch is an intermittent stream that is tributary to the Trinity River approximately four miles downstream of Lewiston Dam.

Heavy runoff during January 2006 caused mud and other debris to clog the inlets of a 24-inch diameter culvert (lower culvert) and a 36-inch diameter overflow culvert that is directly above the lower culvert. The culvert outlets are adjacent to each other in the same channel. The lower culvert is 120 feet long with a 72-inch vertical slotted riser and trash rack. The 36-inch culvert is 90 feet long with a downspout on the outlet end. Both culvert inlets are completely buried under approximately 1,000 cubic yards of mud and debris. The mud and debris is approximately twelve feet deep to the invert of the lower culvert. Water is trickling through the partially plugged lower culvert. The overflow culvert is not flowing.

The proposed project involves excavating around the culvert inlets, flushing the culverts, inspecting the culverts, and making any necessary repairs. The area within ten feet of the culvert riser will be excavated to approximately twelve feet deep to expose the bottom of the lower culvert. The excavation will be extended outward and upward at a two-to-one slope beginning at the base of the excavation around the inlets. The top edge of the finished slope will be approximately 35 feet from the inlets. The lower six feet of the excavation will be lined with a geotextile fabric to prevent saturated sediment from sloughing into the excavation, and the fabric will be covered with rock slope protection. The rock slope protection and surrounding disturbed area will be reseeded.

After the debris is cleared from around the inlet area, the culverts will be flushed. Temporary sediment check dams will be installed below the outlet to collect the sediment that is flushed out of the culverts. The culverts could contain up to thirty-eight cubic yards of sediment. The culverts will be repaired or replaced if necessary. Culvert replacement would involve excavation of the roadbed material to remove and replace the culvert in the same alignment. The temporary check dams and captured sediment will be removed from the channel following the culvert flushing and repair activities.

Excavated material will be stockpiled and contained at a designated County soil stockpile area at Post Mile 0.1 on County Road 231.

The culvert inlets will be accessed by driving over the flat area created by the mud and debris. There is sufficient area on the road shoulder for staging material and equipment. Most of the vegetation around the inlets was destroyed by the debris. The mature conifers that were not harmed by the debris will not be disturbed. The outlet channel will be accessed by an existing road on the neighboring property. Road closures or detours are not expected unless a culvert must be replaced. Alternate County roads are available for a detour if a road closure is necessary.

Installation of the fabric liner and rock slope protection around the inlets will result in approximately 0.014-acre of permanent impacts to the streambed and banks. Installation and removal of the temporary sediment check dams and removal of the sediment flushed from the culverts will result in approximately 0.0055 acre of temporary impacts to the streambed below the culvert outlets. Compensatory mitigation is not required. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes the use of Best Management Practices for heavy equipment use near a waterway, and for sediment and erosion control. The proposed project is scheduled for the summer 2007 when the drainage and sediment is dry. The project is expected to take approximately three weeks to complete.

The applicant has applied to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for authorization to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 3, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The Trinity County Planning Department, as the lead agency for California Environmental Quality Act compliance, has determined that this project will have no significant effect on the environment and is categorically exempt from CEQA (Class 1, Section 15301 – Existing Facilities). The applicant has applied to CDF&G for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement.

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 submitted in writing and received at this office by mail 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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