

February 27, 2007

Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste  
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)  
**California Department of Parks and Recreation**  
**Big River Watershed Restoration Project**  
Mendocino County (WDID# 1B06095WNME)

On June 28, 2006, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Parks and Recreation (CDPR) requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Big River Watershed Restoration Project in Mendocino County. The proposed project causes disturbances to Waters of the State associated with the Big River and the Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit No.113.30.

The proposed project is located on the Big River Property, Mendocino District State Parks, located from the mouth of the Big River, eastward for approximately eight miles. There are approximately eleven sites located in the area between 39.31447°N to 39.31521°N and -123.80719°W to -123.70521°W. The purpose of the project is to correct erosion problems and restore pre-disturbance hydrologic processes in areas associated with old logging roads.

The proposed project consists of restoration work in multiple locations on the various logging roads located east of the mouth of the Big River. The work will include road decommissioning and conversion into recreational trails, stabilizing or removing skidtrails and landings to restore riverine functions, improving fish passage and opening up new habitat for spawning and rearing. More specifically, work will involve: 1) excavating and removing road fill from stream channels to establish original width, depth, alignment and gradient; 2) pulling back sidecast material along roadsides; 3) decompacting road surfaces where revegetation is needed; 4) retrieving and removing debris (culverts, cable, concrete foundations, etc.) that impact hydrologic processes and natural habitats; 5) restoring the natural configuration of the land (ridges, stream valleys, and swales) along roadway corridors; 6) removing non-native invasive vegetation; 7) mulching disturbed sites with excess woody debris from excavations, and; 8) replanting disturbed areas with native species.

Additional work is proposed at the existing entry access and parking area for the Big River Property. Existing conditions encourage visitors to drive and park outside of the designated zones, thus damaging existing habitats. Additional problems are experienced at the boat ramp and the portable toilet areas. Objectives for the parking area include the following: 1) provisions for delineating parking areas for at least 100 vehicles, through the placement of large boulders; 2) provision of parking spaces for approximately 20 vehicle-trailer combinations; 3) gravel road-base surfacing of existing road and designated parking areas; 4) restriction of motor vehicle access to areas outside designated parking areas, through the placement of large boulders; 5) designation of a single boat-launch area and ramp, including posting of pertinent laws and regulations; 6) construction of permanent vault-type toilet building toward the eastern end of the Big River entry area, outside the 100-year flood plain, and; 7) posting of regulatory, informational, and interpretive signs in the entry area.

Work is also proposed at the Big River Rock Quarry, which is located approximately 0.75-miles east of the main entry area. Quarry operations have been terminated since 2002; however the operator has not completed the reclamation plans for the quarry. The CDPR will assume responsibility for reclaiming and restoring the quarry site in order to resolve the current management issues. Work at the quarry site will involve stabilizing the quarry walls, and to the maximum extent possible returning the pit to natural grade.

Approximately 18,125 cubic yards of fill material will be removed during restoration efforts. A large amount of this material will be used to fill the existing quarry on the site as well as to repair the parking area. No Waters of the State will be filled.

This project is designed to be self mitigating. CDPR will adopt best management practices and use materials, methods, and techniques to implement erosion and sedimentation control and to otherwise stabilize slopes and barren soil surfaces. CDPR will also implement a monitoring schedule that will evaluate the integrity and performance of the implemented erosion and sedimentation control measures. Additionally all exposed soil areas will be revegetated with native vegetation. The revegetated areas will be monitored for five years to ensure that vegetation will meet or exceed preconstruction levels. Monitoring will also ensure that vegetation cover is at least 80% native.

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, as the lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that this project qualifies for a Mitigated Negative Declaration pursuant to CEQA. State Clearinghouse number 2006072012.

The Big River Watershed Restoration Project is scheduled to begin summer 2007 when funding is secured and will continue through the spring of 2008. 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. 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.