

March 26, 2007

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

Humboldt County – Blue Slide Road at Little Slater Creek Culvert Repair
WDID No. 1B07017WNHU

Humboldt County

On February 27, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Department of Public Works (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to replacement of an existing culvert on Blue Slide Road at Little Slater Creek near Rio Dell, Humboldt County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Little Slater Creek in the Ferndale Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.11.

High flows in Slater Creek in December 2002 washed out the 36-inch diameter and 70-foot long culvert under Blue Slide Road. The culvert pipe and approximately 1,000 cubic yards of fill material washed out from the stream crossing and the road had to be closed to traffic. Humboldt County made emergency repairs to the crossing that involved removal of the old culvert pipe and installation of a temporary 48-inch diameter culvert in its place so the road could be reopened.

The temporary culvert was installed above the natural streambed elevation which caused stream flows to back up in the channel before reaching the culvert inlet and caused sediment to deposit in the channel above the inlet area. The temporary culvert was also a barrier for fish passage, as there was a 4-foot drop from the outlet to the channel. The proposed project involves replacing the existing culvert with an 8-foot diameter by 110-foot long corrugated metal culvert that will allow fish passage and adequately pass the flows resulting from a 100-year flood event.

The applicant will use an excavator to remove the existing culvert and approximately 2,700 cubic yards of overburden and fill material from the culvert alignment. The culvert alignment will be over-excavated to allow two feet of bedding material to be placed under the culvert and two feet of gravel to be placed inside the culvert pipe to provide a natural substrate bottom. Excavated fill material will be reused onsite as backfill around the new culvert. Any excess fill material will be hauled to an upland (not having wetlands or other waters of the State) disposal area. Rock slope protection will be placed around the inlet and outlet areas to prevent erosion.

The proposed project also involves excavation of approximately 650 cubic yards of accumulated sediment and debris from the stream channel for a distance of approximately 150 feet upstream of the inlet. An excavator will work from the top of bank to remove sediment and debris, and a bulldozer will be used in the stream channel

to restore the bed and banks to pre-2002 conditions. The project file contains detailed design drawings and cross-sections of the proposed culvert installation and channel excavation.

Little Slater Creek is usually dry during the summer, when the applicant proposes to conduct the project. If surface water is present during construction, the applicant will install a temporary stream diversion, consisting of a sand bag coffer dam upstream of the culvert and an 18-inch pipe to carry the water by gravity from the coffer dam through the project. If subsurface water is encountered during excavation activities, the applicant proposes to construct a detention basin within the excavation area to collect the water. Collected water will be pumped to a flat upland area for infiltration. A 90-foot long flatcar bridge will be installed across Little Slater Creek to provide a temporary traffic detour through the project area. The flatcar bridge will be set on pre-cast concrete beams placed above the creek banks.

Installation of the larger fish passage culvert and the addition of rock slope protection around the inlet and outlet areas will result in approximately 660 square feet (0.015 acre) of additional permanent impacts to the streambed. The permanent impacts from this project are in addition to the approximately 1,000 square feet of streambed that was already filled by the existing culvert and fill. Excavation limits for the proposed channel restoration vary. The horizontal limits of the channel excavation are approximately 40 feet at the inlet area, and the excavation limits gradually narrow to the natural channel width at a point approximately 150 feet upstream of the new culvert inlet. Channel restoration activities associated with this project will temporarily impact approximately 1,200 square feet of the streambed and banks.

Compensatory mitigation is not required. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes revegetation of all disturbed areas with a mixture of native vegetation. Noncompensatory mitigation also 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. The project is expected to take approximately two weeks to complete.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 3, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The Humboldt County Department of Public Works, 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 2, Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction of Existing Structures and Class 4, Section 15304 - Minor Alterations to Land). Based on our review, the Regional Water Board anticipates filing a Notice of Exemption for this project. 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.