

May 7, 2007

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

North Coast Railroad Authority – Shoreline Protection Repair near King Salmon  
WDID No. 1B07037WNHU

Humboldt County

On April 4, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the North Coast Railroad Authority (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, Water Quality Certification for proposed activities to repair the existing riprap shoreline protection (revetment) along the east side of Humboldt Bay near King Salmon, Humboldt County. The purpose of the proposed project is to prevent continued erosion of the railroad embankment into Humboldt Bay and adjacent pasture land. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Humboldt Bay in the Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00.

The wave and storm damaged revetment structure is located directly across from the entrance channel of Humboldt Bay. Waves passing through the entrance channel can travel across the bay and reach the shoreline along the existing revetment. Portions of the existing revetment were previously constructed and repaired using recycled pieces of concrete from demolition projects, rail car bodies, miscellaneous metal objects, and some large rock. Tangled rebar protruding from the concrete fragments and the large rocks in the revetment created large voids in the revetment that allow waves to carry seawater through the revetment and onto the Northwestern Pacific Railroad's tracks. The sand and gravel fill supporting the railroad tracks has eroded in many areas and the eroded fill material has been washed into adjacent fields that are currently used as pasture. The erosion and displacement of revetment materials has also reduced the height of the revetment and allowed over-topping by large waves.

The proposed project includes activities along 3,100 feet of the revetment and railroad tracks that begins at approximately the PG&E power plant and extends north toward Eureka. The southernmost 500 feet of the revetment is in the worst condition and needs to be removed and rebuilt. Approximately 750 cubic yards of existing concrete, rebar, railcar parts, and other metal objects will be removed and hauled to an off-site disposal facility. The revetment will be reconstructed using suitable onsite rock material and imported quarry rock. Reconstruction of the revetment will involve placing two layers of rock riprap with the toe of the revetment keyed into a shoreline trench excavated below the mean high tide elevation. The inner rock layer will consist of smaller rock (1/2-ton) and the outer armoring layer will consist of larger rock (2-ton). Rocks will be strategically placed to maximize stability and prevent movement. The proposed shoreline trenching and revetment reconstruction activities will result in permanent impacts to an estimated 0.10 acre of the shoreline along 500 feet of Humboldt Bay. The proposed impacts are considered permanent, although the applicant is not proposing to increase the original footprint area or length of the damaged revetment.

The northern 2,600 feet of the existing revetment has several problem areas that are in need of repair. Low areas on the top of the revetment and voids that extend through the revetment allow seawater to pass through the revetment, causing the rail bed to erode. Repairs to this section of the revetment include filling low spots and voids in the revetment with appropriately sized rock to tighten up the existing structure. After filling the low spots and voids, a low-slump quick-setting concrete will be pumped into the remaining gaps where necessary. All the new rock in this section will be placed above

the mean high tide elevation. The applicant is proposing to restore the height and structural integrity of the existing damaged revetment without increasing the footprint area.

Access to the revetment area will be from an access road that will be graded immediately adjacent to the existing railroad tracks and within the applicant's right-of-way. An access restriction fence will be placed on the east side of the railroad fill structure to isolate the work area from the adjacent pasture.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed revetment repair activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including design drawings and a description of activities related to repairing damaged sections of the railroad track structure. The application and Regional Water Board file is available for public review.

Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation for the proposed project includes timing construction activities with low tides and the use of Best Management Practices for heavy equipment and concrete use near a waterway. Construction activities are scheduled to occur between June 1 and October 15, 2007.

The applicant has applied to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for authorization to perform the project under a Nationwide Permit, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The North Coast Railroad Authority has determined that this project is statutorily exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (Section 15269 – Emergency Projects). Based on a review of the project information submitted to date, Regional Water Board staff determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1, Section 15301 – Existing Facilities) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project, as well. The applicant has applied for a Coastal Development Permit.

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.