



California Regional Water Quality Control Board North Coast Region

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

Humboldt County Department of Public Works, Holmes-Larabee Summer Crossing
WDID No. 1B01145WNHU

Humboldt County

On May 21, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Department of Public Works (DPW applicant) requesting Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Holmes-Larabee summer crossing in Humboldt County (40.415675° Latitude/123.941783° Longitude). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Scotia Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.12.

The project site is located east of Highway 101 and the Avenue of the Giants (Highway 254) frontage road, at the end of Holmes-Larabee access road which crosses the Eel River. The permanent section of the Holmes-Larabee Bridge (County Bridge 4C-171) was constructed in 1937, of reinforced concrete deck about 30 centimeters thick and 3.7 meters wide. The bridge currently only extends part of the way across the Eel River. A portion of existing concrete bridge was removed in 1960, to facilitate wintertime flows. The existing permanent concrete bridge that spans the west channel is approximately 300 feet long. The riverbed at the proposed project site is approximately 800 feet wide (at Ordinary High Water level) with an approximately 300 foot wide gravel bar in the center; the size and shape of the gravel bar varies according to gravel recruitment. Winter flows average 8,000 to 20,000 cubic feet per second (CFS), a rate that would submerge the existing permanent low-level concrete bridge and gravel bar.

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide access for the residents of Larabee and logging equipment by installation of a flatcar seasonal bridge across the low flow of the Eel River. The proposed project involves two fills; the primary fill is located at the gap approximately half way across the permanent bridge. The gap is approximately 35 x 15 feet; the depth varies depending on the amount of gravel recruitment during the winter flows. The gap in the bridge structure (35' long) is approximately 300 feet from the west bank. The gap is permanently filled with 2 ton rock up to a level just below the bridge surface elevation. The applicant proposes to place approximately 40 cubic yards

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of river run gravel over the boulders to bring the elevation up to the bridge surface. The applicant proposes to use native river run gravel from a stockpile located above Ordinary High Water, which is excavated from the same area as the bridge and is closed for the high-water season. The applicant proposes to construct the approaches to the temporary flatcar crossing at the east end by pushing gravel from the adjacent gravel bar according to parameters set forth in the 404 permit by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). A bulldozer will access the gravel bar in the center of the river from the bridge after the gap has been filled; equipment will not enter the waterway. The applicant proposes to construct a gravel ramp at the east channel using approximately 150- 200 cubic yards of gravel from the stockpile of gravel above Ordinary High Water. The applicant proposes to place an 85-foot flatcar bridge over the east channel using brow logs, k-rails or gravel wrapped in filter fabric as the abutments for the flatcar. The method used depends on the configuration of the site, choosing the best method with the objective of minimizing sediment delivery to the channel.

The applicant proposes to start construction after June 1 of each year and to remove the temporary bridge no later than November 15 or earlier if the Eel River flows reach 175 cubic feet per second at the Scotia gauge. The applicant estimates the construction and dismantling times for the proposed project to be one day for each operation. No compensatory measures are required for this project. The total acres involved are 0.05 acres with a total of 300 cubic yards (cy) of fill. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices for equipment operations and erosion and sediment control. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) consultation determined that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect threatened Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast salmonids, steelhead, or their critical habitat

The applicant has an individual permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act that expires on November 15, 2015 (268971N). The Humboldt County Department of Public Works (DPW) determined that the project is categorically exempt in 2001, in accordance with Article 19, section 15301 (Existing Facilities) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines. Based on a review of the project information submitted to date, Regional Water Board staff have 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 a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game, which expires on December 31, 2007(R1#98-0110).

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed seasonal bridge installation activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file are available for public review.

Regional Water Board staff propose 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 and ends at 5:00 p.m on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Diana Henriouille at (707) 576-2350 or Catherine Woody at (707) 576-6723 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

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