

August 28, 2007

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

Trinity County DOT – Salt Creek Bridge Pier Protection
WDID No. 1A07100WNTR

Trinity County

On June 25, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Trinity County Department of Transportation (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to installation of rock slope protection (RSP) around the piers and abutments on the bridge on Tule Creek Road over Salt Creek near Hayfork. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Salt Creek in the Hayfork Valley Hydrologic Subarea No. 106.25.

Salt Creek Bridge on Tule Creek Road is a three-span bridge consisting of two concrete abutments and two supporting concrete pier walls located on each side of the low flow channel. A 2006 bridge inspection indicated scour erosion for the entire width of the abutment at the western end of the bridge and large voids in the existing RSP along the abutment face. Scour erosion was also noted at the upstream ends and along the stream side faces of both pier walls. The purpose of the proposed project is to protect the bridge structures from scour erosion.

The proposed project involves installation of RSP, consisting of three to four foot diameter boulders, along the faces of both pier walls and the western abutment. No work will be done to the eastern abutment. RSP will be keyed into a shallow trench that will wrap around the upstream end of the western pier wall. RSP will also be placed along the sides of both pier walls that face the low flow stream channel. Voids in the existing RSP along the western abutment face will be filled with the gravel removed from the trench excavation and covered with additional RSP.

The proposed project activities are outside the low flow channel and no materials will be placed in flowing water. No grading or vegetation removal is necessary for heavy equipment to access the dry gravel bar on the western creek bank using existing farm roads adjacent to Tule Creek Road. Equipment used to excavate the trench and install the RSP will be operated from the dry gravel bar. An excavator or backhoe will reach across the low flow channel to place RSP along the face of the eastern pier wall.

The proposed project will result in 300 square feet (0.007 acre) and 86 linear feet of permanent impacts to areas of the streambed and streambank that already contains concrete bridge structures and rock armoring. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control and for operation of heavy equipment near a waterway. The use of bioengineering techniques for erosion protection was evaluated and deemed impractical due to the increased potential for

problems associated with debris snagging and accumulating on vegetation placed under the bridge structures. The proposed project is scheduled for the summer 2007 or 2008 when the flows in Salt Creek are low. Construction activities are expected to take 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 Applicant has applied to the California Department of Fish and Game for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement for the project. The Trinity County Planning Department has determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (section 15301 – existing facilities). 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.

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.