

February 15, 2008

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

USDOT – FHA, Hyampom Road Improvement Project, Segment 5
WDID No. 1A07175WNTR

Trinity County

On November 30, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Federal Highway Administration (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Hyampom Road Improvement Project, Segment 5, between the communities of Hyampom and Hayfork, Trinity County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with tributaries to Hayfork Creek in the Corral Creek Hydrologic Subarea No. 106.24.

Hyampom Road is a Federal Forest Highway that is administered and maintained by Trinity County on a Federal Department of Transportation easement within the Hayfork Ranger District of the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. The Federal Highway Administration – Central Federal Lands Highway Division, in cooperation with Trinity County and the United States Forest Service – Shasta-Trinity National Forest, is proposing a project to reconstruct approximately 9.8 miles of Hyampom Road. The primary purpose of the proposed project is to provide a safe road between Hyampom and Hayfork by widening the road to two lanes and improving the drainage system. The proposed project involves reconstruction of the roadway to a consistent width. The proposed project has been divided into six contiguous segments that will be constructed separately over the next few years depending on project funding.

This public notice only describes the proposed project activities for reconstruction of segment 5, a 3.82 mile long segment located between post miles 10 and 14. Segment 5 is a narrow, single-lane roadway that begins just east of Dinner Gulch and extends westerly to where the road widens to two lanes. The narrow roadway requires vehicles to pull partially off the roadway and/or stop for vehicles traveling in the opposite direction. The pavement is only 10 feet wide at the narrowest location. Segment 5 is situated along a steep cliff and has many sharp horizontal curves, areas with limited sight distance, and no guardrails. Due to the steep slopes, the outside edge of the roadway is eroding and the roadway continues to narrow. The proposed project will modify the horizontal and vertical roadway alignment within the existing roadway corridor to obtain a consistent width. The proposed project will address safety and roadway deficiencies by providing gentler curves and a lane in each direction with adequate shoulders, correcting the steep drop-off along the edge of pavement and associated narrowing of the roadway, and improving the drainage system to reduce erosion. Drainage improvements include installation of new culverts or culvert extensions at 35 locations, removal and replacement of 18 existing culverts, and paving the inboard ditch to prevent additional erosion of the ditch and the adjacent embankment.

The proposed project has the potential to degrade water quality from construction activities associated with excavating trenches for new culverts, replacing and extending culverts, and preparing the bedding for culverts, riprap aprons, and rundowns. The proposed project will also create new cuts and fill areas that will expose and disturb soil. Noncompensatory mitigation measures for the proposed project will include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control. Permanent structures to control erosion will also be installed during construction. Trinity County will be responsible for maintaining the permanent structures and any temporary BMPs that are left in place after construction to facilitate revegetation.

The proposed project will result in an 8.6 percent increase in the amount of impervious surface area within the 3.8 mile long project area by increasing the existing 10.1 acres of impervious surface by approximately 0.87 acres. Projects that increase the amount of impervious surface area will increase the volume of storm water runoff from the area, the duration of elevated storm water flows, and the runoff flow rate. The applicant submitted an evaluation of the potential impacts associated with increasing the amount of impervious surface and performed an assessment to determine the increase in flow for the 85th percentile 24-hour storm in those areas where the impacts are potentially more significant, namely those drainages with a contributing area of less than 200 acres. For perennial and intermittent streams with drainage areas greater than 200 acres, the increase in impervious area and the resulting increase in runoff peak, volume, and duration will be negligible. However, for drainages and ditch relief culvert locations with a contributing drainage area of less than 200 acres, the increase in impervious area is potentially more significant.

The proposed project and drainage design includes a total of 38 culverts in drainage areas less than 200 acres. The applicant determined the increase in runoff from the 85th percentile 24-hour storm event will be 1.1 percent. Although a 1.1 percent increase is relatively small, the applicant evaluated the feasibility to mitigate for this increase. Part of the drainage design philosophy for this project is to increase the number of ditch relief culverts crossing under the road to reduce impacts to existing drainage ways and to reduce the potential for culvert plugging. The 38 culverts described above will serve the same function as the 12 existing culverts. The increase in the frequency of culverts will disperse storm water flows compared to the existing situation and provide a mitigating influence for potential impacts associated with the net increase in the area of impervious surface.

The applicant also evaluated using treatment structures to provide additional mitigation. Installation of treatment structures would require creation of open space and relatively flat ground that is not currently available in the project area. The embankment side slopes in the project area typically range from 30 to 70 percent so installation of detention/retention facilities would require significant grading to create suitable sites for installation of storm water detention/retention structures. Expanded grading activities would create additional adverse impacts to the landscape and potentially require further mitigation. Since this is a linear project that crosses many small drainage basins, a detention/retention facility located at any particular site would only treat a small fraction

of the 3.8 mile long project. This condition would necessitate installation of numerous detention/retention facilities resulting in more grading impacts. The applicant determined that installation of detention/retention facilities was infeasible due to the steep slopes and lack of space within the proposed project area. Based on the applicant's evaluation, the effects of the increase in imperviousness are small and are mitigated to the extent feasible by the drainage design approach of increasing ditch relief culvert frequency to disperse flow over a broader area.

Culvert replacement activities and the installation of new culverts, culvert extensions, headwalls, and rock energy dissipaters will result in permanent impacts to 0.018 acre and 598 linear feet of waters of the United States in intermittent stream channels and 0.155 acre and 338 linear feet of waters of the United States in perennial stream channels. The proposed project will also result in 0.01 acre and 700 linear feet of temporary impacts to waters of the United States in stream channels. The proposed project will not result in any impacts to wetlands. Compensatory mitigation is not proposed for the permanent impacts to stream channels since the proposed permanent impacts are intended to reduce channel erosion and are not expected to adversely impact the functions and values of the existing habitat and beneficial uses.

The applicant has received authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 14 (File No. 26733N), pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. A Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game is not required for federal projects. On October 3, 2007, Trinity County approved a Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2004052123) for the project in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment. The proposed project activities are scheduled to begin in March 2008, and the project is expected to take three years to complete.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road widening 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 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.