

March 7, 2008

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

**California Department of Transportation Elk Tieback Retaining Wall
Mendocino County (WDID# 1B07151WNME)**

On September 21, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Tieback Retaining Wall Project on Highway 1 in Mendocino County. The proposed project causes disturbances to Waters of the State associated with Coastal Wetlands and the Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit No.113.00.

The proposed project is located on the west side of Highway 1 approximately 2 miles south of the intersection of Highway 128 and Highway 1, and approximately 3.5 miles north of the Town of Elk. Specifically work will occur between post-miles (PM) 37.8 and 38.2. The purpose of the project is to replace a failing crib wall with a new tieback retaining wall that meets geotechnical conditions, safety, operational, and design standards.

The proposed project will include both drainage improvements and the replacement of the existing crib wall with a tieback wall. Drainage improvements will consist of the following: Replace the 18 inch culvert at PM 37.92 with a 24 inch culvert and incorporate drop inlet as well as a rock energy dissipater at the outlet. Abandon the existing culvert at PM 37.92 by filling it with sand and plugging the ends. Replace the existing 18 inch culvert at PM 37.98 with a 24 inch culvert. The headwall for this culvert will be placed approximately 20 feet to the east to allow for widening of the roadway. The rock energy dissipater at the outlet will be replaced. Replace the existing 24 inch culvert at PM 38.04, replace the existing inlet with a drop inlet, and replace the rock energy dissipater at the outlet. There will also be an under drain installed at the base of the tieback wall.

The new tieback wall will be constructed to replace a failing log crib wall. The tieback wall will be constructed using steel I-beams and treated timber lagging. The new roadway will be widened from the existing configuration of two lanes with widths between 11 feet and 12 feet and no paved shoulders, to two 12 foot wide lanes and two 4 foot wide paved shoulders. The wall will be 656 feet in length and 27 feet high. Construction will consist of clearing, grading and paving the shoulder to the east of the existing road. This new paved section will be used to move traffic during the remainder of construction. The new tieback wall will be constructed and backfilled, then the new roadway will be constructed, the guardrail will be replaced, and erosion control measures, revegetation and restoration/mitigation measures will be implemented.

Construction access will be accomplished through a combination of staging from the existing highway, and constructing temporary access roads from both the north and south ends of the project. The access roads will be rocked to avoid erosion and storm water runoff. Where the access roads pass through any wetlands or Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs), the access road area will be lined with fabric prior to rocking, to facilitate removal of the rock upon

project completion. Construction will take place for a total of two seasons beginning in the summer of 2008.

An ESHA report was completed by Caltrans, detailing the impacts that are expected to occur to coastal wetlands. There are six areas that have been identified as wetland areas, one of which the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) will take jurisdiction over. The remaining five areas are single parameter wetlands, and fall under the authority of the Regional Water Board.

Impacts to coastal wetlands will total 0.18 acres. 0.07 acres of the coastal wetlands falls under federal jurisdiction, and will be permitted with a Non-Reporting Nation Wide permit from the Army Corps. Approximately 0.06 acres of non jurisdictional wetland will be impacted permanently.

Compensatory mitigation for the permanent loss of 0.06 acres of roadside ditch will be attained through the creation of a similar ditch along the newly widened highway, after creation, the ditch will be vegetated with a non-invasive seed mix. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of erosion control Best Management Practices (BMPs), including, but not limited to, silt fences, straw bales, and fiber rolls. All exposed soils will be seeded with a sterile non-invasive seed mix. Impacted ESHAs will also be planted with a variety of native plants as proposed in the ESHA study dated January 18, 2008.

On June 6, 2006, the California Department of transportation, District 1, adopted a negative declaration (SCH No.2006052057) 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 project is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2008 and will last approximately one and a half (1.5) years. Staff is 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 received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Johncaleb Sarsfield at (707) 576-6728 or at jsarsfield@waterboards.ca.gov or Mona Dougherty at (707) 570-3761 or at mdougherty@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The related documents and comments received are on file and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.