

July 18, 2008

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

**Jim Vattuone,
Austin Creek Streambank Restoration Project
Sonoma County (WDID# 1B08052WNSO)**

On March 26, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Sonoma County Regional Parks requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Austin Creek Streambank Restoration Project located in Sonoma County. The proposed project causes permanent impacts to 0.033 acres of stream within the Austin Creek Hydrologic Sub Unit No. 114.12.

The proposed project is located on Austin Creek in Cazadero, Sonoma County, California, (APN(s). No.106-090-009, -010). The latitude and longitude is 38.53337°N and -123.08605°W. The purpose of the project is to stabilize an eroding stream bank, repair/replace a concrete retaining wall with other structures utilizing bioengineering techniques, restore natural vegetation, eliminate sediment deposition into Austin creek and the Russian River, and protect the landowner's four single family homes.

The proposed project is adjacent to four buildings parallel to the creek channel. The west stream bank along the property was protected by a concrete floodwall. Peak flows have undermined the floodwall. The applicant seeks to ensure that the stream does not further erode the stream bank by removing the failed floodwall and replacing it with a riprap buttress wall along the length of the property bordering the creek. The scope of the project is limited to the west bank of the stream, approximately 245 feet in length, with an area of 1,470 sq. ft. (0.033 acres). Approximately 165 cubic yards of thirty-six inch diameter and larger rock from a local quarry will be installed along the stream bank. The rock will be constructed at a 1:1 maximum slope to the top of the stream bank to prevent further erosion. The nominal height of the buttress wall will be approximately six feet. Per a field visit with Regional Water Board, NOAA Fisheries, and California Department of Fish and Game staff, the structure will include: Deeper toeing into the stream bed to protect from scour; rip-rap will not be installed in a straight line but will undulate; Interstitial spaces around rip-rap will be filled with planting soil and planted with willows, and native plants/trees; Planting circles for trees will be constructed within the rip-rap with approximately 5 foot diameters to facilitate planting of larger trees , including big leaf maples. Construction of the bank stabilization project will require operating heavy equipment in the active channel, because of the limited room between the buildings and the stream bank. Gravel filter dams will be constructed at the north and south ends of the project area. The filter dams will be constructed out of ¾-inch washed drain rock imported from the local quarry and covered with a geo-textile filter fabric. The complete project will be described in a deed restriction or conservation easement, and will be crafted so that the entirety of the repair is protected in perpetuity, including all the plants and trees. This protection instrument will be recorded with the County of Sonoma and other appropriate agencies.

Access to the project will be achieved through an existing access on an adjacent property, on the west side of the stream. The rock will be placed using an excavator equipped with a "thumb" to carefully stack the rocks beginning at the bottom of the bank and continuing up until the bank is covered. Prior to placing the rock, it will be necessary to excavate a trench along the base stream bank into which the toe of the riprap will be placed. This "keyway" is necessary to reduce settling and complete the connection between the buttress wall and the stream. The depth of the keyway may vary, but in general should extend to about three feet below the ground surface. The

width of the keyway will be approximately three to four feet, to accommodate the boulders. A portion of the voids between the rocks will be filled with excavated native soil to assist with re-vegetation activities.

Compensatory mitigation will consist of filling the voids between the rocks, as practically as possible, with native soil to assist in re-vegetation. On completion of the construction, the soil filled voids of the rock-buttress will be replanted with native vegetation, particularly willow sprigs installed at the summer water elevation. Additional plant selection will be made by matching the current vegetation on the opposing stream bank and using the California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual Part XI, Riparian Habitat Restoration as a guide. Following construction, the project area within the creek will be cleaned of any detrimental debris. The active channel will be reestablished and the filter dams will be removed. The site will be prepared for the wet season by implementing appropriate erosion and sediment control measures. Such measures may include regrading disturbed areas, applying grass seed/straw to open soil areas, irrigating the grass seed/straw to encourage grass growth, and any appropriate drainage or stabilization features deemed necessary. The project has the potential of improving water quality and habitat availability in Austin Creek and the Russian River, thereby enhancing spawning and rearing conditions for protected species. When completed, the project will reduce potential sediment discharge into both Austin Creek and the Russian River. It will reestablish the riparian habitat with native vegetation; protect the existing alders, which will continue to provide canopy cover and shade in the summer months. The repaired stream bank will offer protection to the Landowners property and dwelling units.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the final project plans in order to reduce and control soil erosion. All construction in and around waters of the state will be conducted during the dry season (April 15th to October 15th), to minimize construction related impacts to hydrology and water quality. To avoid potential harm to the above-mentioned species a properly licensed biologist will be retained to search the area for freshwater shrimp or other special-status species. The biologist will, prior to the start of construction, salvage and relocate any animals that are in harm's way. The relocation activities will be performed after the installation of the gravel filter dams, before commencement of the installation of the riprap. A qualified biologist has been contacted to perform the search and salvage operation.

The Austin Creek Streambank Restoration Project is scheduled to begin in summer and end in fall 2008. 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 staff member Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653, or at sbargsten@waterboards.ca.gov, or Brian Lindell at (707) 576-6732, blindell@waterboards.ca.gov, within 21 days of posting of this notice.

This is a brief summary of this project; all related documents and comments received are on file and may be inspected or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Blvd., Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.