

July 30, 2008

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

Humboldt County Department of Public Works – Fieldbrook Road, Rehabilitation and
Shoulder Widening
WDID No. 1B08096WNHU

Humboldt County

On June 4, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Department of Public Works (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for shoulder widening and drainage improvement activities along an approximately 1.5 mile segment of Fieldbrook Road in Humboldt County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with wetlands, North Fork Anker Creek, South Fork Anker Creek, and an unnamed tributary to Anker Creek in the Blue Lake Hydrologic Area No. 109.10.

Fieldbrook Road is a two-lane road that runs through the small rural town of Fieldbrook and connects to Murray Road to the north and Glendale Road to the south. Fieldbrook Road is a primary corridor for the community with small shops, a gas station, a school and churches located along the roadway. The roadway is heavily used by bicycles and pedestrians for recreation and access to local destinations including Fieldbrook School. The community has repeatedly requested that the shoulders of Fieldbrook Road be widened near the school. The lack of shoulders and the high volume of traffic, including a high percentage of logging trucks, make it a very dangerous road for bicycles and pedestrians. Despite these dangers, many children are walking and riding to school along this roadway.

The proposed project consists of shoulder widening and drainage improvements along an approximately 1.5 mile segment of Fieldbrook Road that runs through the community. The existing roadway within the project area has two 10-foot wide travel lanes with minimal (zero to 2 feet wide) paved shoulders. The existing road provides insufficient space for motorists to adjust to emergency situations and for bicyclists and pedestrians to travel adjacent to the vehicle travel lanes. The proposed project will improve line-of-sight distances and safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists by widening the roadway to include continuous four to six-foot wide paved shoulders along both sides of the 1.5 mile long section. A 3 mile long section of the road surface, including the 1.5 mile long section in the project area, will be rehabilitated and repaved shortly after the shoulder widening and drainage improvement activities are complete.

The proposed project will increase the amount of impervious surface area within the project area. Projects that increase the amount of impervious surface area can increase the volume of storm water runoff from the area, the duration of elevated storm water flows, and the runoff flow rate, which can lead to channel scour, bank erosion, and flooding. The applicant has evaluated potential changes in storm water runoff and flow rates from the proposed project. In general, the results of their evaluation indicate

that the potential increase in runoff from the proposed project is extremely small during the 100-year storm event. However, in order to maintain the existing storm water runoff conditions after the project is completed, post-construction storm water treatment and detention facilities have been incorporated into the proposed project design.

The project was divided into three drainage basin areas for the purpose of describing project activities and for conducting the hydrologic analysis. Proposed activities in each section include the following:

Section 1: The northern end of the project is Section 1 (Station 1+00 to 21+50) and includes North Fork Anker Creek. Storm water runoff from the west side of the road is dispersed via sheet flow over the adjacent land. Runoff from the east side is collected in a partially paved roadside ditch that carries the runoff to North Fork Anker Creek. The road will be widened in both directions and the existing roadside ditch will be filled. The existing ditch on the east side of the road from Station 1+00 to 3+50 will be relocated to the edge of the new road shoulder. The remainder of the ditch will be replaced with an 18-inch diameter subsurface storm drain pipe. Filling a portion of the existing ditch will result in approximately 1,725 square feet of permanent impacts to existing wetlands located in the ditch. Proposed activities in Section 1 are not expected to have any temporary impacts to existing wetlands.

Hydrologic analysis of Section 1 shows that during the peak flow of a 100-year storm event, the post-development conditions of the project will result in a 0.167 cubic feet per second (cfs) increase in storm water runoff. This amount corresponds to a 2.98% increase in storm water runoff that will be transferred to NF Anker Creek during the peak flow of the 100-year event. In order to mitigate for the additional runoff, a retention/detention (R/D) facility will be installed to detain up to 4% of the peak flows, thus resulting in a lower amount of runoff entering the creek during the peak flow time compared to the pre-developed rate.

The R/D facility will be constructed between Stations 11+50 and 12+50, and will consist of a 3-foot diameter by 100-foot long underground pipe running parallel to the new 18-inch diameter storm drain pipe. The location for the R/D facility was selected because it has available right-of-way space, a suitable storm drain inlet, and it will capture runoff from the Fieldbrook Market and Fire Station parking lots. The R/D facility is designed to capture the first flush of runoff from these asphalt parking areas, the roadway, and adjacent properties. During storm events up to a 2-year event, runoff will be directed into the R/D facility where it will act as a retention facility and allow the runoff to slowly infiltrate into the soil. During storms that are greater than a 2-year event, the R/D facility will retain and infiltrate the first flush of runoff and the excess runoff will be slowly discharged to North Fork Anker Creek via the proposed storm drain system. A 75-foot long by 6-foot wide energy dissipater, consisting of three to five rock slope protection (RSP) check-dams, will be constructed between the new storm drain outlet near Station 17+75 and North Fork Anker Creek.

Section 2: The middle portion of the project is Section 2 (Station 21+50 to 53+00) and contains South Fork Anker Creek and an unnamed tributary to Anker Creek. Between

Wagle Lane (21+50) and Anker Road (27+50), storm water runoff flows off the west side of the roadway and is dispersed via sheet flow over the adjacent land. Runoff from the east side of the road is collected in a roadside ditch that drains to South Fork Anker Creek. Between Anker Road and Fieldbrook School (41+00) there are no distinct ditches and runoff is dispersed over land. South of Fieldbrook School, between Stations 42+75 and 47+75, runoff collects in a ditch along the west side of the road. There are no roadside ditches between Stations 48+00 and 53+00 and only shoulder widening in upland areas is proposed in that area.

The roadway will be widened in both directions in Section 2. The roadside ditch between South Fork Anker Creek and Station 24+00 will remain an open ditch but the ditch will be reformed and light RSP will be placed in the outlet area near South Fork Anker Creek. An 18-inch diameter storm drain pipe will replace portions of the existing roadside ditch including the sections between Station 24+00 and Anker Road and between Stations 42+75 and 47+75. Between Anker Road and Station 30+00, a new ditch will be formed to carry storm water to the new 18-inch diameter storm drain pipe and eventually to South Fork Anker Creek. A vegetated bio-swale will be constructed between Stations 44+75 and 47+75. The existing ditch between Stations 44+75 and 47+75 will be widened to create the 8 to 10-foot wide vegetated bio-swale that is designed to treat storm water runoff before it enters an unnamed tributary to Anker Creek (48+00).

Filling portions of the existing ditches in this section will result in approximately 826 square feet of permanent impacts to existing wetlands in the roadside ditches. Construction activities are expected to result in approximately 630 square feet of temporary impacts to existing wetlands in the ditches. Hydrologic analysis of Section 2 shows that during the peak of a 100-year storm event, the vegetated bio-swale will act as an R/D bio-filtration system and the post-construction conditions will result in a net decrease of storm water flows of 0.087 cubic feet per second.

Section 3: The southern end of the project is Section 3 (Station 53+00 to 72+00). The majority of the storm water runoff in Section 3 flows off each side of the roadway and is dispersed over land and vegetation. An existing roadside ditch located on the east side of the road between Stations 55+00 and 57+50 collects runoff for approximately 250 feet before the flows are eventually dispersed onto an outlying vegetated area. This section of roadside ditch will be relocated adjacent to the new road shoulder. Filling the roadside ditch will result in approximately 250 square feet of permanent impacts to existing wetlands in the ditch. Hydrologic analysis of Section 3 shows that the proposed project activities will not cause an increase in storm water runoff.

The proposed project will result in 2816 square feet of permanent impacts and 630 square feet of temporary impacts to existing wetlands in roadside ditches. Compensatory mitigation is required for the permanent impacts to existing wetlands. Compensatory mitigation consists of creating 2,925 square feet of wetlands in new roadside ditches and a vegetated bio-swale. Noncompensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control and for operation of heavy equipment in a stream channel. Noncompensatory mitigation also includes

seeding and mulching disturbed areas. The proposed project is scheduled to begin during the summer of 2008.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide 14 permit, 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. The County of Humboldt determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1 – existing facilities, and Section 15304 – minor alterations to land. Regional Water Board staff have determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 4, Section 15304 – minor alterations to land) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project.

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