

August 4, 2008

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

Trinity County DOT – North Fork Trinity River Bridge Abutment Repair
WDID No. 1B08107WNTR
Trinity County

On June 23, 2008, 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 (certification) for activities related to repairing the south abutment of the East Fork Road Bridge over the North Fork Trinity River near Helena. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the North Fork Trinity River in the Helena Hydrologic Subarea No. 106.15.

During the winter storms of late December 2005 and early January 2006, a 60-foot long by 35-foot high area along the south bridge abutment was undermined and damaged. The existing slope around the south abutment was previously protected with a blanket of grouted small rock. High flows undermined the slope and blocks of the armoring broke off and slid down the streambank. The armoring is currently undermined and there are large cracks in the remaining grout.

The purpose of the project is to repair and restore the abutment armoring and adjacent streambank areas. The area of undermined armoring below the ordinary high water elevation will be replaced by filling the void with 2-ton to 4-ton rock riprap. The large rock will be placed into the undermined areas slowly in order to allow fish to relocate. NOAA Fisheries concurred that this method is less likely to impact fish because replacing the armoring with the same material would require electroshocking, dewatering the low flow area, and pouring grout in the channel. The new riprap armoring will not extend into the stream channel beyond the previous limits of the eroded grout armoring. The remaining damaged area above the ordinary high water elevation will be repaired by placing a 1.5-foot thick layer of lighted grouted rock (quarter-ton to half-ton) over a layer of woven geotextile fabric.

When possible, project activities will be conducted with equipment working from the road and bridge. Grout will be pumped from the bridge. Silt fence, straw wattles and/or sandbags will be used to form a barrier along the base of the slope during removal of the old grout and pouring the new grout. Placing the large rocks below the ordinary high water elevation in a slow and controlled manner will require access for heavy equipment to reach the south bank. Access will be created by grading a road from the east side of East Branch Road to the south bank. Two 3-inch diameter fir trees, one 8-inch diameter madrone tree, two vine maple clusters, and several clusters of small willows will be removed to create the access road. The access road will be seeded with native grasses and mulched after the project is complete.

The new riprap armoring will result in approximately 360 square feet of permanent impacts to the streambank in an area that was previously armored with grouted rock.

The new grouted rock armoring will result in approximately 1,800 square feet of permanent impacts to the streambank area above the ordinary high water elevation. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and erosion control, and the operation of heavy equipment near a waterway. An oil-absorbent boom will be placed in the stream below the work area and spill containment and cleanup supplies will be onsite during the project. The proposed project will be conducted during the late summer when flows are low.

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 also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. The Trinity County Planning Department determined that this project is to repair a facility that was damaged as a result of a declared emergency and is statutorily exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15269 – emergency projects. 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.

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.