

August 6, 2008

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

**Sonoma County Water Agency,  
Localized Channel Maintenance Projects  
(WDID No. 1B08093WNSO)**

**Sonoma County**

On May 23, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Michael Stevenson of Horizon Water and Environment, on behalf of the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the 2008 Localized Channel Maintenance Projects located in Sonoma County.

The proposed project consists of removing sediment from blocked culvert road crossings at five sites and repairing one destabilized streambank. Localized sediment removal projects refer to a limited (or localized) project extent, generally less than 200ft. per site, with sediment removal work focused at the immediate culvert or crossing area.

The purpose of the localized sediment removal projects is to improve the hydraulic and flood conveyance capacity of the creeks, prevent potential flooding of adjacent residences and properties, and improve the potential of the channels to serve as aquatic habitat.

The five localized sediment removal projects would cause permanent impacts to 0.09 acres of streambed within the Mark West Hydrologic Sub Unit No. 114.23; 0.25 acres in the Santa Rosa Hydrologic Sub Unit No. 114.22; and 0.07 acres within the Laguna Hydrologic Sub Unit No. 114.21. The Bank Stabilization project would cause permanent impacts to 0.01 acres of streambed within the Laguna Hydrologic Sub Unit No. 114.21.

Locations for the local sediment removal projects are as follows:

The Airport Creek project is located at the Skylane Boulevard culvert road crossing in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California. The project site latitude and longitude are 38°30'48.26" N and -122°47'56.60" W.

The Colgan Creek project is located at the culvert road crossing beneath Hearn Avenue in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California. The project site latitude and longitude are 38°25'6.09" N and -122°43'16.52" W.

The College Creek project is located at the culvert road crossing at West College Avenue in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California. The project site latitude and longitude are 38°26'45.53" N and -122°45'5.68" W.

The Ducker Creek project is located at the culvert road crossing at Benicia Drive in Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California. The project site latitude and longitude are 38°28'9.66" N and -122°40'22.61" W.

The Steele Creek project is located at the culvert road crossing at Gamay Street in Sebastopol, Sonoma County, California. The project site latitude and longitude is 38°27'26.45" N and -122°45'25.56" W.

Localized sediment removal activities include: (1) installation of temporary access ramps as needed; (2) removal of sediment from the box or corrugated metal culverts and areas immediately upstream and downstream of the culverts; (3) selective removal or thinning of vegetation at sediment removal locations; (4) debris removal as necessary; and (5) installation of temporary coffer dams as a dewatering system if/as necessary.

Localized sediment removal activities at the Airport, Colgan, College, Ducker, and Steele creek culvert crossings would involve the estimated removal of 645 cubic yards of sediment. The hydraulic and flood conveyance capacity of these channels has been decreased from their original design due to sediment accumulation and the growth of in-channel vegetation. The amount of sediment removal was determined by comparing cross-sections of the original culvert or channel design with current conditions to evaluate the degree of sediment accumulation and blockage. Recent cross-sections surveyed in 2006 and 2007 were used as the basis of comparison to the original design capacity.

Sediment and vegetation in the culverts will be removed with an excavator, bulldozer, or front loader operating from the top of bank, the roadway crossing directly above the culverts, or from existing maintenance roads to the side of the channels. At some locations, small push-loading type Bobcats may be lowered into the culverts to remove sediment. Accumulated sediment will be removed and hauled to an off-site location approved by the Regional Water Board.

If necessary, temporary access ramps would be constructed where needed to allow equipment to enter the culvert and channel. The ramp locations would be selected to avoid impacts to vegetation, while providing efficient, safe equipment access to the work area. Access ramps, if used, would be temporary and would be restored following sediment removal. The restored ramp areas would be seeded with native grasses and erosion control fabric would be installed.

Work will be done between August 1 and October 31, 2008. It is likely that some flow will be present in the culvert work areas as a result of summer irrigation and urban runoff. If flow is encountered, a dewatering system using a coffer dam, sump, and diversion pipe will be used to intercept and divert surface water and shallow groundwater from the project area to be released downstream. Fish screening shall be conducted at the intake that meets all NOAA Fisheries fish screen criteria. Large sediment filtering bags will be incorporated into the outlet end of the discharge line to minimize turbidity. The dewatering system will be removed following project completion.

The single proposed bank stabilization project is located on Gossage Creek. Bank stabilization is required to prevent further bank erosion and channel instability which would cause the discharge of additional sediment to receiving waters. The bank stabilization project extends 60 feet along Gossage Creek in Sonoma County, California. The project site latitude and longitude are 38°20'18.33" N and -122°43'54.45" W.

The bank stabilization project at Gossage Creek includes: (1) removal of vegetation (primarily cattails) from the channel at the base of the existing bank; (2) installation of compacted soil to back-fill slope and regrade the bank slope; (3) key-in rip-rap at the toe of slope for base of bank stability; (4) installation of erosion control fabric and a minimum of 4" of soil on the reconstructed bank slope; and (5) revegetation with grass along bank slope, with riparian plantings installed at top-of-bank and at the toe-of-bank locations.

The bank stabilization designs and implementation activities use bioengineering techniques to address slope stability. These approaches include using engineered back filled soils, erosion control fabric, and planting of native riparian trees at the top-of-bank and the toe-of-slope to provide additional bank stability and increased canopy in the channel.

Equipment used for bank stabilization activities may include excavators, bulldozers, front-end loaders, and 10- and 20-cubic-yard dump trucks. Staging will occur on the adjacent access road. Soil and rip-rap will be staged in areas that have been previously disturbed (i.e., service road, turn-outs, etc). If repair activities affect the active channel, the work area will be isolated from flowing stream segments using silt fences, wattles, and/or cofferdams, as described above.

For the localized channel maintenance projects, mitigation is proposed to compensate for repeated temporal impacts (repeated periodic removal of sediment accumulation). Mitigation will include off-site erosion control and restoration activities. On-site mitigation opportunities were considered, but do to the existing impacted conditions of the culvert crossings (with hardened concrete beds, metal piped culverts, or concrete box culverts in place) opportunities for on-site mitigation were severely limited. Off-site mitigation projects will be coordinated through the "Watershed Partnerships Program" (WPP) funded at a cost of 10% of the cost of the project, which results in a restoration area larger than 10% of the impacted area.

The Cotati Creek Critters Upper Laguna de Santa Rosa restoration project and the Cook Creek headwaters erosion control and sediment management project will provide the off-site mitigation. The Cotati Creek Critters project involves understory revegetation, monitoring and maintenance of 0.32 acres along the Upper Laguna Channel. The mitigation funding from the Localized Channel Maintenance projects provides a portion of the total 4.6 Cotati Creek Critters project area that will be restored through overall SCWA mitigation funding in 2008. The Cotati Creek Critters mitigation project will provide bank stabilization, increase ecological value of the stream, and

provide environmental education to volunteers and users of the area. The Cook Creek headwaters erosion control and sediment management project includes slope grading and vegetation plating to decrease sediment delivery to Cook Creek. For each off-site mitigation project, native plants will be planted and managed, and a five year monitoring plan will be implemented with an 80% survival rate of all plant species. Yearly monitoring and reporting will be required.

The applicant has applied for a California Department of Fish and Game 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement, on May 23, 2008.

Applicant has applied for a United States Army Corps of Engineers Permit.

The County of Sonoma has determined that this project is statutorily exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (Section 15301 – Existing Facilities), and filed a Notice of Exemption on March 26, 2008. Based on a review of the project information submitted to date, Regional Water Board staff 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.

At a minimum, the following construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the final project plans as appropriate in order to reduce and control soil erosion: work in and around waterways will be conducted during the dry season; installation of construction barrier fencing to preclude equipment entry into sensitive areas; installation of silt fencing or fiber rolls to prevent sediment loss from immediate work area; topsoil salvage and reapplication; and seeding and mulching.

The channel maintenance and bank stabilization projects are scheduled to be between August 1 and October 31, 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](mailto:sbargsten@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.