

September 9, 2008

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

**Catherine Younger**  
**Green Valley Ranch Wetland Restoration project**  
**Sonoma County (WDID No. 1B08106WNSO)**

On June 23, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Eric Austensen of Streamline Engineering, on behalf of Catherine Younger (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated with the Green Valley Ranch Wetland Restoration Project located in Sebastopol, Sonoma County. The proposed project causes permanent impacts to approximately 0.75 acres of wetland within the Laguna Hydrologic Sub-area No. 114.21. The Project is located on Sonoma County Assessors Parcel No. 104-090-036-000, at a Latitude of 38° 25.397'N and a Longitude of 122° 53.796'W

Green Valley Ranch was originally operated as a dairy until 1969. In 1970, the Ranch was converted to vineyard. The Ranch is owned by Catherine Younger, and for the past several years, a neighboring farmer has operated the vineyard. The wetland proposed for restoration after the recent disturbance was previously an agricultural pond that was built on the property at least 50 years ago. At an unknown time before the vineyard was planted, an 18 inch concrete pipe was placed in an 18.9 acre drainage area, diverting its flow to the pond. Since then, the pond has been filling with sediment from the drainage. The pond drains to an adjacent roadside ditch. Sediment also filled the ditch. Wetland plants established in the pond and may have established in the ditch, as well. The pond is located adjacent to Graton Road, and is surrounded by vineyard on the other three sides.

During November 2007, vineyard operators used an excavator to remove sediment from a roadside ditch along Graton Road, in an effort to promote better road drainage. In an attempt to clean up what was perceived as overgrown and unsightly brush in the old pond, and also to prevent oversaturation of the vineyard due to high ground water levels, a two foot deep trench was dug through the middle of the wetland. Much of the surface soil of the wetland was scraped off while clearing the dense vegetation. The 18 inch culvert that historically provided flow to the pond was rerouted directly to the ditch via an 18 inch plastic culvert.

Regional Water Board staff received a complaint regarding the work in the ditch and wetland, and on February 27, 2008, Regional Water Board staff visited the site. Following the site visit, staff notified other regulatory agencies, and on March 13, 2008, the County of Sonoma PRMD send Catherine Younger a *Notice and Order* for grading without a permit. The County is requiring that the site be restored, and that a permit be obtained for the work.

Plans for the restoration of the wetland submitted to the Regional Water Board include grading plans designed to allow surface flow to exit the wetland at the southeast corner into a ditch that parallels Graton Road, the furthest point from the culvert. This maximizes saturation of the wetland, enhancing the wetland plants and water quality.

The plan indicates that fill soil will be removed from several locations in the more barren areas of the wetland. This will lower the ground surface in those areas to promote propagation of wetland plants as they receive more summer groundwater. Sediment basin function will also be recreated. The created pools will be two feet deep below the spillway elevation. The project will include excavation for, and placement of, 18 cubic yards of rock and gravel below the spillway to serve as an energy dissipater. A rock and gravel cutoff wall will be constructed at the spillway entrance to contain summer groundwater in the wetland. The extra soil present from the excavation will be spread on the adjacent vineyard to a maximum depth of 18 inches. Per the planting plan submitted to the Regional Water Board, the landowner will plant Arroyo Willow, Shining Willow and Red Twig Dogwood.

A new, smaller, wetland area will be created by excavating a grassy area in the corner of the property directly south of the driveway. This area will be planted according to plans submitted to the Regional Water Board, and will include plantings of Bog Rush, Bulrush Tule, Red Twig Dogwood and Shining Willow.

After wetland grading is complete, the original 18 inch culvert will be rerouted back to its original outfall, returning water to the wetland. The roadside ditch will be left alone and allowed to continue to re-vegetate, in order to protect the aquatic life that inhabit many of the pools in the ditch.

The project will require at least a five year monitoring and reporting plan with minimal survival requirements for the restored areas.

Appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been incorporated into the final Project plans in order to reduce and control soil erosion.

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 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 or comments, please contact staff member Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653, [sbargsten@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:sbargsten@waterboards.ca.gov), or Brian Lindell at (707) 576-6732, or at [blindell@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:blindell@waterboards.ca.gov).

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.