

September 29, 2008

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

California Department of Transportation - District 1
Highway 101 & 271 - Mendocino County, Culvert Rehabilitation Project:
WDID No. 1B08025WNME

Mendocino County

On February 20, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application and \$500.00 fee from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) District 1, requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 101 & 271 – Mendocino County, Culvert Rehabilitation project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State within the Eel River Hydrologic Unit No.111.00, Outlet Creek Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 111.61, and Benbow Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 111.32. Both temporary and permanent impacts are proposed to seven unnamed ephemeral drainages within the Eel River watershed, four of which are within Regional Water Board jurisdiction.

All seven of the proposed project locations are within Mendocino County. Three locations are along Highways 101 at post mile (PM) markers 54.53, 59.30 and 95.88. In addition, four locations are along Highway 271 at PM markers 0.11, 0.78, 18.32 and 20.64. The purposes and objectives of the project are to repair and upgrade the culverts and down drains to protect the roadway from erosion related structural failures. The proposed construction activities will consist of: installing new corrugated metal or steel pipes; replacing headwalls; installing culvert flumes, aprons, end sections and downdrains; installing rock slope protection; revegetation; and erosion control.

The project will result in permanent impacts to 219 feet² (27 linear feet) of drainages considered waters of the U.S. and or waters of the State. Water diversions may be required for work associated within drainage; however, in an attempt to reduce impacts to jurisdictional waters work will only be conducted during the dry season. All graded areas within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized with native vegetation. In addition, construction and post construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented to ensure erosion is minimized and controlled. To compensate for the loss of waters of the U.S. and waters of the State associated with project, Caltrans proposes to plant approximately 562 feet² of riparian vegetation on-site at locations PM 54.63 and PM 59.30.

Caltrans has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to perform the project under their Nationwide Permit No. 14 (linear transportation projects) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. Caltrans has also applied to California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement. Caltrans has determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (General Rule Categorical Exemption). In addition, Regional Water Board staff also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1 Categorical Exemption) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption. Construction work in all drainages will only be conducted

during the dry season from the period of May 15th to October 15th. The entire project is expected to take 50 working days and is anticipated to be completed by October, 2009.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within 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 Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or jpuget@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road construction 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 related documents and comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.