

September 29, 2008

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

Humboldt County DPW - Sediment Excavation Pilot Test for Salt River Ecosystem
Restoration
WDID No. 1B08139WNHU

Humboldt County

On September 19, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Public Works Department (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) for activities related to a pilot test that involves removal of accumulated sediment from three locations in the Salt River stream channel near Ferndale. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Salt River in the Ferndale Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.11.

The purpose of the proposed project is to collect information on the properties of the aggraded sediment that will be removed in the future as part of the full-scale Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project (SRERP). The Salt River is aggraded with sediment and colonizing vegetation, primarily willows. The SRERP is a larger project intended to restore the Salt River ecosystem which is currently impaired due to the excess sediment. Information gathered during this pilot study will be used to complete the planning and design of sediment removal and reuse activities for the SRERP project.

The proposed project involves removal of sediment and debris at three specific locations within the Salt River channel. All three excavation areas are located within areas of the channel that are proposed for future excavation and restoration. Each excavation area will be approximately 30 feet long, 10 feet wide and 3.5 feet deep. A backhoe or excavator will be used to remove approximately 40 cubic yards of sediment at each location. Excavated materials will be placed directly into a dump truck for transportation to the Riverside Ranch where it will be stockpiled in an upland area. The Riverside Ranch is currently owned by Western Rivers Conservancy but the property is being acquired by the California Department of Fish and Game as part of the SRERP.

The proposed pilot study activities will temporarily impact 900 square feet and 90 linear feet of stream channel. The proposed project is not expected to result in any permanent impacts to waters of the state. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control. The proposed project is expected to take two days to complete.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 27, 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 County of Humboldt determined that this project is categorically exempt from California

Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15306, Class 6 – information collection. Regional Water Board staff have also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 6, Section 15306 – information collection) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project.

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.