

December 18, 2008

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

**Alton Preserve, LLC**  
**Alton North Conservation Bank Project**  
**Sonoma County (WDID# 1B07048WNSO)**

On April 26, 2007, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Harvey Rich, on behalf of Alton Preserve, LLC, requesting a Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Alton North Conservation Bank (Project) located in Sonoma County. The proposed project causes permanent impacts to 0.16 acres of seasonal wetland within the Santa Rosa Hydrologic Sub Unit No. 114.22

The proposed project is located at 2779 Piner Road in northwest Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, California, (APN. No. 034-042-088). The latitude and longitude is 38.46717° N and -122.77790° W. The purpose of the Alton North Conservation Bank (Project) is the construction and enhancement of wetlands to provide habitat for endangered plant species Burke's goldfields (*Lasthenia burkei*) and Sonoma sunshine (*Blennosperma bakeri*). The Project will provide partial mitigation for the Kerry Ranch development project.

Approximately 7.31 acres of vernal pool habitat will be constructed on a 23.0 acre parcel. Of this total, approximately 6.12 acres will be created habitat; the remaining habitat will be produced by enhancing existing seasonal wetland swales and modifying some of the existing depressional features within them. These vernal pools will be created and enhanced to produce habitat for stable populations of Burke's goldfields. Eighty vernal pools will be created ranging in size from 1,427 square feet to 14,478 square feet. The pools will possess slightly concave rather than level bottoms and together with the gentle sides slopes (ranging from 10:1 to 25:1) will provide broad zones over which Burke's goldfields and Sonoma sunshine can shift each year in response to changes in annual precipitation. Swales will be constructed to provide hydrologic connections among the pools and between the pools and existing swales. A single California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*)(CTS) breeding pond will be constructed. Burke's goldfields and Sonoma sunshine seed will be collected from source pools in the adjacent, existing Alton Lane Preserve. The location of the Project is within the limits of the Alton Conservation Area.

Compensatory mitigation for the Project includes tasks and performance goals with a Mitigation and Monitoring Plan that has been created to offset the impacts to wetlands and monitor the success of the restoration and creation efforts. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be employed during construction to minimize sediment production and prevent the movement of loose soil off-site.

Monitoring of the hydrologic performance and vegetation establishment and cover of the vernal pools and the Burke's goldfields colonies will extend for 10 years. Quantitative data on Burke's goldfields and Sonoma sunshine numbers and plant species cover will be collected, and semi-quantitative data will be collected on the general vegetation. All monitoring results will be provided in an annual monitoring report to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the Regional Water Board, each year for the first five years.

Special status plant surveys were conducted in spring of 2006 and spring of 2007. Target special-status species will be those listed in the Santa Rosa Plain Vernal Pool Ecosystem Preservation Plan (CH2M Hill 1996). The total number of Sonoma sunshine plants is estimated to be 3,919 plants on the Project site. CTS are known to occur in vernal pools created in the northwest corner of the existing Alton Lane Preserve, and the Project is well within the migratory distance for juvenile and adult CTS.

Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the final project plans in order to reduce and control soil erosion. All construction in and around waters of the state will be conducted during the dry season (April 15<sup>th</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>), to minimize construction related impacts to hydrology and water quality.

The Alton North Mitigation Bank (Project) is scheduled to begin Fall of 2009 and end in Fall 2010. 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.