

August 27, 2009

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

Redway Community Services District –
Water Supply Infiltration Gallery Improvement Project
WDID No. 1B09083WNHU

Humboldt County

On July 30, 2009, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Redway Community Services District (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities associated with extension of an existing water supply system infiltration gallery located under a gravel bar on the South Fork Eel River. The proposed project will cause disturbance to waters of the United States associated with the South Fork Eel River in the Benbow Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.32.

The Applicant supplies water to the community of Redway. Recent drought conditions have substantially reduced flows in the South Fork Eel River and the intake pump station that is used to draw water from the river is not able to operate at its design capacity due to the low water levels and insufficient suction pressure. The proposed project consists of improvements to the subsurface infiltration gallery to ensure that the community does not run out of water.

The infiltration gallery was constructed in 1992 and consists of two 16-inch diameter perforated PVC laterals set in excavated bedrock trenches that are aligned perpendicular to the river's flow direction. The perforated PVC laterals are covered with rock filter media, a layer of armor rock riprap, and a surface layer of river-run aggregate. Water captured in the laterals flows into a 12-inch diameter PVC pipeline that conveys the water to the water treatment plant (WTP) intake pump station. Historically, a low-flow channel was excavated across the gravel bar to facilitate infiltration into the laterals. However, the low-flow channel has filled over time leaving the end of the laterals approximately 30 feet away from the river's low-flow channel. A bedrock berm under the gravel bar surface remains between the low-flow channel and the end of the existing infiltration laterals.

During the summer of 2008, flows in the river were substantially reduced and the Applicant was not able to operate the WTP at design capacity. The Applicant eliminated bulk water sales and was able to meet the community's demand. Due to three consecutive seasons of drought conditions the intake capacity substantially dropped again in June 2009. The Applicant anticipates that the bedrock berm will continue to inhibit infiltration into the laterals whenever water surface elevations in the South Fork Eel River are at current or lower levels. Proposed improvements to the infiltration gallery will not increase the Applicant's capacity to divert water and will not affect the existing water right allowing diversion of water from the South Fork Eel River.

The proposed project includes excavation of gravel to expose the existing laterals for examination, removal of any sediment that may be adversely affecting performance of the laterals, and excavation to remove the bedrock berm to improve the rate of infiltration from the low-flow channel to the laterals. An area, up to 20 linear feet measured parallel to the river channel and up to 50 linear feet measured parallel to the laterals, will be excavated across the gravel bar from the edge of the low-flow channel to the ends of the existing subsurface laterals. Sand bags will be used to create a temporary dike between the low-flow channel and the area of excavation to prevent the diversion of river water into the construction area. A turbidity curtain will be installed between the dike and the active low-flow channel to minimize potential for discharge of sediment to the water.

Dewatering of the excavated area is expected to be necessary due its location in the gravel bar. Water will be pumped to a temporary basin constructed in the floodplain and set back as far as possible from the low-flow channel to maximize filtration through the gravel bar. Excavation spoils will be transported offsite with the potential exception of the excavated bedrock. Excavated bedrock may be used as backfill following completion of the excavation. Clean gravel (3- to 6-inches diameter) from an offsite source will be used to as the remainder of the fill to bring the excavation area up to the grade of the existing rock filter media. A layer of armor rock riprap will be placed over the backfill and extending from the existing armor rock to the edge of the low-flow channel. The armor rock will be covered by a layer of river-run aggregate with the exception of the shoreline area where the rock will be exposed along approximately 20 linear feet of the shoreline. Areas disturbed by construction activities will be restored to pre-existing contours. An existing road from the WTP to the gravel bar will be used to access the proposed temporary use area.

The existing influent pump station will be taken out of service during construction. A temporary bypass system will be installed to convey water from the low-flow channel to the WTP. The Applicant has applied to the Department of Fish and Game for authorization to install and operate the temporary pump system.

The proposed project includes placement of rock riprap immediately adjacent to the low-flow channel which will result in permanent impacts to approximately 20 linear feet and 80 square feet of the shoreline. The proposed project will also result in temporary impacts to up to 0.74 acre of the gravel bar including the temporary use area, excavation area, and the retention basin. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control and for operation of heavy equipment on the gravel bar. Noncompensatory mitigation also includes revegetation to replace several small willows located immediately adjacent to low-flow channel that will be removed during excavation of the bedrock berm. The project is expected to take up to 90 days to complete.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Numbers 3 and 33, pursuant

to Clean Water Act, section 404. The Applicant has also applied to the California Department of Fish and Game for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement. The Redway Community Services District determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to section 15301, class 1 – existing facilities and section 15302, class 2 – replacement or reconstruction. Regional Water Board staff have determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (class 2, section 15302 – replacement or reconstruction, and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps, levee cross-sections, and design drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file are available for public review.

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.