

August 28, 2009

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

For the

Gold Ridge RCD 2008 Estero Americano Rangeland Grant Program,  
Tremari Ranch Project  
WDID No. 1B09052WNSO  
Sonoma County

On April 20, 2009, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Lisa Hulette, Executive Director of Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, on behalf of Jim and Rose Tremari (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, water quality certification (certification) for proposed activities related to stream restoration and stabilization projects within the Estero Americano watershed within Sonoma County.

The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the State and United States associated with an unnamed tributary to Estero Americano, in the Bodega Hydrologic Unit No. 115.00, Estero Americano Hydrologic Area No. 115.30.

The proposed project is part of the Gold Ridge RCDs Estero de Americano Rangeland Grant Program for 2008, funded by the State Water Resources Control Board, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The project site is located on a private ranch in southwestern Sonoma County, latitude 38.325158°N, longitude 122.838986°W, within the Estero Americano Watershed, which is on the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board's Clean Water Act 303 (d) List as impaired due to excessive sediment/siltation and excess nutrient loading. The proposed projects have been designed to implement measures to address excess sedimentation/siltation, riparian management, and water quality issues, key factors in attenuating existing adverse impacts to the Estero Americano. Current problems include mass wasting, down-cutting and head-cutting within stream channels, excessive erosion resulting from grazing practices and stream crossings, erosive geology, and lack of riparian vegetation.

The project includes three sites (A, B, and C). The two upper sites (B and C) have failed concrete crossing/grade control structures that washed out during the 2005/2006 New Year's Eve storm. These crossings will be replaced with arch pipe crossings. The lower site (A) is a large pasture prone to seasonal flooding where cattle cross the creek on a regular basis. A permanent fenced crossing will be established at the lower site.

Additionally, 13,200 feet of riparian pasture fencing along the creek will be installed to exclude cattle from the riparian zone. The riparian zone will be revegetated with native plants. Debris/obstructions (instream concrete) will be removed from the creekbed. An off-channel water supply for the cattle will be installed.

The proposed project will result in permanent impacts to approximately 0.8 acres stream bed/bank within the water course. The project is designed to reduce sedimentation and nutrient delivery to the Estero Americano watershed, increase

habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species, increase riparian areas, and therefore, compensatory mitigation is not required. Non-compensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices for erosion control and for operation of heavy equipment near a stream channel. The proposed project is scheduled to commence in the dry season of 2009.

Applicant has applied to the California Department of Fish and Game and the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries, to obtain their respective permits and opinions.

The Gold Ridge RCD, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that the proposed project is categorically exempt from CEQA review, (Sections 15301, 15304, and 15333), and have filed a Notice of Exemption for this project on March 3, 2009, State Clearinghouse number 200903817.

The Gold Ridge RCD 2008 Estero Americano Rangeland Grant Program, Tremari Ranch Project is scheduled to begin in summer 2009 and end in Fall 2009. 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. Under Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3858(a): "The executive director or the executive officer with whom an application for certification is filed shall provide public notice of an application at least twenty-one (21) days before taking certification action on the application, unless the public notice requirement has been adequately satisfied by the applicant or federal agency. If the applicant or federal agency provides public notice, it shall be in a manner and to an extent fully equivalent to that normally provided by the certifying agency." The Gold Ridge RCD, on behalf of the Applicant, provided equivalent public notice of the Project through the posting of the Notice of Exemption and description of the Project to the State Clearinghouse on March 3, 2009. There were no public comments received. 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 Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.