

January 12, 2010

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

General Water Quality Certification
For

Bureau of Reclamation, Trinity River Restoration Program - Channel Rehabilitation for
Remaining Phase 1 Sites and Phase 2 Sites

Trinity County

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) is proposing to issue General Water Quality Certification for discharges related to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) proposed channel rehabilitation activities in the mainstem Trinity River. Proposed discharges are associated with the Trinity River Restoration Program, an ongoing effort to restore the anadromous fishery of the Trinity River as described in the Secretary of the Interior's 2000 Trinity River Record of Decision. Proposed channel rehabilitation activities are located along a 40-mile long reach of the mainstem Trinity River from Lewiston Dam to the North Fork Trinity River. The proposed projects will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Trinity River in the Trinity River Hydrologic Unit No. 106.00.

The primary purpose of the proposed channel rehabilitation activities is to increase salmonid habitat for all life-stages. The proposed activities will create complex fish habitat and improve juvenile rearing habitat in the mainstem Trinity River and its side channels. Projects are designed to use alluvial processes of the Trinity River to maintain and increase salmonid habitat and complexity over time, and to provide conditions suitable for reestablishing and sustaining native riparian vegetation. Channel rehabilitation activities include removal of encroaching riparian vegetation, rehabilitation of floodplain and in-channel alluvial features, construction of off-channel habitat for aquatic and riparian dependent species, coarse and fine sediment management, and rehabilitation of upland habitat.

The Regional Water Board acted as lead agency for a Master Environmental Impact Report (MEIR) and site specific Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Report (EA/EIR) (State Clearinghouse number 2008032110) for channel rehabilitation and sediment management activities for the Remaining Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Regional Water Board approved the environmental document on August 25, 2009. Proposed channel rehabilitation activities will occur at the "Remaining Phase 1" sites and 23 additional locations referred to as the "Phase 2" sites.

The MEIR portion of the environmental document evaluates the environmental impacts of proposed channel rehabilitation activities at the Remaining Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites from a programmatic perspective, and provides a discussion of existing conditions, environmental impacts, and the mitigation measures required to comply with CEQA. The EA/EIR portion of the environmental document is an integrated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/CEQA document that evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed channel rehabilitation and sediment management activities for

the Remaining Phase 1 sites at the project-specific level. Six Remaining Phase 1 sites and twenty-three Phase 2 sites were identified in the environmental document. Within the Remaining Phase 1 sites, more than 150 discrete activity areas were established for planning purposes.

The projects have been designed to avoid and minimize adverse impacts and permanent impacts to waters of the United States. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed activities. Noncompensatory mitigation for the proposed projects include revegetation of disturbed areas, as appropriate, and the use of Best Management Practices for heavy equipment use in and near a waterway.

Reclamation will apply for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the channel rehabilitation projects under Nationwide Permit Number 27, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. Regional Water Board staff are proposing to issue General Water Quality Certification to regulate Reclamation's channel rehabilitation activities at the Remaining Phase 1 and Phase 2 sites pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. Environmental impacts associated with the Remaining Phase 1 sites have already been evaluated at the project-specific level, as described in the EA/EIR. The Remaining Phase 1 sites will be eligible for enrollment and coverage upon issuance of the General Water Quality Certification Order. Phase 2 sites will be eligible for enrollment and coverage following completion of subsequent project-specific environmental analysis to supplement the programmatic level review contained in the MEIR.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of Reclamation's proposed channel rehabilitation activities. Additional information is available on the Trinity River Restoration Program's website at: <http://www.trrp.net/implementation/remainingP1.htm>. The Regional Water Board files contain a significant amount of additional information about the projects and are available for public review at the Regional Water Board office.

Staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 45-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 45 days of the posting of this notice.