

March 10, 2010

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

California Department of Transportation
Highway 162 – Sand Bank Grind and Replace Storm Damage Repair Project
WDID No. 1B10018WNME

Mendocino County

On February 24, 2010, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 162 Sand Bank Grind and Replace Storm Damage Repair Project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with the Eel River Unit No.111.00

The proposed project consists of three locations along Highway 162 at post mile (PM) 14.44, PM 16.69, and PM 19.80, in Mendocino County. During the winter of 2005/2006, several storm events contributed to the failure of these highway facilities. The purpose of the proposed project is to restore the roadway to pre-storm conditions and improve the facility to prevent further highway deterioration. The proposed construction activities will consist of: replacing culverts; installing drop inlet vaults; grading drainage ditches and slopes adjacent to drainages; installing underdrains; replacing culverts; installing outlet down-drains; replacing asphalt and road base; re-establishing drainage flows; installing rock slope protection (RSP); and conducting slope revegetation and erosion control.

The proposed project will result in temporary and permanent impacts to unnamed ephemeral tributaries the Eel River and Middle Fork Eel River. Caltrans has determined the temporary impacts to waters of the U.S. and State would total approximately 0.03 acres (876 linear feet). However, permanent impacts are only 0.005 acres (107 linear feet). Caltrans will utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) to provide erosion control and pollution prevention throughout the project area during construction. All graded areas within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized and/or replanted with appropriate native vegetation. In addition, the proposed project will restore the former drainage flow at the culvert located at PM 16.69 and reduce the amount of water that flows to the culvert at PM 16.65. These actions are likely to improve water quality by reducing the velocity of water, the sediment delivery potential, and the water temperature. Additionally, Caltrans proposes to lay back steep erodible slopes at PM 14.44 to reduce the sediment delivery potential to the Eel River.

The proposed project will be conducted in summer months during low flow conditions; however, a water diversion may be required. The majority of proposed project activity is scheduled to be conducted between July 31, 2010 and October 15, 2010. The entire project is expected to take 60 days to complete. The proposed in-channel work will only be conducted between June 15th and October 15th.

Caltrans has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 14 (linear transportation projects) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Caltrans has applied to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. Caltrans has determined that this project is exempt by statute from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (Class Statutory Exemption 15269 (b)(c)). In addition, Regional Water Board staff also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 2 Categorical Exemption) and anticipates filing a Notice of Exemption.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within 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 or comments, please contact staff member Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or jpuget@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road construction activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The related documents and comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.