

April 14, 2010

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

Healdsburg Veterans Memorial Beach Annual Operation
Sonoma County Regional Parks
WDID No. 1B03062WNSO

Sonoma County

On October 1, 2009, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Michelle Julene, of Sonoma County Regional Parks (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated with annual beach installation, maintenance and demobilization of the annual summer beach (Project). This is a continuation of the same activities that have previously received certifications. Project is located along the Russian River, River Mile 31.5-31.6, upstream of the Healdsburg War Memorial Dam and Fish Ladder, and downstream of the Healdsburg Avenue Bridge, on the left/east bank, on the southeast side of the City of Healdsburg, latitude 38.603096°N, and longitude 123.85990°W, in Sonoma County. The proposed project will cause temporary impacts to approximately 0.28 acres, 350 linear feet, of bank of the Russian River, Guerneville Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.11, Russian River Hydrologic Area 114.00.

The purpose of the project is to continue the annual beach installation, which provides a safe public swimming and recreation area. This facility averages approximately 75,000 annual visitors. This beach is one of only two developed public beaches available to the general public in this reach of the Russian River.

Activities associated with the annual beach installation include:

Regional Parks prepares the beach for public use for the Memorial Day weekend, generally May 25 – June 3. Although the swimming area would not be ready at this time, beach goers would be able to wade in the Russian River while picnicking, barbecuing, and using the outdoor recreation area. Beach preparation for the Memorial Day weekend includes creation of a continuous grade line on the beach area and installation of one main buoy line in the Russian River. The continuous grade would be created by pushing the stockpiled beach sand onto the exposed riverbank. The continuous grade would be required for public safety, and would generally be a 5:1 slope depending on natural conditions of the exposed riverbank. These activities occur between May 15 and May 22. After the Memorial Day weekend, the beach would be closed to the public. Equipment and machinery used for beach preparation of the Memorial Day weekend includes two full-sized bulldozers to move the sand between the storage area and the beach area. No machinery or equipment enters the flowing river channel.

Annual beach preparation would begin after the Memorial Day weekend. Bulldozers would be used to create a berm of imported clean river gravel and cobble, the toe of which would be approximately 6 feet shoreward of the flowing channel. The berm

would be approximately 8-10 inches high. The purposes of the berm would be to protect water quality in the river and to define the beach area. Imported or stored beach sand would be placed upon the graded beach area and groomed. Dump truck(s) would be used to transport the purchased sand to the beach area. Access would be provided by the existing Regional Parks Department service road. Appurtenant feature for the annual beach preparation would include the installation of additional buoys and safety lines installed in the Russian River, and the installation of radio lines for lifeguard communication and the placement of lifeguard stands on the beach itself. The swimming area would be created as the flashboards are added to the Dam, on or after June 26. The beach would be reopened for public use for the July 4 weekend and would remain open through the Labor Day weekend. The Regional Parks Department would maintain the beach throughout the summer season. Equipment and machinery used for the annual beach preparation would include dump truck(s) to transport purchased beach sand and two bulldozers to create the berm and to locate the purchased beach sand. No machinery or equipment would be used in the flowing channel of the river.

After the Labor Day weekend, the beach would be closed for public use. The lifeguard stands, radio line, swimming safety line, and buoys would be removed for storage to the corporation yard. The water level in the seasonal recreational swimming area would be gradually decreased as the flashboards at the Dam are removed. Bulldozers would be used to move the beach sand for storage above the ordinary high water mark. This activity generally would occur between September 3 and September 10. No machinery or equipment would enter the flowing channel of the river. Imported river gravel and cobble used to create the berm would be allowed to wash back into the Russian River as the river flow increases during the winter season.

Non-compensatory mitigation and erosion control measures include relocating beach sand to an on-site storage location above the flow of the river, stabilization, seeding, and/or covering the sand stockpiles and beach area to minimize erosion, sediment input, and turbidity during the winter and spring months.

Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, filed a Notice of Exemption, Statutory Exemption, Section 15261 (Ongoing Project) and Section 21169 ("Grandfather Clause"), on March 15, 2002, pursuant to CEQA guidelines. The Project will also be Categorical Exempt pursuant to Section 15301, Existing Facilities.

The Applicant has received a California Department of Fish and Game Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement Extension, Notification Number: R3-2002-0079, issued on September 28, 2006, and expiring December 31, 2011.

The Applicant has received a US Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Section 404 Individual Permit, Permit No. 276060N, issued on June 12, 2009, and expiring on December 31, 2019. The Army Corps Permit authorizes up to 0.43 acres of dredge/fill area, which includes variables of beach width and seasonal morphology of the river.

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 Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

100415_Sonoma_Co_Regional_Parks_Healdsburg_Vets_Memorial_Beach_PN