

July 8, 2010

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

California Department of Transportation
Highway 3- Trinity River Bridge Scour Rehabilitation
WDID No. 1A10020WNTR

Trinity County

On March 3, 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 3 - Trinity River Bridge Scour Rehabilitation Project. The proposed project has the potential for temporary impacts to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with the Trinity River located within the Upper Trinity River Hydrologic Unit No. 106.00, and an undefined Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 106.40. .

The proposed project is located on Highway 3 at post mile (PM) 68.5, in Trinity County. The purpose of the proposed project is to replace existing pier wall bents 2, 3, and 4 with new outrigger bents. Currently, the channel runs parallel to the bridge in a meandering path, and then makes an abrupt turn as it crosses under the bridge. According to Caltrans, channel degradation and migration are worsening the scour potential by progressively lowering and raising the profile of the riverbed. The proposed project will result in temporary impacts to waters of the U.S and waters of the State.

Caltrans has determined the temporary impacts to waters of the U.S. and State would total approximately 6,105 feet² (138 linear feet). Caltrans proposes to minimize the temporary impacts to waters of the U.S and State by implementing Best Management Practices (BMPs) to provide erosion control and pollution prevention throughout the project area during construction. In replacing the pier walls with smaller footprint outrigger bents Caltrans will be decreasing the permanent impact of the bridge. Therefore, compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Caltrans will appropriately stabilize and/or replanted disturbed soil areas with appropriate native vegetation. Caltrans has evaluated implementing post-construction storm water treatment at the site and determined that implementing them within the project area was not feasible.

The proposed project will be conducted from January 2011 to November 2013 with approximately 250 working days. Construction activities within the water channels will occur during low flow periods, between May 15th and October 15th of any given year, to minimize potential impacts. To minimize groundwater exposure to fresh concrete, work will be conducted during the low flow season when water is confined to a narrow channel. Four out of six piles/column bents will be outside the wetted channel during construction. Additionally, use of a clear water diversion will minimize exposure at the remaining two piers.

Construction activities that take place within jurisdictional waters of the U.S. will also require a California Department of Fish and Game 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement, and a non-reporting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Nation Wide Permit 14, Linear Transportation Projects. Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Caltrans prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration State Clearing House Number 2009022070, which was issued April 1st, 2009. Prior to issuing the Water Quality Certification, the Regional Water Board will consider the environmental document and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment.

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.