

July 29, 2010

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

City of Yreka – Yreka Creek Floodplain Restoration and Greenway Trail Project
WDID No. 1A09150WNSI

Siskiyou County

On December 31, 2009, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the City of Yreka (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for proposed activities related to the Yreka Creek Floodplain Restoration and Greenway Trail Project (project) in the City of Yreka (Yreka). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Yreka Creek in the Shasta Valley Hydrologic Area No. 105.50.

The proposed project is located in the northern portion of Yreka on approximately 6 acres along Yreka Creek that is designated for open space. The project area begins approximately 700 feet north of Highway 3 and extends approximately 1,700 feet north (downstream) between the City's existing wastewater treatment plant and maintenance yard on the west, and Dear Creek Way on the east. A portion of the project area was the site of the City's former wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that was decommissioned in 1971 and some of the old WWTP structures still exist. The site has also been used for storage of excess construction materials including rubble and concrete riprap. Removal of excess fill along the creek and floodplain is a main component of the proposed project.

Yreka Creek is a perennial stream that provides habitat for anadromous fish. The creek was heavily mined in the past and is currently restricted to the western edge of the project area. The creek is incised in some locations with limited access to its floodplain. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve aquatic and riparian habitat along the creek through restoration of floodplain and riparian areas while reducing flooding effects on downtown Yreka and also improving the quality of storm water runoff that enters the creek. Proposed activities are intended to improve floodplain functions by increasing floodplain capacity and increasing the creek's access to the restored floodplain.

The proposed project also implements several improvements recommended in the *Yreka Creek Greenway Master Plan* including a portion of the multi-purpose trail system. Project elements include: debris and fill removal for floodplain widening in order to increase floodwater storage; configuration of the floodplain to enhance riparian and aquatic habitat; revegetation of the expanded floodplain with native species; development of a multi-use non-motorized trail system on both sides of the creek; construction of two seasonal pedestrian bridges across the creek; construction of a trailhead off Deer Creek Road that will include a parking lot, restroom, and interpretive center; and several improvements at the existing Visitor's Center. The Visitor's Center improvements are located in upland areas. The proposed project, in combination with future and previously completed projects, is part of a cumulative effort by the City to

reduce flood related impacts, improve stream and riparian habitat, and create new open space recreation.

Proposed floodplain restoration will involve excavation and removal of approximately 13,600 cubic yards of concrete and fill material along the east side of the creek. Approximately 8,800 cubic yards of the excavated material will be used to raise the elevation of adjacent upland areas and to create trail access and parking areas. The remaining excavated material will be hauled to the City's maintenance yard on North Main Street, the City's WWTP, or other appropriate disposal locations. Floodplain restoration includes floodplain widening, grading to configure the restored floodplain to enhance riparian habitat and provide space for a recreational trail system, and revegetation of the floodplain using native species. The restored floodplain is designed to provide an additional 11.3 acre-feet of storage capacity during a 100-year storm event.

Construction of two seasonal pedestrian bridges across the creek requires installation of permanent posts on both sides of Yreka Creek. Two posts will be installed at both ends of each bridge for the purpose of securing the seasonal bridges when the bridges are in use over the creek. The seasonal bridges will also have two mid-span support posts under each bridge that will only be placed in the Yreka Creek channel during the low flow season. The permanent support posts will result in 2 square feet of permanent impacts to riparian wetlands along the streambanks. The mid-span support posts will temporarily impact 1 square foot of stream channel while the bridges are in use.

Portions of the project area are currently vegetated with mature cottonwood, willow, and other riparian vegetation. Much of the existing riparian vegetation will be avoided and retained. Approximately 1.26 acres of riparian vegetation, including 47 mature trees (larger than 6-inches diameter at breast height), will be removed during construction. Proposed mitigation for impacts to riparian vegetation includes revegetation of 1.8 acres of floodplain and riparian area. The applicant has prepared a Revegetation Plan Monitoring and Reporting Program (Plan). The Plan specifies planting 316 native riparian trees of various species and monitoring revegetation success (80 percent survival) for a period of three years.

Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. The project involves aquatic, riparian, and floodplain restoration and has been designed to avoid and minimize adverse impacts and permanent impacts to waters of the United States. Noncompensatory mitigation for this project includes revegetation of disturbed areas, as appropriate, and the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control, and for heavy equipment use near a waterway.

The applicant has obtained authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (File No. 2008-00172) to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Numbers 27 and 33, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has applied to CDF&G for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement. On February 4, 2010, the City of Yreka approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration (State

Clearinghouse No. 2009122039) for the project in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. The Regional Water Board has considered 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.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed activities including maps and detailed design drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file are available for public review.

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 Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.