

August 6, 2010

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

Humboldt County Department of Public Works – Jacoby Creek Bridge Sediment  
Removal Project  
WDID No. 1B07145WNHU

Humboldt County

A public notice (Attachment 1) was posted for this project on September 15, 2008. This is an amended public notice intended to inform the public that the Humboldt County Department of Public Works (County) has requested an amendment to the previously issued Water Quality Certification to address proposed changes to the project. The revised project is very similar to the original project with the main difference being diversion of stream flows to allow for additional sediment removal.

The County conducted sediment removal activities from underneath the Jacoby Creek Bridge in September 2009 to help alleviate frequent winter flooding in the immediate area. During the September 2009 activities, the County was only able to remove approximately 100 cubic yards of sediment out of an allowable annual extraction amount of 350 cubic yards. In December 2009 and January 2010 localized flooding occurred once again within the County roadway and surrounding private properties. Soon thereafter, County staff met with Department of Fish and Game (DFG) staff to discuss options that would allow for removal of more sediment during future activities.

The proposed project involves annual bridge maintenance in the form of sediment removal from the stream channel underneath the bridge. The purpose of the proposed project continues to be reduction of frequent flooding in the immediate area of the bridge during winter months when Jacoby Creek rises and overtops its banks. Previously, authorized sediment removal activities were restricted to the left and right banks, outside of the active “wetted” stream channel. The County is now proposing to divert the low summertime flows around the active excavation areas in order to excavate the entire width of the stream channel. The County is proposing two options for diverting flows around the active work areas.

Since Jacoby Creek contains listed fish species during all times of the year, the County is proposing to enlist the help and guidance of DFG to conduct fish relocation efforts prior to diverting flows. The addition of diversion activities to the project requires amendments to all permits and additional Section 7 consultation with the National Marine Fisheries Service through the Army Corps of Engineers permitting process. A site visit with staff from regulatory agencies was conducted on March 4, 2010 to evaluate the proposed new activities. Removing as much sediment as allowed from underneath the Jacoby Creek Bridge is supported by DFG, local residents, and the County.

Prior to any fish relocation activities conducted by DFG or other qualified professionals, several site preparation activities will occur. Silt fence will be placed along the dry portion of the channel margin to prevent sediment from entering the flowing stream

during construction activities. A longitudinal trench will be excavated along the non-wetted portion of the stream channel using small equipment or hand-tools. The trench will be large enough to contain an 18-inch diameter HDPE culvert pipe. The pipe will be used to convey the stream through the project. Once the trench is completed, approximately 120 linear feet of 18-inch diameter culvert will be placed within the ditch. A sandbag cofferdam will be installed on the upstream end in front of the culvert. Sandbags will be stacked and shaped to direct the stream into the pipe. A water bladder may be used instead of sandbags. Fish exclusion fencing (1/4-inch mesh hardware cloth) will be placed across the channel above the upstream end and below the downstream end of the project. After the site is prepared for fish exclusion and relocation, DFG will be notified for assistance. If DFG is not available to assist the County in relocation efforts, the County will hire a qualified biologist approved by DFG or eliminate the relocation efforts and proceed with sediment removal activities as previously authorized and described in the original project description (no work in the wetted channel). Diversion of the stream and fish relocation efforts may not be necessary during future maintenance activities.

After fish have been relocated outside the project area, stream diversion activities will commence. The County is proposing two options for water diversion. The first and preferred option is to divert stream flow using a sandbag cofferdam or water bladder device through a culvert pipe within an excavated ditch as described above. This method is preferred because the need for water pumps would be eliminated along with the need to constantly observe and maintain the pumps. Diverting the stream through a culvert pipe would most likely occur in two stages. The first stage would be to divert the stream flow along one side of the streambank while work is being conducted on the opposite side. Once sediment is removed from one half of the channel the stream would be diverted to the other side to allow excavation to be completed on the other side.

The other method of diverting the stream flow around the project would include pumping the flow using diesel or electric water pumps situated on the banks outside of the stream channel and work area. Generators and/or fueling areas would be located on the top of bank and outside of the work area. To prepare the site for mechanical pumping/diversion, a small pit would be excavated outside the wetted channel and near the upstream end of the project area. After the pit was created, the stream flow would be conveyed into the pit where it would then be pumped around the project area and allowed to filter through a vegetated embankment before entering the stream channel downstream of the fish exclusion fencing.

After the project area has been excluded of fish and the stream has been properly diverted, excavation of accumulated sediment within the County right-of-way will commence. The procedures for excavation will follow the same guidelines as described in the 2008 project description. It is likely that a platform bridge will need to be constructed over the diversion pipe so that equipment can enter the channel without damaging the diversion pipe. In 2009, a platform bridge was built over the wetted stream channel out of 4-inch by 12-inch by 12-inch boards. The platform allowed the bobcat and hand-operated excavator to cross over the wetted channel from one side to

the other. This worked very well and would most likely be utilized again to cross over the diversion pipe. If the stream is not diverted, then the temporary platform bridge will be constructed as it was in 2009 to allow equipment and personnel to cross over the wetted portion of the channel. As in 2009, excavated sediment will be temporarily stockpiled on the adjacent property (Jacoby Creek Land Trust) and then hauled off to a County disposal site once the project is complete. Equipment to be used will continue to be small hand-operated earthmovers, small bobcat, hand tools, and possibly a small excavator or backhoe.

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.

September 15, 2008

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

Humboldt County DPW – Jacoby Creek Bridge Sediment Removal Project  
WDID No. 1B07145WNHU

Humboldt County

On August 1, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Public Works Department (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) for activities related to removal of accumulated sediment from under the bridge over Jacoby Creek on Old Arcata Road. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Jacoby Creek in the Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00.

The bridge on Old Arcata Road over Jacoby Creek is a 90-foot long by 36-foot wide concrete structure located approximately one mile upstream from its confluence with Humboldt Bay. This low gradient reach of the stream tends to accumulate excess sediment. The results of a recent stream channel assessment indicate that approximately 900 cubic yards of additional sediment has accumulated under the bridge area since the bridge was installed in 1988. Most of the sediment has deposited on the upper streambanks near the bridge abutments. The accumulated sediment is contributing to more frequent flooding in the area which sometimes causes Old Arcata Road to be closed to through traffic.

The proposed project involves removal of approximately 300 cubic yards of the accumulated sediment. The purpose of the proposed project is to restore the flow capacity under the bridge in order to reduce the frequency of flooding along the roadway and adjacent properties. Proposed sediment removal activities will occur on both sides of the creek channel. Sediment removal activities will be confined within two areas that extend approximately 30 feet away from the abutments and 60 linear feet parallel to the stream channel. The excavation areas will extend approximately 12 feet beyond the edges of the bridge deck in both the upstream and downstream directions. The sediment removal areas are located above the flowing portion of the stream channel. Sediment will be removed to an average depth of two to three feet below the existing ground surface.

Access to the stream channel will be from a path along the guardrail on the northeast side of the bridge. Sediment will be removed using hand tools and a small low-profile rubber tracked loader. Excavated sediment will be removed from under the bridge and transferred to another small loader that will transport the material out of the channel to temporary stockpile areas located on adjacent upland property. After all the sediment

has been removed and stockpiled it will be loaded into dump trucks and relocated to an offsite upland location.

In order to provide access to the south side of the channel and to avoid impacts to riparian vegetation along the south streambank, a wooden platform spanning the wet channel area will be installed on the downstream side of the bridge. The low-profile loader and workers will use the platform to haul excavated material to the north side of the channel where it can be transferred to the stockpile areas. Rakes and hoes will be used to smooth the disturbed areas, remove depressions, and restore the gradual slope along the streambanks.

The proposed activities will temporarily impact 3,600 square feet and 120 linear feet of streambank. The proposed project is not expected to result in any permanent impacts to the streambanks or channel. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control including installation of silt fence between the wet channel and excavation activities. The proposed project is expected to take less than a week to complete.

The applicant has obtained authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 3 (File No. 2007-00778), pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has also obtained a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. The County of Humboldt determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review pursuant to Section 15301, Class 1 – existing facilities, and Section 15304 – minor alterations to land. Regional Water Board staff have determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1, Section 15301 – existing facilities) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project.