

August 31, 2010

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

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Willow Creek 2nd Bridge Area
Fish Passage Project
WDID No. 1B09151WNSO

Sonoma County

On December 29, 2009, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Laura Saunders of Prunuske Chatham, Inc., on behalf of Mr. Brendan O'Neil of California Department of Parks and Recreation, Russian River District (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (Certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated with the Willow Creek 2nd Bridge Area Fish Passage Project (project). Project is located on Willow Creek, approximately 2 miles upstream of the mouth of Russian River, in the city of Jenner, latitude 38.435°N, and longitude 123.086°W, in Sonoma County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Russian River in Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to remove impediments to natural stream channel formation, reestablish channel connectivity and fish passage, provide habitat connectivity, and maintain public access. Bridge construction at Willow Creek 2nd Bridge crossing will improve flow conditions in the immediate vicinity of the crossing. A primary channel is more likely to establish, and flow divergence to adjacent marshy areas will likely decrease.

The proposed project has two components: the first will replace six existing 24 inch culverts with a single span precast concrete bridge, footings, and abutments, road side sloping and realignment. This portion of the project will occur within the existing footprint of the road and will extend out into adjacent habitats, impacting 0.035 acre of wetland. Project work will include the removal of native vegetation and fill within jurisdictional features to accommodate road widening, side sloping, and bridge placement. The second component of the project is channel realignment upstream of the new crossing to provide for channel development, hydraulic connectivity, and fish passage. The proposed channel-forming project includes the excavation of a primary channel approximately 1,000 linear feet (1-2 feet deep and 3-5 feet wide) in two sections of cattail-dominated wetland, and the removal of native riparian vegetation.

The proposed project will result in permanent impact to approximately 0.035 acres of wetland and 1000 linear feet of impact to bed and bank. Compensatory mitigation for the fill of 0.035 acre of wetland will consist of the restoration of proper function to 2.6 acres of wetland, 0.5 miles upstream of the potential project area, know as the Grist Mill pond and marsh. Currently the Grist Mill pond and marsh site receives water from three springs. The water from the Grist Mill springs flows across Willow Creek Road (from the

south) and enters the Grist Mill pond and marsh. As water crosses Willow Creek Road, it travels within an inboard ditch and indirectly makes its way across the road at one of several low spots. The water flowing over Willow Creek Road increases in temperature (up to 10 degrees). The mitigation to improve function and enhance the Grist Mill pond and marsh will include the installation of three stream crossings; one multi plate arch and two armored crossing per Department of Fish and Game specifications. Each crossing would be located as close to the inlet of surface runoff as feasible. The crossings would route surface flows across the road prism to the marsh via the most direct route, reducing thermal loading by decreasing exposure to solar radiation and latent heat.

Seven dog tooth violet plants within 0.075 acre of coastal prairie are expected to be removed during road elevation construction activities. Dog tooth violet is a larval host plant habitat for the Myrtle's Silverspot Butterfly, a federally listed endangered species. Compensatory mitigation for the impact to the Myrtle's Silverspot Butterfly will consist of the restoration of one acre of coastal prairie habitat currently occupied by dog tooth violet that has been invaded by Douglas fir seedlings and saplings, and coyote bush. This will happen within one year of project construction. The restoration project is located south of Willow Creek. Douglas fir will be cut, lopped and scattered and coyote bush will be lopped and stems painted with glyphosate. Following treatment, the mitigation site would be absent of Douglas fir and contain less than ten percent cover of coyote bush

The Applicant has applied to the US Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit. The applicant has also applied to the California Department of Fish and Game for a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. On September 3, 2010, The California Department of Parks and Recreation adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH No. 20100022054) for the project in order to comply with CEQA. 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 drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file area 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 Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.