

September 3, 2010

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

Granite Construction Company - Mad River Aggregate Extraction  
Emmerson, Blue Lake, and Johnson Bars  
WDID 1B02120WNHU

Humboldt County

On August 13, 2010, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Granite Construction Company (applicant) requesting Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for aggregate extraction operations on the Mad River near Glendale and Blue Lake. The proposed projects will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Mad River in the Mad River Hydrologic Unit No. 109.00.

Granite Construction Company's proposed Mad River aggregate extraction operations will affect three separate gravel bars: Emmerson Bar, Blue Lake Bar, and Johnson Bar. The Emmerson Bar covers approximately 80 acres and is located approximately 0.3 miles upstream of the Hatchery Road Bridge over the Mad River. The Blue Lake Bar covers approximately 120 acres and is located downstream of the Hatchery Road Bridge. The Johnson Bar covers approximately 40 acres and is located approximately one mile downstream of the Blue Lake Bar near Glendale. Annual aggregate extraction operations at all three bars will typically disturb up to 15 acres. The maximum annual volume of aggregate authorized for extraction from the three bars is up to 52,850 cubic yards annually. The actual volume removed and the specific area of extraction within each gravel bar varies from year-to-year.

Aggregate excavation from the dry gravel bar surfaces is conducted with scrapers, dozers, excavators, loaders, and dump trucks. The permitted extraction season is typically from June 1 to October 31. Summer crossing installation and use is allowed between June 31 and September 15. Summer crossings consist of railroad flatcars on concrete block and clean gravel-fill abutments. Summer crossings are located to avoid potential fish spawning, holding and rearing habitat. Appropriate crossing locations are typically shallow low-velocity waters located away from riffle crests and pools. Temporary stockpiling of excavated material within the limits of the extraction area is allowed through October 15 when stockpiles must be removed above Ordinary High Water.

After the applicant has removed the aggregate to the approved extraction design lines and grades, the extraction area is regraded as necessary to leave no depressions or berms that may potentially trap fish or cause impacts to surrounding habitats. The applicant's consultant will conduct a site visit at the conclusion of extraction operations and provide any additional recommendations reflecting seasonal extraction plan and reclamation plan conformity. When the final surfaces of the site are graded for seasonal reclamation, the operator may remove the summer crossings and leave the bankfull

channel area to the natural reclamation process, which occurs during the high-flow events of the following winter. The extraction season typically ends on October 15, unless agencies agree to grant an extension of the season. The applicant will implement mitigation and impact avoidance measures during the aggregate extraction processes including; maintenance and inspection of equipment, maintaining vertical and horizontal offsets from the live channel to ensure low-flow channel confinement, maintaining sufficient water depth for fish, minimizing impacts to water quality, limiting the number wet crossings, limiting the amount of haul roads providing access to the channel extraction areas, and use of clean washed gravel and concrete blocks for construction of temporary crossings.

Previous aggregate extraction operations on the applicant's gravel bars were regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Letter of Permission (LOP) procedure (LOP 2004-1) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. LOP 2004-1 expired in 2004 and the ACOE issued a five-year individual section 404 permit (Permit No. 27426N) consistent with LOP 2004-1 that authorized the applicant to annually extract up to 52,850 cubic yards of aggregate from these three gravel bars and the Graham Bar, and to construct summer low-flow channel crossings as needed. The applicant's individual section 404 permit coverage expired following the 2008 extraction season. There was no authorized gravel extraction from the Mad River in 2009.

In February 2009 the ACOE issued a public notice describing the proposal to modify LOP 2004-1. Under a new LOP 2009, as well as the expired LOP 2004-1, each gravel operator is required to comply with standardized procedures and receive an operator specific LOP. A Letter of Modification to the LOP is required for each subsequent year's extraction activities. The applicant has applied (File Nos. 2009-00016) for authorization from the USACOE to perform the proposed future activities. The USACOE may regulate the proposed activities under a new LOP 2009 or under individual section 404 permit. The applicant applies to California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G) for Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreements (1600 Agreement) on an annual basis after receiving approval of their annual extraction plans by the County of Humboldt Extraction Review Team, CDF&G, ACOE, and NOAA Fisheries.

The applicant conducts aggregate extraction operations under conditions of the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for Gravel Removal from the Lower Mad River. The CDF&G, as a responsible California Environmental Quality Act agency, filed Notice of Determinations for Supplemental PEIRs for the Emmerson Bar and Johnson Bar on September 21, 2006, and the Blue Lake Bar on July 11, 2006. On April 2, 2009, Humboldt County Department of Community Development Services, as lead agency for CEQA, completed a Final Supplemental to the PEIR (SCH# 1992083049) and filed a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse on April 7, 2009.

The Mad River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for sediment and turbidity was established in 2007 by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, because the State of California determined that the water quality standards for the Mad River are exceeded due to excessive sediment and turbidity. Roads and bank erosion are identified as sources contributing to the sediment impairment. The primary adverse impacts associated with excessive sediment and turbidity in the Mad River pertain to cold freshwater habitat,

primarily anadromous salmonid habitat. Actions authorized by this Order require implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment control at temporary stream crossings, and activities intended to enhance habitat for salmonids and other aquatic species such as alcove/wetland extractions designed to sequester silt and harbor willows. Accordingly, this Order is consistent with, and implements portions of the Mad River TMDL.

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 (hard copy) and received at this office by mail or by direct delivery 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.