

October 27, 2010

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

Humboldt County DPW– Tompkins Hill Road Slope Repair  
WDID No. 1B1096WNHU

Humboldt County

On August 23, 2010, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Department of Public Works (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to installation of a rock slope buttress on the east side of Tompkins Hill Road south of Eureka. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with wetlands in the Eureka Plain Hydrologic Unit No. 110.00.

Winter storms of 2005-2006 caused a slide above Tompkins Hill Road at Post Mile 0.33. The slide pushed dirt, trees and debris onto the road. Emergency repair work consisted of cutting down trees and clearing debris from the roadway. The proposed project involves excavation of the slide area to accommodate installation of a rock slope buttress. The primary purpose of the proposed project is to stabilize the hillside.

The proposed rock slope buttress will be approximately 15 feet tall and extend approximately 100 feet along the roadway. Excavated material will be stockpiled in the roadway. Some of the excavated material will be used as structural backfill and any excess material will be hauled offsite to an appropriate upland disposal site.

A roadside drainage channel along the east side of the road collects storm water runoff and seepage from the adjacent hillside. The drainage channel contains seasonal wetlands that will be temporarily impacted during the proposed project. The drainage channel has been disturbed repeatedly since the 2005-2006 storm events due to the frequent maintenance that has been conducted to remove slide material that sloughs off the hillside and blocks the drainage channel and northbound lane of the roadway. The drainage channel will be reconstructed to its existing form following construction of the rock buttress and the channel will experience less frequent disturbance after the hillside is stabilized.

Compensatory mitigation is required for the proposed temporary impacts to 100 square feet of existing wetlands within the approximately 1-foot wide roadside drainage channel. Proposed mitigation includes restoring the drainage channel and monitoring the channel following project completion for the purpose of verifying that the drainage channel is being revegetated through the natural propagation of wetland plants. If monitoring indicates that wetlands vegetation does not reestablish within the drainage channel, the channel will be reassessed to determine if conditions can be modified or created to encourage wetland plant propagation. Noncompensatory mitigation will include the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and turbidity

control. The proposed project is scheduled for construction during the summer when the drainage channel is dry.

The applicant is proposing to perform the project under the non-reporting provisions of Nationwide Permit No. 3, pursuant to Clean Water Act Section 404. A Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game is not required. Regional Water Board staff have determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 4, Section 15304 – minor alterations to land) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project.

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.