

May 24, 2011

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

California Department of Transportation  
Highway 254 – Redcrest Rock and Drainage Storm Damage Project  
Project WDID No. 1B11049WNHU

Humboldt County

On April 18, 2011, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 254, Redcrest Rock and Drainage Storm Damage Project. Additional information was received on May 19, 2011. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with ephemeral drainages within the Eel River Hydrologic Unit, No.111.00, and Scotia sub-area No. 111.12.

The proposed project includes roadway and drainage restoration at two locations, Post Miles (PM) 22.3 and PM 40.06 located in Humboldt County, on Highway 254. At PM 22.3 the proposed project is necessary because the drainage system and the roadway have failed. The existing cross culvert is plugged with rock and is separated, due to localized earth movement. A new cross-culvert will be placed on a new alignment and the area of the former feeder culvert and junction box will be graded to drain to the new drainage system. At PM 40.06 the proposed project would permanently restore an existing 36-inch diameter culvert. The drainage system and roadway have failed at this location: the roadway embankment slipped and separated the CMP downdrain. The purpose of the proposed project is to stabilize and reconstruct the roadway embankment and restore the drainage system.

Caltrans has determined that total project permanent impacts to ephemeral drainages will be approximately 0.0262 acres (329.25 linear feet). The temporary project impacts to ephemeral drainages identified as waters of the U.S. and State will be approximately 0.026 acres (248 linear feet). In addition, Caltrans has determined that temporary impacts to riparian areas (waters of the State) will total 0.23 acres (10,140 feet<sup>2</sup>, 295 linear feet) Caltrans proposes revegetation and additional trees and shrubs will be planted at onsite locations to offset impacts to riparian habitats, improve water quality by shading and cooling waters, and enhance habitat for aquatic species. Caltrans proposed to revegetate 0.32 acres (14,100 feet<sup>2</sup>, 440 linear feet) of riparian habitat. Additionally, the drainage work planned should benefit water quality by reducing area with excessive erosion.

Project activities are tentatively scheduled to be conducted between September 1 and October 31 and are anticipated to take 50 days to complete. Work within waters of the U.S will only be conducted in the dry season (May 15 to October 15). Caltrans' contractor will be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for

construction and post-construction phases of the project to provide erosion and sediment control and pollution prevention throughout the project area. All graded areas within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized and BMPs will be implemented to ensure erosion is minimized and controlled.

Caltrans has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 14 (non-reporting, linear transportation project) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Caltrans has applied for a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. Caltrans has determined that this project is Categorical Exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA - class 1 categorical exemption). In addition, Regional Water Board staff also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA and anticipates filing a notice of exemption.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within 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 or comments, please contact staff member Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or [JPuget@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:JPuget@waterboards.ca.gov) within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road construction activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The related documents and comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.