

May 31, 2011

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

Humboldt County Department of Public Works – Maple Creek Road at Boulder Creek,
Bridge Scour Repair Project
WDID No. 1B11043WNHU

Humboldt County

On April 11, 2011, 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 associated with implementation of bridge abutment repairs and scour protection measures. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Boulder Creek in the Butler Valley Hydrologic Area No. 109.30.

The Applicant maintains a bridge over Boulder Creek on Maple Creek Road. Records indicate that the single-span concrete bridge structure was built in 1923. The entire footing of the western (left bank) abutment is currently exposed due to scour. Erosion along the left streambank immediately upstream of the abutment has resulted in failure and mobilization of the existing rock slope protection (RSP) that was previously installed to protect the bridge abutment and adjacent streambank area from scour during high flow events.

The Applicant is proposing to repair the existing RSP area and add RSP scour protection along the exposed abutment footing in order to protect the bridge abutment and maintain the integrity of the structure. Proposed activities involve the installation of additional RSP along the left streambank beginning upstream of the bridge abutment and continuing downstream along the toe of the abutment. Equipment and RSP materials will be staged on flat areas adjacent to the county road on both sides of the bridge. An excavator operating from the roadway will be used to lower the RSP materials (2 to 3 ton rock) into the stream channel.

The Applicant is planning to access the project area from an area along the left streambank that is a short distance downstream of the bridge. The proposed access route is located on private property and the Applicant is planning to secure a temporary construction easement from the land owner. One approximately 3-inch diameter willow will be removed from the streambank along the access route and other riparian vegetation along the proposed access route will be pruned as necessary to provide adequate clearance for the excavator.

The proposed project involves installation of a temporary work pad along the bottom edge of the left streambank so the excavator will not be operating directly in the flowing portion of the stream. Native material from a gravel bar located at the base of the access route will be used to build the temporary work pad. The work pad will extend upstream from the access route toward the bridge until the excavator can reach the

upstream extent of the RSP repair area. Once the excavator is able to reach the upstream extent of the RSP a trench will be excavated along the toe of the existing RSP and along the base of the abutment. The toe trench will be approximately 38-feet long, 3-feet wide, and 2-feet deep. A layer of three-ton rocks will be placed in the bottom of the toe trench to provide a stable foundation for the subsequent layers of rock. Material excavated from the toe trench will be used to fill the interstitial spaces around rocks placed in the toe trench. Additional rock will then be stacked along the streambank and abutment area beginning at the upstream end of the existing RSP and continuing to the downstream end of the abutment.

The temporary work pad will be removed to the extent feasible to ensure unrestricted fish passage following installation of the RSP. All areas disturbed during the project will be restored to pre-existing conditions to the extent practical. The temporary access route will be mulched and seeded to minimize sediment transport into the stream channel. Any holes and depressions created during the project will be graded smooth to facilitate draining and prevent fish stranding.

Prior to the start of in-stream construction activities, fish exclusion fencing will be installed upstream and downstream of the project area. After the upstream fencing is installed a biological monitor will use a broom to brush the water surface and gravel areas to mobilize any fish that may be present in the area. Additional fencing will be installed across the downstream end of the construction area as fish hazing occurs. Fencing will not be placed across the downstream end until at least two hazing passes have been completed. Every attempt will be made to ensure that fish are not able to enter the active construction area. The biological monitor will also monitor the area on a regular basis to verify that fish are not present within the fish exclusion area during construction. If fish are observed, construction activities will be suspended until the fish are relocated to a suitable location out of the construction area.

Proposed activities associated with installation of approximately 30 cubic yards of RSP materials will result in permanent impacts to 114 square feet and 38 linear feet of streambank. Installation of the temporary gravel work pad will result in temporary impacts to 30 linear feet and 240 square feet of streambed along the toe of the left streambank. Compensatory mitigation is not required. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and erosion control. The proposed project is expected to take up to 10 days to complete and will be implemented between July 1 and October 15.

The Applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit Number 3, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The Applicant has also applied to the California Department of Fish and Game for a Lake and/or Streambed Alteration Agreement. Humboldt County determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Section 15301 – Existing Facilities). Regional Water Board staff have determined that this project is

categorically exempt from CEQA review (Section 15301 – Existing Facilities) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for the proposed project.

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 project including maps and photos. The application and Regional Water Board file are 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 Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

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