

August 29, 2011

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

GR Sundberg, Inc. – Mad River Gravel Extraction Operations at Miller-Almquist Bar
WDID No. 1B11155WNHU

Humboldt County

On August 10, 2011, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Randy Sundberg, representing GR Sundberg, Inc (applicant), requesting Water Quality Certification and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) to continue annual gravel (river-run aggregate) removal activities at the Miller-Almquist Bar on the Mad River in Arcata. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Mad River in the Blue Lake Hydrologic Area No. 109.10.

The applicant's proposed gravel extraction operations are located approximately 1,000 feet downstream of the Highway 299 bridge over the Mad River in Sections 9 and 16, T6N, R1E, HB&M. The proposed project involves extraction of up to 6,300 cubic yards per year of river-run gravel from the Miller-Almquist Bar. The Miller-Almquist Bar covers approximately 3.1 acres at River Mile 4. Extraction of river-run gravel has occurred at this gravel bar since at least 1993. The proposed extraction activities will result in the temporary disturbance to approximately 1 to 3 acres of the gravel bar each year. The actual volume of material removed and the specific area of extraction varies from year-to-year. Gravel removal activities are expected to continue annually following authorization by other local, state, and federal permits.

Aggregate extraction activities at the Miller-Almquist Bar have been regulated in the past by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) Letter of Permission Procedure. In April 2011, the ACOE issued an Individual Permit (Permit No. 2009-00028) to the applicant pursuant to Clean Water Act, Section 404. In addition to conditions set forth by the Regional Water Board, the California Department of Fish and Game (CDF&G), National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and ACOE conduct additional regulatory review and project approval. These agencies and the County of Humboldt Extraction Review Team (CHERT) require extensive monitoring, data gathering, reporting, site inspections, channel cross-section surveys, and aerial photo review. The applicant is required to provide gravel extraction proposals each year to an inter-agency review team, including members of the ACOE, CDF&G, NMFS, and the CHERT. The ACOE provides annual authorization in the form of a letter of modification to the Individual Permit.

River-run aggregate may be removed from the gravel bar using a variety of extraction methods which may include skims, wet and dry trenches, alcoves, fish access channels, and excavation of wetland pits on terraces above the ordinary high water elevation. A variety of heavy equipment may be used including scrapers, dozers, excavators, loaders, and dump trucks. After the applicant has removed the material to the approved extraction design lines and grades, the extraction area is graded as necessary to leave

no depressions or berms that may potentially trap fish or cause impacts to surrounding habitats.

Existing haul roads will be used to access the gravel bar. No mature riparian vegetation will be disturbed and no new haul roads will be cut through mature riparian habitat. The applicant may construct temporary channel crossings using a flatcar bridge with brow log, concrete block, or K-rail abutments, and native gravel approaches. Temporary crossings are located to avoid potential fish spawning, holding, and rearing habitat. When the final surfaces of the site are graded for seasonal reclamation, the operator may remove the temporary crossings and leave the bankfull channel area to the natural reclamation process, which occurs during the high flow events of the following winter. The applicant will implement mitigation and impact avoidance measures during the aggregate extraction processes, including: restricting heavy equipment and trucks to haul roads, exclusion of all machinery from the low flow channel, maintenance of vertical and horizontal offsets from the live channel when appropriate, regular maintenance and inspection of equipment to prevent vehicle leaks into receiving waters, limiting temporary channel crossings, and maintaining sufficient water depth for fish.

The applicant conducts aggregate extraction operations under conditions of a Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and Supplemental PEIR. On April 2, 2009, Humboldt County Department of Community Development Services, as lead agency for CEQA, completed the Final Supplemental PEIR (SCH# 1992083049) for Gravel Extraction on the Lower Mad River and filed a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse on April 7, 2009. The CDF&G, as a responsible California Environmental Quality Act agency, filed a Notice of Determination for the Final Supplemental PEIR on April 8, 2011. Regional Water Board staff have considered the environmental documents and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment.

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. The proposed project is required to implement 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.

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, aerial photos, and regulatory agency documents. 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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