December 22, 2011

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

Mr. Mark Cleveland
Sonoma County Regional Parks
Ragle Ranch FEMA Bank Stabilization Project
WDID No. 1B11177WNSO
Sonoma County

On September 26, 2011, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Jeffrey Peters of Questa Engineering Corporation on behalf of Mr. Mark Cleveland of Sonoma County Regional Parks (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Ragle Ranch Bank Stabilization (Project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with Atascadero Creek, tributary to Green Valley Creek and then the Russian River, located within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No.114.00 (Guerneville Hydrologic Sub-Area No.114.11).

The project is located at 500 Ragle Road, Sebastopol, Assessor's Parcel Number 077-170-001, latitude 38.405603°N, longitude 122.854718°W. The Project is expected to take place during the dry season, and will take approximately 45 days to complete. The project will permanently impact approximately 45 linear feet of bed and bank.

The project is to repair and stabilize channel banks in two areas of Atascadero Creek where erosion from flood damage has contributed to slope instability and is threatening to undermine the adjacent piers of two pedestrian trail bridges. The stabilization and pier protection would be accomplished using willow planted rock rip rap, a replanted willow tree cluster, live willow staking, and a coir fiber log. Bioengineering techniques and planting of native plant species will be utilized.

Work at Bridge 2 includes approximately 40 linear feet of rock slope protection with 500lb rock rip rap along the lower half of both sides of the bank. An erosion control blanket would be added to the upper half of the banks. A cluster of 4-inch diameter willows that has been repeatedly cut back and has regrown currently directs flows into the exposed abutment of Bridge 2. The willow would be removed from the center of the creek and replanted on the bank. A dead willow downstream is currently acting as a debris dam and would be selectively trimmed. At the uppermost end of the project, immediately downstream from where dense blackberries are growing, live willow stakes would be planted among the rip rap. Additional habitat improvement would be done by planting twenty (20) 1-gallon native blackberry plants at the top of bank along the trail. On the bank opposite of the trail, a coir fiber roll and 20 live willow stakes would be planted for bank stability and habitat. Total rip rap volume at Bridge 2 would be 20 cubic yards (CY).

At Bridge 3, a rock trench consisting of 200 lb rock would be installed 5ft downstream of the bridge, across the creek, perpendicular to stream flow, with no change in channel bed elevation, to slow water velocity, minimize erosion at the bridge piers, encourage sediment deposition, and prevent the upstream migration of steps in the channel profile that lead to incision. The exposed, upstream pier on the southwest side of the bridge

would be protected with hand-placed, 100lb, rip rap. Total rip rap volume at Bridge 3, would be 5 CY.

Applicant has applied for authorization from the Unites States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Applicant has applied for a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. Sonoma County Region Parks has filed a Notice of Exemption, Declared Emergency, class 15269, per Governor's Office of Emergency Services Declaration # 2006-01, for the California Environmental Quality Act.

The Russian River is identified as impaired on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list. The Russian River is listed as impaired for sediment and temperature. At present, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) have not been established for this water body. If TMDLs are established and implementation plans are adopted for this watershed prior to the expiration date of the requested Certification, the Regional Water Board may revise the provisions of that Certification to address actions identified in such action plans. Bank erosion is identified as a source contributing to the sediment impairment. Removal of riparian vegetation is identified as a source contributing to temperature impairment. Activities that will be authorized by the pending certification are designed to increase riparian vegetation and reduce sediment discharges from bank erosion. Actions authorized by this Order require implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and turbidity control and planting of more riparian zone shade vegetation at and near the project site. Accordingly, this pending Order is consistent with, and implements BMPs that would attenuate sediment and temperature adverse impacts.

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 Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 or SBargsten@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.