

May 15, 2012

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

Johnson's Beach
Seasonal Beach Grooming
WDID No. 1B11090WNSO

Sonoma County

On March 8, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Kevin Doble, of DolbleThomas & Associates, Inc. on behalf of Ms. Laura Wilson of Johns (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Johnson's Beach Seasonal Beach Grooming (Project), for activities associated with seasonal beach grooming prior to opening of a Summer beach and resort. Project is located on the Russian River, 16241 First Street, Guerneville, latitude 38.499935°N, longitude 122.997683°W, in Sonoma County. The proposed project will cause temporary impacts up to approximately 2.04 acres and 420 linear feet of beach and bank of the Russian River, Guerneville Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.11, Russian River Hydrologic Area 114.00.

The work proposed includes grading of the gravel bar (beach grooming) for recreational purposes. There will be no work within the wetted portion of the river. The proposed Project does not include installation or operation of the summer dam or boat launch ramp at Johnson's Beach.

The proposed Project involves the following:

- Grooming of beach area will be limited to excavation of children's wading pool, approximately 75 feet by 75 feet by 1.5 feet deep. Pool will be no closer than 5 feet from existing water level in river. Excavated gravel will be temporarily deposited near the snack bar area to create a level area, and placed on two layers of filter fabric. Gravel will be replaced in kiddie pool area at end of the season and will be packed back in place by using pressurized water jetting and compaction, in order to leave area compacted similar to unaltered beach areas to prevent localized scour in children's pool area. Contour shall be as close to it was before disturbance as possible.
- The remainder of the beach shall not be graded. This will protect the upper layer of the beach/gravel bar that acts to armor the surface, and prevent increased erosion. The beach/gravel bar should aggrade, increase in elevation and start to assume a more natural shape and configuration.
- Parking Area Silt Removal and Export. Occasionally the parking area traps fine sediment and debris deposited by the river when it reaches higher flows. Applicant states that it is only after the river reaches the 22 ft. level and above, as measured at the Guerneville Bridge just upstream of the parking area, will the removal of fine silt and debris be needed. It is necessary to remove accumulated silt and debris in order for the parking area to be used and the beach to operate.

The applicant proposes the following monitoring program for the removal of silt and debris which will include the following:

- Written notification of the need to remove silt and debris from the parking area, subject to Regional Water Board Executive Officer approval, prior to the commencement of work. (Work shall not occur prior to May 1st or after June 15th in any given year).
 - Monitoring and documentation of the silt and debris being exported, including estimated quantities and area of disturbance.
 - Written certification that only fine silt and debris is removed and no aggregate or sand has been exported.
 - Final total of quantity exported.
 - Removal shall be limited to material finer than sand that would be detrimental to water quality if re-deposited into the river. Over time, the parking area may increase in elevation as the material deposited that is of sand size and larger is left to accumulate.
- Filling of a seasonal drainage erosion gully caused by road runoff from a culvert that drains Highway 116. The area to be filled is approximately 200 feet long, four feet wide, and four feet deep. Up to one foot diameter rock will be put into gully and imported material will be graded into the gulley. It is anticipated that this will be done once, however drainage may be adjusted seasonally until stabilized.

Compensatory mitigation is integrated into the new practices that will be implemented at the beach. As the armored layer of the beach is not going to be disturbed, as has been done in the past, the gravel bar/beach will increase in elevation and assume a more natural shape that will enhance fluvial processes. As a result, the river adjacent to the gravel bar/beach should become deeper and better habitat for cold water fish, and will provide a better swimming hole for recreational users. Additionally, gravel/aggregate material will no longer be removed from the beach and river system.

The County of Sonoma Permit and Resource Management Department, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that the project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, 153111- Accessory Structures, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

Specific details of activities are under review by the regulatory and permitting agencies; changes to the proposed activities may be required before authorization is granted.

The Applicant has an existing Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game, Agreement Number 1600-2009-0407-3, dated December 2009.

The Applicant has applied to US Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit.

Project work is scheduled annually between May 1 and October 15.

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 Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 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 Project 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 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.