

June 7, 2012

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

California Department of Transportation
Highway 3 – Hayfork Bike Lane Project
WDID No. 1A12021WNTR

Trinity County

On May 3, 2012, 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 3 – Hayfork Bike Lane Project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with the Trinity River Hydrologic Unit No.106.00 (Hayfork Valley Hydrologic Sub-Area 106.25).

This project will provide a bike route and pedestrian facility on Highway 3, in the town of Hayfork, in Trinity County. To create the bike route, the highway will be widened, as needed, to provide an 8-foot paved shoulder, on both sides of the highway from Post Mile (PM) 7.3 near to Reservoir Road near PM 7.95. Bike route improvements on Highway 3 will require grading (cut and fill) in spot locations, paving in spot locations, drainage improvements, signing and striping. Bike route improvements on Trinity Street will be limited to signage only. There are four (4) drainage locations that require modification in order to construct the bike route that are subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction. All four locations convey open waters and have connectivity downstream to Hayfork Creek a tributary to the South Fork Trinity River.

Caltrans has determined that the proposed project will result 1,640 feet² of permanent impacts and 2,250 feet² to waters of the U.S. and waters of the State, for a total of approximately 3,889 feet² (0.09 acres) of impacts to waters. Caltrans proposes to offset direct impacts to waters of the U.S. and State through on-site revegetation measures, including the enhancement of a roadside ditch with an adjacent vegetated earth berm. The project will result in an increase of approximately 0.4 acres of impervious surface (new pavement); therefore Caltrans has incorporated on-site storm water treatment BMPs which promote biofiltration to treat the pollutants and capture the increased volume in highway storm water runoff.

The proposed project is anticipated to be during low flow conditions between August and November 5th. The project will result in less than one acre disturbed soil area. Caltrans will utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) to provide erosion control and pollution prevention throughout the project area during construction. All graded areas

within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized and/or replanted with appropriate native vegetation.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 14 (linear transportation projects) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. Caltrans has also applied for a California Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Agreement. Caltrans has determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (Statutory Exemption). In addition, Regional Water Board staff has determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1 Categorical Exemption) and anticipates filing a Notice of Exemption

The South Fork Trinity River is listed on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list as impaired for sediment and temperature. In December, 1998, the U.S. EPA established sediment total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for the South Fork Eel River and tributaries. Roads are a significant source of sediment in the watershed (directly, from surface erosion, and, indirectly, by triggering landslides. In addition, activities that impact stream bed, banks, and floodplains and reduce riparian vegetation are identified as sources contributing to increased stream temperatures. Such projects may involve removal of vegetation and/or channel alteration, and also have potential to increase sediment loads. A focus on measures to reduce sediment discharges to surface waters from roads in the watershed, and measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on riparian zones is essential for achieving Basin Plan and CEQA compliance

To ensure compliance with Water Quality Objectives within the Basin Plan, adequate wetland and riparian protection and stringent requirements to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the sediment and temperature impacts associated with the proposed project will be incorporated as enforceable conditions in this Water Quality Certification. In addition, Caltrans will be required to conduct surface water monitoring, sampling, and analysis in accordance with the conditions of the Water Quality Certification. Additionally, storm water runoff monitoring, sampling, and analysis will be conducted as required by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit for Storm Water Discharges from the State of California, Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Properties, Facilities and Activities Order No. 99 – 06 - DWQ. The surface water data collected will be utilized to assess the adequacy of BMPs during construction as well as site specific mitigation measures proposed to minimize impacts to the environment, including sediment and temperature 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 Jeremiah Puget at

(707) 576-2835 or 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.

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