

June 22, 2012

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

Reeves Canyon Road Bridge at Mill Creek
WDID No. 1B12060WNME

Mendocino County

On April 23, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Laura Saunders, of Prunuske Chatham, Inc., on behalf of Mr. Alex Straessle of Mendocino County Department of Transportation (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for the Reeves Canyon Road Bridge at Mill Creek (Project), for activities associated with installation of a new bridge crossing Mill Creek on Reeves Canyon Road. Project is located on Reeves Canyon Road at Mill Creek, approximately 9 miles north of the City of Ukiah, latitude 39.280715°N, longitude 123.289559°W, in Mendocino County. The proposed project will cause temporary impacts to approximately 1,655 square feet/37 linear feet, and 1000 square feet/71 linear feet of permanent impacts to creek bed and bank of Mill Creek, Forsythe Creek Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.33, Russian River Hydrologic Area 114.00.

The proposed Project is being constructed to improve aquatic habitat conditions for anadromous steelhead in the project area, to protect water quality in Mill Creek and downstream aquatic habitats by removing constant roiling and input of fine sediments from vehicular traffic, and improve safety of a county road.

The proposed railcar bridge will replace a year-round wet ford crossing through Mill Creek that experiences moderate traffic from local residents. It will improve water quality through the reduction of delivery of fine sediments, improve habitat conditions for aquatic species with the stream channel, and improve road safety. An existing downstream rock weir that causes the creek to be shallow and wide in the crossing area will be removed to allow the creek to reestablish a more natural geometry. Large rock and large wood structures will be emplaced in the creek to provide aquatic habitat complexity.

The bridge consists of four spans, with a total length of 242 feet. Each span will consist of two side-by-side railcar girders that will be supported by three steel bents and two concrete abutments. Road surfaces on the approaches will be compacted gravel to reduce sediment tracked onto the bridge. On the western side of the project area, an existing failed culvert will be replaced with a new culvert to reconnect a seasonal channel to the riparian floodplain and the creek, and the existing roadside ditch will be graded. The new culvert will divert storm water that currently runs down the road and causes erosion and sedimentation to the creek. An adjacent existing ranch road will also be graded to slope out, rocked, and rerouted to connect to the existing road.

Compensatory mitigation includes water quality impact reducing actions such as: removing vehicle traffic from the creek by installation of the bridge, thus reducing fine sediment and chemical contamination in Mill creek; improvement of road conditions next to the bridge and replacement of a failed culvert to reduce erosion and fine sediment

delivery to the creek, and increasing flow to a vegetated channel area. Additional mitigation includes the implementation of a mitigation planting plan that includes planting 48 trees and shrubs; planting of 36 acorns; maintenance, weeding, watering, monitoring of the planted species, and annual reporting for five years.

The Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has produced a Mitigated Negative Declaration, and filed Notices of Determination with the State Clearinghouse, (SCH No. 2012022027) on March 13, 2012, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

The Applicant has applied for a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game, and has applied to US Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit.

Project work is scheduled to begin in the dry season of 2012 and have duration of two months.

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.

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