July 9, 2012

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

Meamber Irrigation Tailwater Recycling Project
WDID No. 1A12102WNSI

Siskiyou County

On May 25, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Don Meamber (Applicant), requesting after-the-fact Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities associated with construction of an earthen berm that isolates and contains irrigation runoff (tailwater), reduces the amount of warm tailwater runoff entering the Shasta River, and allows for reuse of the captured water which reduces the amount of cold water withdrawn from the Shasta River for irrigation purposes. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with wetlands on irrigated agriculture land in the Shasta Valley Hydrologic Area No. 105.50.

The proposed project is a component of the larger Shasta River Tailwater Reduction Project (SRTRP). The SRTRP involves projects at seven locations on six separate ranches throughout the Shasta Valley Hydrologic Area. All components of the SRTRP are located on existing active agricultural lands. The objective of the SRTRP is to improve water quality in the Shasta River by decreasing temperatures and increasing dissolved oxygen through improved agricultural irrigation management. The SRTRP aims to achieve these objectives by reducing the amount of warm tailwater returned to the Shasta River and allowing more cold water to remain in the river by reducing agricultural irrigation diversions.

The Meamber Irrigation Tailwater Recycling Project (project) is located on the Meamber Ranch along Montague-Grenada Road in north-central Siskiyou County. This component of the SRTRP involved construction of an earthen berm to modify a newly constructed pond to allow the pond to capture and isolate tailwater while allowing cold spring water from an onsite spring to flow freely into the Shasta River. The project also includes construction of approximately 1,400 linear feet of new ditch to collect tailwater from upper fields, installation of 500 feet of underground pipe to transmit tailwater from the upper fields to the tailwater isolation pond, and installation of 2,500 linear feet of gated pipe to deliver captured tailwater for irrigation water recycling.

The earthen berm that was constructed to create the tailwater isolation pond is located within uplands and wetlands within irrigated agriculture land. The berm was constructed perpendicular to the contour and connected to an existing berm oriented parallel to the contour. These berms create an enhanced treatment wetland area. Soil for berm construction was excavated from the adjacent agricultural wetlands and an upland field. Approximately 268 cubic yards of fill material scraped from the adjacent uplands and 0.5 acre of wetland was used to construct the approximately 550-foot long berm. Excavation of the adjacent wetland area was necessary to increase the storage capacity of the isolation pond. Fill for berm construction also resulted in permanent impacts to 0.1 acre of wetland area. The tailwater isolation pond and enhanced wetland created by these berms is designed for water levels to be maintained at no more than three feet deep. A ten horsepower turbine pump will be installed in the pond and

connected to an existing water pipeline to allow for irrigation water recycling and to maintain the water level.

On March 30, 2011, the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH No. 2011022041) for the project in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document, Best Management Practices (BMPs), and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment. The environmental document includes mitigation measures for the project's impacts hydrology and water quality, and biological resources including wetland mitigation through enhancement. Noncompensatory mitigation includes revegetation of appropriate areas and the use of BMPs for sediment and erosion control. The Applicant has applied for after-the-fact authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to implement the project, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. A Lake and/or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game is not required for this project.

The Shasta River watershed is listed on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list as impaired for temperature and organic enrichment/low dissolved oxygen. On June 28, 2006, Regional Water Board adopted a Resolution approving amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) to establish and Action Plan for the Shasta River Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) addressing temperature and dissolved oxygen impairments in the Shasta River. 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 TMDL compliance. The project is designed to improve water quality in the Shasta River by decreasing temperatures and increasing dissolved oxygen through improved agricultural irrigation management. Accordingly, this project is consistent with, and implements portions of the Shasta River TMDLs.

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 project including plans, maps, and photos. 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.