

July 17, 2012

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

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve
Fox Pond Road Upgrade and Pedestrian Trail Project
WDID No. 1B12054WNSO

Sonoma County

On April 17, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Kim Bachelder, of Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated with improving emergency vehicle access, hydrology, aesthetics and environmental restoration, and safe access across wetland areas. Project is located within the Healdsburg Ridge Open Space Preserve, at the terminus of Arabian Way, Healdsburg, latitude 38.640137°N, and longitude 122.858927°W, in Sonoma County. The proposed project will cause permanent impacts to approximately 224 square feet (0.005 acres), of bank/channel of seasonal drainages and seasonal wetlands, Warm Springs Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.24, Russian River Hydrologic Area 114.00.

The project includes safety and environmental improvements to trails and roads on the preserve. The preserve is used for passive recreation, including hiking, biking, bird watching, and picnicking. Current trail conditions at the preserve traverse wetland areas and are less than optimal during the wet season. Proposed work shall improve trail and road conditions and improve public safety at the preserve. Trail improvements include two boardwalks with adjacent rock walls, and one puncheon to span wetland and seasonal drainages on the northeastern portion of the site. Road improvements include removing and existing 6 inch diameter culvert under the dirt access road east of the park entrance at the southern edge of Fox Pond. A drainage lens will then be installed to provide better drainage. Approximately 350 feet east of this improvement an armored dip will be installed in a low area on the road. Currently there is a culvert under the road that no longer functions; an armored dip was chosen to replace the culvert to restore natural flow patterns rather than keeping flow concentrated in a culvert.

Compensatory mitigation consists of enhancement of wetland areas adjacent to Fox Pond on its eastern perimeter. The mitigation area will be cleared of all noxious weeds and invasive plants. Locally collected willow and cottonwood sprigs will be planted along the perimeter of the high water mark of the pond. These plantings will provide increased shade and cover and food sources for nesting birds, aquatic organisms, and other wildlife. Sprigs will be planted in the dormant season. Total area of planting will be approximately 0.24 acres. Plantings shall be maintained to achieve a minimum of

50% survival, greater than 80% canopy cover, and less than 10% bare soil, at the end of five years. Monitoring and maintenance shall continue until success criteria are met.

All erosion control measures will be installed and in place by October 15 and maintained thereafter as appropriate. At a minimum, the following construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the final project plans as appropriate in order to reduce and control soil erosion: work in and around waterways will be conducted during the dry season; installation of construction barrier fencing to preclude equipment entry into sensitive areas; straw wattles, straw bales, erosion control matting, and/or seeding of disturbed soil. Additionally, all required BMPs shall be on-site and ready for timely deployment before the start of construction activities.

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, completed a Mitigated Negative Declaration on March 20, 2008 and filed it with the State Clearinghouse, No. 2007102071, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

The Applicant has consulted with the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) to determine the necessity for a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. DFG has determined that a permit from their agency is not necessary.

The Applicant has applied to US Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit, for a NWP-18, Minor Discharges.

Project is scheduled to start as soon as possible. Under Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3858(a): "The executive director or the executive officer with whom an application for certification is filed shall provide public notice of an application at least twenty-one (21) days before taking certification action on the application, unless the public notice requirement has been adequately satisfied by the applicant or federal agency. If the applicant or federal agency provides public notice, it shall be in a manner and to an extent fully equivalent to that normally provided by the certifying agency. If an emergency requires that certification be issued in less than 21 days, public notice shall be provided as much in advance of issuance as possible, but no later than simultaneously with issuance of certification." Due to the nature of public safety associated with this project, 401 Water Quality Certification will be issued during the 21-day public comment period. Public comments will still be accepted and reviewed during the entire 21-day 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.