

August 2, 2012

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

**Russian River Recreation and Parks District
River Access and Boat Ramp/Portages Project**

WDID No. 1B12107WNSO

Sonoma County

On June 5, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Dana Zimmerman of Russian River Recreation and Parks District (RRRPD) (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated annual maintenance of public access areas, boat ramps and portages on the lower Russian River. Project is located at three separate locations, on the Russian River, near Guerneville, Sonoma County. The first site is at the west end of Johnson's Beach, latitude 38.499692°N, longitude 122.998424°W. The second site is at Cozy Cove on the east side of Russian River along Guerneville Park Road, latitude 38.495972°N, and longitude 123.005333°W. The third site is at Vacation Beach near the annual summer crossing, latitude 38.483443°N, and longitude 123.010483°W. The proposed project will cause temporary impacts to approximately 0.30 acres, of river bank/beach of the Russian River, Guerneville Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.11, Russian River Hydrologic Area 114.00.

The project includes public safety and water quality protection improvements to public access areas, as well as providing boat ramp and boat portage facilities to the Russian River in the Guerneville area. Annually, the RRRPD performs routine installation and maintenance of temporary public river access facilities. These facilities include existing boat ramp/portages, and public beach access points. The RRRPD provides garbage receptacles at each access location and portable bathrooms at Cozy Cove and Vacation Beach. Bathrooms at Johnson's Beach are provided by the commercial operator of the beach. At the starts of each summer season the RRRPD performs minor repairs and makes smooth the gravel along the boat ramp/portage routes to provide an even surface for installation of the imported gravel base surface. Starting in 2012, the RRRPD will install filter fabric over the natural gravel bars, in areas where imported gravel is to be placed, in order to prevent contamination of the natural substrate by imported material. By October 15th of each year the imported material shall be removed and stored outside the river channel where it cannot be washed into the river during high winter flows. In addition, minor gravel smoothing for public access areas may be done at Cozy Cove and Vacation Beach. No alteration of habitat structures occurs, and no work is performed within the wetted channel. There shall be no removal of gravel or other aggregate from the beach other than what is imported and placed on filter fabric. No grading that could be considered to adversely impact the natural function of the gravel bars or access areas is permitted.

The project allows the only public boat launching access to the Russian River in the Guerneville area for residents and visitors. The project provides for controlled public access to the river for recreation. This reduces the overall impact to the river system by limiting access to known and monitored points of ingress and egress which reduces the potential damage to the riparian corridor and river banks from individuals and vehicles attempting to find their own access routes to the river. Additionally, the RRRPD provides trash receptacles and portable bathrooms at each location. Recent communications with the applicant indicate that without the installation of the trash receptacles and bathrooms, the areas have quickly fouled with garbage and waste, which both have negative impacts to health and safety, and water quality. Providing trash disposal and sanitary facilities provides for proper disposal of waste, thereby maintaining water quality and reducing overall impacts to animal life and the environment in the river system.

Russian River Recreation and Parks District, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, completed a Notice of Exemption for Categorical Exemption 15301-Existing Facilities and 15323-Normal Operations of Facilities for Public Gatherings, on June 25, 2012, and filed it with the County Clerk of Sonoma County, for a public posting period of 30 days, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

The Applicant has obtained a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement Extension, Notification No. 1600-2001-0996-R3, on February 24, 2012, from the California Department of Fish and Game. The Applicant has applied to US Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit, File No. 2012-00219N.

Project is scheduled to start as soon as possible to reduce the public health and safety and water quality impact issues of the accumulating trash and waste. 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 health and 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.