August 2, 2012

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

Trinity Co. DOT – Summit Creek Road Culvert Installation

WDID No. 1A12116WNTR

Trinity County

On June 21, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Trinity County Department of Transportation (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, water quality certification for proposed activities associated with installation of a culvert at an existing wet ford (stream crossing) where Summit Creek Road crosses Summit Creek. The proposed project is located near Post Mile 4.0. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Summit Creek in the South Fork Trinity River Hydrologic Area No. 106.20.

Summit Creek Road will be closed through the project area during construction. The proposed project will not include a temporary stream crossing and no detour route will be provided around the project area. Summit Creek Road makes a loop with two connections to Highway 3 that will provide alternate routes to all residences.

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to eliminate the existing wet ford crossing so vehicles will no longer be driving directly through the stream. The project will separate the stream channel from the unpaved road surface, improve the surface of the existing roadway at the crossing, and reduce future road maintenance. The proposed culvert is designed to improve water quality and aquatic habitat by reducing sedimentation and potential pollution associated with vehicles driving directly through the stream.

The proposed project involves installation of a 70-foot long and 10-foot diameter corrugated metal culvert to replace the existing wet ford. The project will require excavation of the streambed and streambanks to align the culvert with the stream channel and to achieve the appropriate grades. The proposed culvert is sized to pass the 100-year storm event and it will be embedded approximately four feet into the streambed. Material excavated from the stream channel and/or additional imported material engineered to simulate the natural streambed material will imported from a commercial source and placed inside the embedded culvert to simulate a natural streambed. Excess excavated material not suitable for use as streambed material will be used as backfill over the culvert or removed from the project site. Road sub-base and base materials from commercial sources will be placed on top of the backfill to restore the existing 16-foot wide unpaved roadway over the new culvert.

In order to simulate natural streambed porosity, the materials placed within the culvert will undergo a compaction and water jetting process that partially seals the streambed

to assure that surface waters do not permeate the streambed and flow subsurface. Water used in the jetting process will be trucked to the site from a local water district source and a sump will be excavated at the outlet end of the culvert to collect the water used in the jetting process. Pumps will be placed in the sump to recycle the water for jetting and to pump any excess water to vegetated areas away from the stream. After the jetting process is complete the sump area will be filled with streambed mix and compacted to restore the streambed.

Rock slope protection (RSP 1/4-ton) will be placed around the inlet and outlet of the new culvert. RSP areas will extend approximately 3 feet beyond the ends of the culvert on each streambank in a 6-foot high by 3-foot wide wedge. The RSP will be embedded into the fill embankments and streambanks such that the outer edges of the rocks will be flush with the banks in order to maintain hydraulic capacity of the channel.

The proposed new culvert and RSP will result in permanent impacts to 82 linear feet and 736 square feet of stream channel. Activities associated with jetting and installation of the temporary sump at the outlet will result in temporary impacts to 10 linear feet and 30 square feet of streambed. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include revegetation of any disturbed areas that are suitable for supporting riparian vegetation using locally derived alder or willow cuttings. Non-compensatory mitigation measures also include use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and erosion control and for use of heavy equipment in a stream. Proposed activities are scheduled to begin on September 15, 2012 when the stream channel is expected to be dry and the project is expected to be completed in approximately 20 working days.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit No. 14 pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. Trinity County determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Section 15301 – Existing Facilities). Regional Water Board staff have also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Section 15301 – Existing Facilities) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for the proposed project.

The South Fork Trinity River Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for temperature and sediment was established in 1998 by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, because the State of California determined that the water quality standards for the South Fork Trinity River are exceeded due to excessive temperature and sediment. Roads and bank erosion are identified as sources contributing to the sediment impairment. In addition, activities that impact the riparian zone and reduce riparian vegetation are identified as sources contributing to increased stream temperatures. The primary adverse impacts associated with excessive temperature and sediment in the South Fork Trinity River pertain to cold freshwater habitat, primarily anadromous salmonid habitat. The

proposed project is designed to improve water quality and aquatic habitat by reducing sedimentation and other potential pollution associated with vehicles driving directly through the wet stream channel. In addition, authorized activities require implementation of BMPs for sediment and erosion control. Accordingly, this project is consistent with, and implements portions of the South Fork Trinity River TMDL.

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 activities including maps and detailed design drawings. 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.