

October 9, 2012

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

**Steelhead Beach ADA Access Mat Grading Project  
WDID No. 1B12023WNSO**

Sonoma County

On March 27, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Bert Whitaker of Sonoma County Regional Parks (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated with grading and installation of a 8 foot wide by 100 foot long nylon mesh mat to provide an ADA accessible path to the river. Project is located at Steelhead Beach Regional Park, Russian River, 9000 River Road, Forestville, latitude 38.500166°N, longitude, 122.899581°W, in Sonoma County. The proposed project will cause temporary impacts to 0.034 acres of bed and bank of the Russian River, Guerneville Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.11, Russian River Hydrologic Area 114.00.

The project includes installation of a portable ADA accessible path to the river each year for the fishing season which starts in October. Generally the work involves placing and securing a portable nylon mesh mat with large rebar anchors across the accumulated river gravels down to the ordinary high water line. The mat is 8-feet wide and 50-feet in length. Regional Parks typically installs two mats, oriented end-to-end, for a total of 100-feet in length. On years with heavy gravel deposition, some grading of the beach gravels occurs to level the area for installing the mat and trying to meet a 5% accessible path slope. Grading affects approximately 1,500 sq ft (approx. 100' L X 15' W) of beach area where the mat is to be installed. Grading is completed with a tractor and box scraper, or a small bulldozer. No rock is removed from the site during grading activities, only pushed within the grading footprint to smooth out depressions and ridges of the deposited river gravels. The mat is removed during periods of flooding/declared potential of significant flooding, but no grading is performed when the mat is removed. If winter flooding were to occur, for example, Regional Parks would remove the mat and reinstall again in spring/early summer after the river level has receded. For installation after flooding, Regional Parks would only grade again if the deposition/scour in the area was enough to compromise the appropriate grade for ADA purposes. The mat is intended to stay in place throughout the year to allow river access.

Compensatory mitigation is not required for the project.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, had determined that the project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, 15301-Existing Facilities and 15304-Minor Alterations to Land, and will file a Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse concurrent with issuance of the 401 Water Quality Certification, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

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

Project is scheduled for October of each year.

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 Section 401 Water Quality Certification is being issued concurrently with this Public Notice.

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