

February 13, 2013

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

United States Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District
Dry Creek Reach 15 Habitat Enhancement Project
WDID No. 1B12176WNSO

Sonoma County

On September 14, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Peter LaCivita of the United States Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco 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 habitat for salmonids within the reach of Dry Creek immediately below Warm Springs Dam.

Project is located near the 9900 block of Dry Creek Road, just downstream of the bridge below Warm Springs Dam, within Dry Creek Valley, west of the town of Healdsburg, at latitude 38.719658°N, and longitude, 122.996487°W. The proposed project will cause permanent impacts to approximately 480 feet, 3.9 acres, of bed and bank of Dry Creek and within two side channels of Dry Creek, within the Dry Creek Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.24, Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The project is situated along Dry Creek approximately 1,500 feet downstream of the Warm Springs Dam. The total length of the project reach is approximately 1,650 feet, the length of actual impact to the creek and side channels is approximately 480 feet. The project is being conducted per requirements within the 2008 National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion for the Russian River Watershed (Biological Opinion) that requires fish habitat enhancement along portions of Dry Creek to aid in the recovery of Coho Salmon and Steelhead Trout. It is a mitigation project in itself. The project has been developed to provide suitable main channel and off-channel habitats critical for juvenile Coho and Steelhead rearing. The project is designed to improve the physical habitat of the reach for a variety of life stages for Coho, minimize impacts to flood conditions, improve channel stability, and provide sustainable enhancements to riparian vegetation and instream spawning and rearing habitat. The project will create secondary channels to provide connected off channel habitat for Coho rearing and possible spawning during both high and low flow conditions, as well as low velocity refugia during high flows. Clean gravel/cobble will be added to the main and secondary channel for improved spawning habitat. The project also includes removal of invasive species and replacement planting with native species. Large woody debris (LWD) and boulder habitat structures will be installed within the modified side channels to provide habitat complexity.

The project will include monitoring as specified within the Biological Opinion. The project is planned to take approximately two months to complete and will be constructed primarily during the dry season. All erosion control measures will be installed and in place by October 15, or before seasonal rains, and maintained thereafter. 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 primarily 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. All permanent BMPs shall be biodegradable. Additionally, all required BMPs shall be on-site and ready for timely deployment before the start of construction activities.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board), as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, shall file a Notice of Exemption (15333-Small Habitat Restoration Projects) for the project, and will file it with the State Clearinghouse, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

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.

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