

April 12, 2013

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

Crescent City Harbor District – Citizen’s Dock Fender Pile Repair  
WDID No. 1A13027WNDN

Del Norte County

On February 14, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Crescent City Harbor District (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities associated with repairing the Citizens Dock and three fish docks in the Crescent City Harbor to ensure their continued safe use for off-loading and transfer of fish and shellfish, and for other commercial and sport use. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Pacific Ocean in the Smith River Plain Hydrologic Subarea No. 103.11.

On March 11, 2011, a tsunami generated by the Tohoku Earthquake in Japan reached the Crescent City Harbor and a series of tsunami-generated surges caused major damage to the inner boat basin, the outer harbor, and to support facilities in the harbor. Rapid fluctuations in water levels and wave action created excessive forces that damaged the existing Citizens Dock and fish dock structures. Proposed dock repairs consist of replacing missing and damaged fender piles and their associated timber chocks, walers, and ladders.

The Citizens Dock is a timber structure built in the 1950s that is used for offloading and transfer of fish and crab. This Y-shaped dock consists of a 260-foot long and 34-foot wide timber approach trestle connected to two timber wharfs. The approach trestle provides access to both wharfs and serves as the fuel facility for the commercial fleet. There are several fish buying stations on the 210-foot long by 62-foot wide south wharf. The 260-foot long by 40-foot wide west wharf has a fish buying station and a commercial ice plant that serves the fishing fleet. Three fish docks (Wild Planet Foods, Pacific Choice, Alber Seafood) that service the commercial/industrial activities associated with fish processing are also in need of repair. All three fish docks are approximately 25-feet wide by 120-feet long.

Proposed activities to repair Citizen’s Dock will include replacement of chocks, ladders, and 13 fender piles. Proposed repairs to the fish docks will include replacement of up to 18 fender piles and associated chocks and walers. Fender piles are non-structural piles located on the exterior perimeter of the docks. The fender piles cushion and protect the docks, and the outer rows of bearing piles, from damage caused by vessel impacts. Fender piles also protect the hulls of watercraft tied to the dock. Chocks are braces placed between fender piles that hold the piles in position and provide lateral stability. Fiber reinforced plastic (FRP) chocks will be used where existing chocks are being replaced. Proposed repairs are necessary to protect and restore the structural integrity of the dock structures.

Existing broken or damaged wood piles will be removed by vibratory pile driving equipment positioned on a barge mounted crane. The entire pile will be extracted when possible. Piles that cannot be completely extracted will be cut off at least 3 feet below the ocean floor. A flat barge will be used for staging materials and to hold debris generated by the project. Some locations may allow direct placement of the removed pilings onto a

flatbed trailer positioned on the dock. All removed piles will be hauled to a landfill. Removed timber chocks will be stored in a dumpster until ultimate disposal through the local solid waste transfer facility. Damaged steel ladders will be recycled.

FRP piles will be vibrated into the ocean floor using the same barge mounted equipment used for pile removal. Replacement piles are less than 1-foot diameter and have similar dimensions to existing piles. Best management practices, including floating debris barriers and absorbent booms, will be implemented to prevent release of construction materials and debris into surrounding waters.

The proposed project will result in 28.5 square feet of permanent impacts to the ocean floor associated with installation of the 31 FRP piles. Since permanent impacts are associated with installation of new piles with similar dimensions to the piles they replace, the project is not expected to result in any overall increase in the area of permanent impact to the ocean. The proposed pile removal activities will also result in approximately 31 square feet of temporary impacts to waters of the United States. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Noncompensatory mitigation includes implementation of Best Management Practices for pile removal and containment of debris.

The Applicant has obtained authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit No. 3 (File No. 2012-00019), pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The Applicant has also applied for a Coastal Development Permit. A Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game is not required. Regional Water Board staff have determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1, Section 15301 – existing facilities) and anticipate filing a Notice of Exemption for this project. The proposed project is scheduled for construction beginning July 2013 and is expected to take up to three months to complete.

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 project including maps and 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.