

April 25, 2013

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

California Department of Transportation
State Route 116 – Pocket Canyon Creek Project
WDID No. 1B13011WNSO

Sonoma County

On January 17, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) requesting Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed State Route 116 Pocket Canyon Creek retaining wall (project). The proposed project would cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) associated with the Lower Russian River Hydrologic Sub-Area of the Russian River Hydrologic Unit (HU114.11).

The proposed project is located on State Route (SR) 116 at post mile 13.7, in Sonoma County. The purpose of the project is to prevent the shoulder of SR 116 from collapsing into Pocket Canyon Creek. The shoulder is unstable due to undermining of the existing retaining wall. The scope of work includes:

- Replacing the failed retaining wall with a soldier pile wall (SPW);
- Placing rock slope protection with willow plantings at the base of the SPW to prevent erosion and enhance and protect habitat;
- Replacing the existing culvert with a culvert in kind; and
- Repairing the road surface.

Pocket Canyon Creek is within the Lower Russian River Hydrologic Unit Area and watershed. Pocket Canyon Creek drains to the Lower Russian River which is listed on the 201 CWA section 303(d) list as impaired for sediment and temperature. Roads are a significant source of sediment in the watershed (directly, from surface erosion, and, indirectly, by destabilizing hillsides).

Caltrans has determined that the proposed project would result in approximately 0.066 acres of permanent and approximately 0.108 acres of temporary impacts to jurisdictional waters. Ten riparian trees would be permanently impacted as a result of the proposed construction project. Caltrans proposes to offset the permanent impacts to riparian habitat with both on-site revegetation and purchase of off-site riparian habitat credits at the East Austin Creek Mitigation Bank. Caltrans also proposes to restore temporarily impacted areas to pre-construction condition following completion of construction activities.

The proposed project would be conducted between summer and fall of 2014 (estimated duration 97 days). The project would result in less than one acre of disturbed soil area. Caltrans would utilize Best Management Practices to control pollutants during construction. All graded areas within the project affected by construction activities would be appropriately stabilized and/or replanted with appropriate native vegetation.

To ensure compliance with Basin Plan Water Quality Objectives, requirements to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the sediment impacts associated with the proposed project would be incorporated as enforceable conditions in the Water Quality Certification.

Caltrans has applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Reporting Nationwide Permit No. 14 (*Linear Transportation Projects*), pursuant to CWA, section 404. Caltrans has also applied for a California Department of Fish and Wildlife 1602 streambed alteration agreement. Caltrans has requested biological assessment and opinion from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. National Marine Fisheries Service regarding potential impacts to threatened and endangered species within the project site.

On March 2, 2012, Caltrans, acting as lead agency, certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed project in order to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (State Clearing House No. 2012012036). The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental documentation, including any proposed changes, and would incorporate avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures into the project as a condition of certification to avoid significant effects to the environment.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within 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 or comments, please contact staff member Brendan Thompson at (707) 576-2699 or via e-mail, at Brendan.Thompson@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of Caltrans's proposed road construction activities. The Regional Water Board's project file includes the application for Water Quality Certification and additional details about the proposed project, including maps and design drawings. Project documents and any comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.