

May 24, 2013

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

Humboldt County DPW – Salmon Creek Road at Salmon Creek, Two Bridges Scour
Protection
WDID No. 1B13035WNHU

Humboldt County

On March 6, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Humboldt County Public Works Department (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, water quality certification for proposed activities associated with installation of rock slope protection (RSP) to protect two bridge structures on Salmon Creek Road from additional erosion and scour during high flows in Salmon Creek. The bridges are located on Salmon Creek Road at Post Mile 2.65 and 2.94 near Miranda. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Salmon Creek in the Weott Hydrologic Subarea No. 111.31.

Salmon Creek Road Post Mile 2.65

Proposed activities at the Post Mile 2.65 bridge location involve placement of approximately 100 tons of rock riprap along the left streambank to protect the bridge abutment from additional scour. An excavator will be used to excavate a 2-foot wide toe-trench along the toe of the left streambank beginning near the downstream dripline of the bridge and extending approximately 70-linear feet upstream. RSP materials will be placed by an excavator in the toe-trench and extending approximately 30 feet up the streambank to connect with the existing RSP. Sediment excavated from the toe-trench will be placed in the interstitial voids between the rocks while the RSP is being installed.

An existing access road and staging area located approximately 100 feet downstream of the bridge on the right streambank will be used for heavy equipment access to the stream channel. The proposed project will not require removal of any mature riparian vegetation. A single alder will be pruned and non-riparian vegetation along the access route will be pruned or removed as necessary to provide adequate clearance for the heavy equipment access. RSP materials will be transported from the staging area to the RSP area by front-end loader. Proposed temporary impacts to riparian vegetation are not expected to decrease the amount of shade on the stream channel. Upon completion of the project, straw mulch will be applied to all disturbed areas above the ordinary high water elevation.

The proposed RSP installation activities at this bridge will result in permanent impacts to 70 linear feet and 140 square feet of streambank in waters of the United States. The proposed temporary access route will result in temporary impacts to 10 linear feet and 250 square feet of streambank. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include implementation during the dry season when flows are low and the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for materials staging and use of heavy equipment in a stream channel. The proposed project will be implemented during the summer low-flow period between 2013 and 2018, and is expected to take approximately 14 days to complete.

Salmon Creek Road Post Mile 2.94

Proposed activities at the Post Mile 2.94 bridge location involve resetting existing unstable RSP materials, filling voids in the existing RSP, and placement of approximately 80 tons of additional rock riprap along the left streambank. An excavator will be used to excavate a 2-foot wide and 45-foot long toe-trench along the toe of the left streambank beginning near the downstream dripline of the bridge and extending approximately 15-linear feet upstream of the upstream dripline. RSP materials will be placed by an excavator in the toe-trench and extending approximately 2 feet up the streambank to connect with the existing RSP. Sediment excavated from the toe-trench will be placed in the interstitial voids between the rocks while the RSP is being installed.

An existing access road along the left streambank will be used to provide heavy equipment access to the stream channel. The access road enters the stream channel approximately 100 feet downstream of the bridge. Equipment and materials staging will occur at designated areas along the roadway approaches to the bridge. RSP materials will be transported from the staging area to the RSP area by front-end loader. The proposed project will not require removal of any mature riparian vegetation; however, several alder along the access route will require substantial pruning to provide adequate clearance for the heavy equipment access. Proposed impacts to riparian vegetation are not expected to decrease the amount of shade on the stream channel. Upon completion of the project, straw mulch will be applied to all disturbed areas above the ordinary high water elevation.

The proposed RSP installation activities at this bridge will result in permanent impacts to 45 linear feet and 90 square feet of streambank in waters of the United States. The proposed temporary access route will result in temporary impacts to 10 linear feet and 250 square feet of streambank. Compensatory mitigation is not required for the proposed project. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include implementation during the dry season when flows are low and the use of BMPs for materials staging and use of heavy equipment in a stream channel. The proposed project is scheduled for the summer low-flow period between 2013 and 2018, and is expected to take approximately 14 days to complete.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform these projects under Nationwide Permit Nos. 3 and 14 pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (1600 Permit) from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Humboldt County Public Works determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (section 15301 – existing facilities). 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 South Fork Eel River Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for sediment and temperature were established in 1999 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 Eel River are exceeded due to excessive sediment and temperature. 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 Eel River pertain to cold freshwater habitat, primarily anadromous salmonid habitat. Proposed activities do not involve removal of any riparian vegetation providing shade to the river and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and turbidity control is required. Accordingly, the proposed activities are consistent with, and implement portions of the South Fork Eel 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, design plans, and photos of the project area. 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.

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