

May 28, 2013

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

California Department of Transportation
State Route 128 – Smoot Sink Storm Damage Repair Project
WDID No. 1B12174WNME

Mendocino County

On September 7, 2012, 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 128 – Smoot Sink Storm Damage Repair Project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with the Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit No.113.00 (Navarro River Hydrologic Sub-Area 113.50).

The proposed project is located on State Route 128 at post mile (PM) 35.5, in Mendocino County. The purpose of the project is to stabilize a slide, realign the roadway, improve drainage, and implement permanent erosion control and vegetation planting. The scope of work includes the construction of soil stressing anchor walls; construction of a rock buttress along Rancheria Creek; reconstruction of the vertical and horizontal alignments of the roadway; replacements and improvements to the drainage systems at the three Intermittent Streams; installation of permanent erosion control measures; and restoration of temporarily disturbed areas.

Caltrans has determined that the proposed project will result in 0.012 acres (522.75 square feet) of permanent impacts to waters of the U.S. (Intermittent Stream A) and 0.005 acres (217.8 square feet) of permanent impacts to riparian areas (Rancheria Creek); and an additional 0.019 acres (827.64 square feet), 0.004 acres (174.24 square feet), 0.005 acres (217.8 square feet), and 0.003 acres (130.68 square feet) of temporary impacts to waters of the U.S. (intermittent stream A, intermittent stream B, intermittent stream C, and Rancheria Creek respectively). Caltrans proposes to mitigate for permanent impacts to jurisdictional waters through on-site revegetation and restoration of existing drainages. Caltrans proposes onsite mitigation of temporary effects by restoration of disturbed portions of the affected waters and areas following completion of the construction activities.

The proposed project will be conducted in summer months during low flow conditions between June 15th and October 30th; however, work may be conducted outside these work windows if the stream channels are dry. The project will result in less than one acre disturbed soil area. Caltrans will utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) to provide erosion control and pollution prevention throughout the project area during construction. All graded areas within the project affected by the construction activities will be appropriately stabilized and/or replanted with appropriate native vegetation.

Caltrans has received authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 14 (linear transportation projects) pursuant to

Clean Water Act, section 404. Caltrans has also applied for a California Department of Fish and Game 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement. On September 16, 2011, Caltrans, acting as lead agency, certified a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed project in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (State Clearing House No. 2011042011). The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental documentation, including any proposed changes, and incorporates any avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures into the project as a condition of approval to avoid significant affects to the environment.

The Navarro River watershed is listed on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list as impaired for sediment and temperature. In 2000, the U.S. EPA established sediment and temperature total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for the Navarro River Watershed. Roads are a significant source of sediment in the watershed (directly, from surface erosion, and, indirectly, by triggering landslides). In addition, activities that impact the riparian zone and reduce riparian vegetation are identified as sources contributing to increased stream temperatures. A focus on measures to reduce sediment discharges to surface waters from roads in the watershed, and measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on riparian zones is essential for achieving TMDL, Basin Plan, and CEQA compliance.

To ensure compliance with Water Quality Objectives within the Basin Plan, adequate wetland and riparian protection and stringent requirements to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the sediment and temperature impacts associated with the proposed project will be incorporated as enforceable conditions in this Water Quality Certification. In addition, Caltrans will be required to conduct surface water monitoring, sampling, and to assess the adequacy of BMPs during construction as well as site specific mitigation measures proposed to minimize impacts to the environment, including sediment and temperature impacts.

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 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 the applicant's proposed road construction 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 related documents and 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.