

June 27, 2013

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

Granite Construction Company – Graham Bar Culvert Removal, Mad River  
WDID 1B13050WNHU

Humboldt County

On May 1, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Granite Construction Company (Granite/applicant) requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, water quality certification for proposed activities associated with removal of an existing access road and culverts located at the Graham Gravel Bar on the Mad River. The proposed activities will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Mad River in the Blue Lake Hydrologic Area No. 109.10.

The Graham Gravel Bar and project area are located adjacent to property at 1540 Giuntoli Lane, Arcata, which was formerly occupied by Granite for a variety of uses including aggregate processing and storage. The Surface Mining and Reclamation Plan (Reclamation Plan) for the Graham Gravel Bar requires that existing “bridge culverts” be removed after aggregate extraction operations at the bar have ceased. The existing “bridge culverts” are located under a section of access road that extends from the adjacent upland processing and stockpile area into the stream channel.

The existing structure to be removed from the stream channel consists of an elevated road prism with three approximately 60-inch diameter and 20-foot long corrugated metal culverts within the road prism and an approximately 2-foot thick layer of concrete and asphalt decking material over the culverts. The structure extends approximately 50 feet from the streambank into the Mad River channel where it ends. Historically, the structure was used as a stream crossing that provided access to a gravel bar on the north bank of the river; however, the deteriorated structure has not been used for decades.

The proposed project involves removal of the existing access road, associated culverts, and decking materials, and restoration of the disturbed area as required by the applicable Reclamation Plan. An excavator with a bucket and thumb will be used to remove the culverts and decking materials. All activities will be conducted during the summer low flow period. If the surface water is present in the vicinity of the project, flows will be diverted around the excavation area. Removed culverts and decking materials will be recycled and/or disposed of at appropriately permitted offsite locations. Any trenches or depressions in the streambed that remain following removal of the structure will be backfilled using native materials. The access road approach to the structure will also be stabilized and revegetated.

The proposed project will temporarily impact approximately 1,500 square feet of streambed and 20 linear feet of streambank. The proposed project will not result in any permanent impacts to waters of the state. Compensatory mitigation is not required. Removal of the permanent structure and revegetation of the access road approach will reestablish streambed and streambank areas currently occupied by the structure. Non-

compensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control, and heavy equipment use in a waterway.

The applicant has obtained authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Individual Permit (File No. 2009-00016), pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. The project is scheduled for the 2013 summer low flow period and is expected to take approximately 15 days to complete.

The applicant conducted aggregate extraction operations on the Mad River under conditions of the Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for Gravel Removal from the Lower Mad River. On April 2, 2009, Humboldt County Department of Community Development Services, as lead agency for CEQA, completed a Final Supplemental to the PEIR (SCH# 1992083049) and filed a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse on April 7, 2009. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental documents and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment.

The Mad River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for sediment and turbidity was established in 2007 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 Mad River are exceeded due to excessive sediment and turbidity. Roads and bank erosion are identified as sources contributing to the sediment impairment. The primary adverse impacts associated with excessive sediment and turbidity in the Mad River pertain to cold freshwater habitat, primarily anadromous salmonid habitat. Proposed activities involve removal of an existing unnatural structure from the stream channel and require implementation of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control. The proposed project also includes stabilization and revegetation of the existing access road approach into the stream channel. Accordingly, the proposed activities are consistent with, and implement portions of the Mad River TMDL.

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 (hard copy) and received at this office by mail or by direct delivery 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.