
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

August 1, 2012

Ms. Lisa Bolton
Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 1966
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

Dear Ms. Bolton:

Subject: Notice of Applicability (NOA) for Coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects

File: Trout Unlimited – Standley Creek Inner Gorge Road Decommissioning Project

WDID No.: 1B1212OWNME

This letter is to certify coverage of Trout Unlimited's *Standley Creek Inner Gorge Road Decommissioning Project* (hereinafter referred to as "Standley Creek Project") under the General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects.

Background:

On July 3, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received your Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the terms of, and obtain coverage under, the General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects (General 401 Order) for the Standley Creek Project. The Standley Creek Project is being coordinated by Trout Unlimited in coordination with Campbell Timberland Management, LLC, CA Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and Pacific Watershed Associates on properties owned by the Usal Redwood Forest Company, LLC.

The purpose of the project is to address controllable sediment delivery sites along an abandoned inner-gorge logging road adjacent to Standley Creek. This project constitutes the last of four phases of watershed assessment and implementation conducted through the California Department of Fish and Game's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP) in the Standley Creek watershed. Residual funding from a

previous project phase was made available for the Standley Creek Project through the FRGP. Since the implementation of this Standley Creek Project was not included in the original FRGP grant, the project was required to seek individual state and federal permits instead of the coordinated permitting coverage provided through FRGP.

Project Location:

The project is located within the Standley Creek watershed, a tributary to the South Fork of the Eel River. Currently Standley Creek supports populations of anadromous salmonids including coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout.

Project Description:

In 2006, the Pacific Watershed Associates (PWA) inventoried 66.1 miles of road in the Standley Creek watershed, and identified 462 sites and 27.2 miles of road requiring treatment to reduce current and potential sediment delivery to streams. The Standley Creek Project will continue with ongoing implementation of treatments recommended by the PWA, by treating 42 sites and 1.98 miles of abandoned road by permanent decommissioning.

The project proposes the implementation of eight different types of erosion control and erosion prevention treatments for the proposed project area, generally subdivided into two categories: site-specific treatments and road treatments.

All treatment prescriptions are for permanent road decommissioning and include:

(1) "storm-proofing" roads; (2) hydrologically disconnecting road; (3) outsloping; (4) ripping; (5) cross drain installation; and (6) watercourse crossing removal; (7) erosion control, and (8) landslide stabilization.

Total project treatment sites include: 1.98 miles of road, 14 stream crossings, 23 landslides, 1 spring, and 4 road discharge points. The estimated total volume of sediment delivery to watercourses that will be prevented from the project is 15,460 cubic yards.

All proposed road work will be constructed according to the guidelines and standards detailed in the "Handbook for Forest and Ranch Roads" (Pacific Watershed Associates, 1994) and the California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual, Part X (Weaver et al. 2006) which have been attached to the project application.

Project Impacts:

The total area of ground disturbance associated with the project is estimated to be 4.97 acres. No linear streambank impacts have been assessed for the project because all fill materials within Waters of the State are proposed to be excavated from the watercourse channel and spoils will be relocated to cutslope areas along the road grade.

Project Timeframes:

Proposed project start date: August 1, 2012

Expected date of completion: October 15, 2012

Seasonal Implementation Window: August 1 – October 15

Monitoring Plan:

Visual monitoring of the entire Standley Creek Project area will be conducted two times throughout the winter wet months following construction for two consecutive years following implementation. Observations of landslide sites will focus on evidence of continued, or reactivation of the slide mass and or surface erosion has the potential for sediment delivery to the stream network. Stream crossing sites will be visually inspected for common post-decommissioning erosion features including but not limited to: channel incision, bank erosion, sideslope failure, surface erosion, and road surface runoff.

If visual observations indicate there is post-decommissioning erosion features above 5% of the original stream crossing fill volume, PWA will initiate a stream crossing decommissioning performance evaluate as per the methodology outlined in their 2005 report to CDFG (Evaluation of Road Decommissioning, CDFG Fisheries Restoration Grant Program 1998-2003).

Trout Unlimited will compile and submit a final report to the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board and the California Department of Fish and Game's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program in March 2013.

Agency Permits:

The applicant has also submitted applications for permitting and/or coverage of:

- a) Army Corp of Engineers Section 404 Permit – Permit 27 – Aquatic Habitat Restoration, Establishment, and Enhancement Activities pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act
- b) NOAA/NMFS Consistency Determination with Biological Opinion No. 151422SWR2006SR00190:JMA.
- c) California Department of Fish and Game – Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement

Notice of Applicability and Project Determination:

Regional Board staff has determined that the Project, as described in the NOI is categorically exempt from CEQA review (section 15333 - Small Habitat Restoration Projects) and meets the eligibility requirements for coverage under the General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects.

Receiving Water: Standley Creek, tributary to the South Fork Eel River

Filled or Excavated Area: Post-decommissioning stream crossing adjustments may result in up to 255 cubic yards of sediment delivery

Total Impacts: Acreage Temporarily Impacted: 4.98 acres maximum
 Length Temporarily Impacted: 0 linear feet
 Acreage Permanently Impacted: 0.0 acres
 Length Permanently Impacted: 0 linear feet

Dredge Volume: None

Discharge Volume: Post-decommissioning stream crossing adjustments may
 result in up to 255 cubic yards of sediment delivery

Project Location : 39.9080 North Latitude and -123.8390 West Longitude

Regional Board staff has determined that the proposed activities may proceed under the General 401 Order.

Reporting:

As required in Section B, Item 4, of the *General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects*, a Monitoring Plan must also include at least an annual reporting of findings for the period stated. In addition, you must submit a Notice of Completion (NOC) no later than 30 days after project completion. A complete NOC includes photographs with a descriptive title, the date each photograph was taken, the name of the photographic site, the WDID number indicated above, and the photographic orientation. Also, please, include the project name and the WDID number with all future inquiries and document submittals.

Please call Jonathan Warmerdam at (707) 576-2468 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Original Signed By Luis Rivera For

Matthias St. John
Executive Officer

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cc: Dominic MacCormack, US Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch,
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