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**North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board**

April 27, 2016

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**In the Matter of**  
**Water Quality Certification**

**for**

**Burke's Goldfields Habitat Enhancement Project at SACMA**  
**WDID 1B15138WNSO**

APPLICANT: Sonoma County Airport, Jon Stout  
RECEIVING WATER: Wetlands  
HYDROLOGIC UNIT: Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.23  
COUNTY: Sonoma  
FILE: Burke's Goldfields Habitat Enhancement Project at SACMA,  
ECM PIN CW-818784

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**FINDINGS BY THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER:**

1. On October 19, 2015, Jon Stout, Airport Manager, Sonoma County Airport (Applicant) filed an application for water quality certification (certification) under section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. § 1341) with the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region (Regional Water Board) for activities associated with the Burke's Goldfields Habitat Enhancement Project at SACMA (Project). Information describing the Project was noticed for public comment on the Regional Water Board's website on February 11, 2016. We received no comments. The proposed Project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (and or state) associated with the seasonal wetland pools and swales, which drain to Redwood

Creek, tributary to Santa Rosa Creek and the Middle Russian River within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.23. The project is located on Ordinance Road in Santa Rosa across from the CAL FIRE air base, at latitude 38.515162°N and longitude 122.805094°W. Temporary impacts to waters of the United States and state would be approximately 1.478 acres.

2. The purpose of the project is to establish approximately two acres of occupied Burke's goldfields habitat to meet one of the mitigation requirements of multiple agency's permits for the Sonoma County Airport Runway Safety Enhancement Project (WDID 1B12182WNSO). Burke's goldfields (*Lasthenia burkei*) is an endangered plant species listed under both state and federal Endangered Species Acts. The purpose must be achieved subject to two primary constraints. First, the work must meet Federal Aviation Administration guidelines that prevent habitat work that could attract hazardous wildlife. Therefore, the project must not increase the existing wetland habitat area on site. Second, the wetlands on site were constructed as mitigation for the wetland impacts of several projects on the Santa Rosa Plain and protected under a Restrictive Covenant. Therefore, the project must not decrease the existing wetland habitat area on site.

The project will involve modifying many of the existing mitigation vernal pools on the site to provide the soil and hydrologic conditions that will support Burke's goldfields. Some existing pools will be filled and some will be excavated to achieve appropriate depths. Heavy equipment will be used for the earthwork, vernal pool plant species seeds will be salvaged, and topsoil will be stockpiled and reused in the pools. Burke's goldfields seed will be collected from other sites and the newly modified pools will be inoculated.

3. Grading and clearing work is proposed to be conducted between May 15 and October 15, 2016, depending on site conditions. Work is expected to take six to eight weeks.
4. Because the impacts of the project are temporary in nature and the project will improve soil and hydrologic conditions for Burke's goldfields, no compensatory mitigation is required. The project will employ best management practices to prevent or reduce any discharges during and after construction.
5. The applicant has applied for coverage under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit No. 27, Aquatic Habitat Restoration, Establishment and Enhancement Activities, pursuant to CWA, section 404.
6. On February 4, 2014, the County of Sonoma filed a Notice of Determination for the Environmental Impact Report Addendum for the Charles M. Schultz Sonoma County Airport Master Plan Implementation Project (SCH 2008062022) in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document,

BMPs, and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment.

7. The Russian River is identified as impaired for sediment and temperature under Clean Water Act Section 303(d). At present, total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) have not been established for this water body. If TMDLs are established and implementation plans are adopted for this watershed prior to the expiration date of the requested certification, the Regional Water Board may revise the provisions of that certification to address actions identified in such action plans. Bank erosion is identified as a source contributing to the sediment impairment. Removal of riparian vegetation is identified as a source contributing to temperature impairment. Activities that will be authorized by this certification are designed to reduce removal of riparian vegetation and reduce sediment discharges from bank erosion. Accordingly, this certification is consistent with, and implements, BMPs that would attenuate sediment and temperature adverse impacts.
8. Pursuant to Regional Water Board Resolution R1-2004-0087, Total Maximum Daily Load Implementation Policy Statement for Sediment-Impaired Receiving Waters within the North Coast Region (Sediment TMDL Implementation Policy), the Executive Officer is directed to "rely on the use of all available authorities, including existing regulatory standards, and permitting and enforcement tools to more effectively and efficaciously pursue compliance with sediment-related standards by all dischargers of sediment waste."
9. The federal antidegradation policy requires that state water quality standards include an antidegradation policy consistent with the federal policy. The State Water Board established California's antidegradation policy in State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16. Resolution No. 68-16 incorporates the federal antidegradation policy where the federal policy applies under federal law. Resolution No. 68-16 requires that existing quality of waters be maintained unless degradation is justified based on specific findings. The Regional Water Board's Basin Plan implements, and incorporates by reference, both the State and federal antidegradation policies. This certification is consistent with applicable federal and State antidegradation policies, as it does not authorize the discharge of increased concentrations of pollutants or increased volumes of treated wastewater.
10. This discharge is also regulated under State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2003-0017-DWQ, "General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredge and Fill Discharges That Have Received State Water Quality Certification," which requires compliance with all conditions of this water quality certification. (Weblink attached below).

Receiving Water:

Wetlands,  
Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.23

Filled or Excavated Area: Permanent impact to waters of the US:  
None  
Temporary impact to waters of the US:  
1.478 acres of wetlands

Latitude/Longitude: 38.515162°N / 122.805094°W

Expiration: April 27, 2021

Accordingly, based on its independent review of the record, the Regional Water Board certifies that the Burke's Goldfields Habitat Enhancement Project at SACMA Project (WDID No. 1B15138WNSO), as described in the application, will comply with sections 301, 302, 303, 306 and 307 of the Clean Water Act, and with applicable provisions of state law, provided that the Applicant complies with the following terms and conditions:

All conditions of this certification apply to the Applicant (and all their employees) and all contractors (and their employees), sub-contractors (and their employees), and any other entity or agency that performs activities or work on the Project as related to this Water Quality Certification.

#### TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

1. This certification action is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including review and amendment pursuant to Water Code section 13330 and title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3867.
2. This certification action is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any discharge from any activity involving a hydroelectric facility requiring a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent certification application was filed pursuant to title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3855, subdivision (b) and the application specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.
3. The validity of this certification is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required under title 23, California Code of Regulations, section 3833, and owed by the Applicant.
4. A total fee of \$7,254 was received for the Project on December 22, 2014 and April 21, 2016. This certification will be subject to annual billing during the construction phase ("Annual Active Discharge Fee") and during the monitoring phase of the Project ("Annual Post Discharge Monitoring Fee"), per the current fee schedule, which can be

found on our website:

[http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/northcoast/water\\_issues/programs/water\\_quality\\_certification.shtml](http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/northcoast/water_issues/programs/water_quality_certification.shtml) These fees will be automatically invoiced to the Applicant.

The Applicant must notify the Regional Water Board of the end of the construction phase of the Project in order to request the Regional Water Board to terminate annual construction period billing and to receive a "Notice of Completion of Discharges Letter." If the Project is subject to annual monitoring fees, the Applicant must also notify the Regional Water Board at the end of the monitoring period in order to request to terminate annual monitoring period billing and receive a "Notice of Project Complete Letter." Completion reports may be necessary to be submitted by Applicant at the end of each of these phases. Regional Water Board staff may request site visits at the end of each phase of the Project to confirm status of Project and compliance with this certification.

5. The proposed Project will have only temporary impacts to waters of the U.S. The Applicant proposes to enhance the Project site wetland condition to include a greater self-sustaining population of Burke's goldfields (mean density of at least 40,000 plants per acre by the 5<sup>th</sup> year of establishment. The Applicant shall implement the *Site Development Plan* submitted with the application on March 4, 2014 and any revisions approved by the Executive Officer.

Results of annual monitoring of the mitigation areas for five years shall be reported to the Regional Water Board annually, November 30<sup>th</sup>. Reports shall summarize data collected, annual performance, any remedial action necessary and whether success criteria are met. The reports shall be submitted to the following email address: [NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov)

6. The Regional Water Board shall be notified at least five working days (working days are Monday – Friday) prior to the commencement of construction.
7. The Applicant shall submit the site *Grazing Management Plan* (described in section 4.1.3 of the *Long Term Management Plan*) for review and approval of the Executive Officer before implementation of any grazing activities at the site. The Applicant shall notify the Regional Water Board prior to use of herbicide in our near wetlands if they are deemed necessary for site management.
8. Only wildlife-friendly, 100 percent biodegradable erosion and sediment control products that will not entrap or harm wildlife shall be used. Erosion and sediment control products shall not contain synthetic (e.g., plastic or nylon) netting. Photodegradable synthetic products are not considered biodegradable. The Applicant shall request approval from the Regional Water Board if an exception from this requirement is needed for a specific location.

9. BMPs shall be implemented as proposed in the application materials. BMPs for erosion, sediment and turbidity control shall be implemented and in place at commencement of, during and after any ground clearing activities or any other Project activities that could result in erosion or sediment discharges to surface water. Severe and unseasonal rain events are becoming more frequent due to the effects of climate change. Therefore, BMPs shall be immediately available for deployment at all times to prevent discharges to waters of the state.
10. No debris, soil, silt, sand, bark, slash, sawdust, rubbish, cement or concrete washings, oil or petroleum products, or other organic or earthen material from any construction or associated activity of whatever nature, other than that authorized by this certification, shall be allowed to enter into or be placed where it may be washed by rainfall into waters of the state. When operations are completed, any excess material or debris shall be removed from the work area.
11. The Applicant shall provide Regional Water Board staff access to the Project site to document compliance with this certification.
12. If, at any time, an unauthorized discharge to surface water (including wetlands, lakes, rivers or streams) occurs, or any water quality problem arises, the associated Project activities shall cease immediately until adequate BMPs are implemented including stopping work. The Regional Water Board shall be notified promptly and in no case more than 24 hours after the unauthorized discharge or water quality problem arises.
13. Prior to implementing any change to the Project that may be a material change as defined in California Water Code section 13260(c) as a proposed change in character, location, or volume of the discharge, the Applicant shall obtain prior written approval of the Regional Water Board Executive Officer. If the Regional Water Board is not notified of the material change to the discharge, it will be considered a violation of this certification, and the Applicant may be subject to Regional Water Board enforcement action(s).
14. All Project work shall be conducted as described in this certification and in the application submitted by the Applicant, and shall comply with all applicable water quality standards as detailed in the Basin Plan. If the Regional Water Board is not notified of a significant alteration to the Project, it will be considered a violation of this certification, and the Applicant may be subject to Regional Water Board enforcement actions.
15. The Applicant shall provide a copy of this certification and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Order No. 2003-0017-DWQ to any contractor(s), subcontractor(s), and utility company(ies) conducting work on the Project, and shall require that copies remain in their possession at the work site. The Applicant shall be responsible for ensuring that all work conducted by its contractor(s),

subcontractor(s), and utility companies is performed in accordance with the information provided by the Applicant to the Regional Water Board.

16. Disturbance or removal of existing vegetation shall not exceed the minimum necessary to complete the Project.
17. Fueling, lubrication, maintenance, storage, and staging of vehicles and equipment shall not result in a discharge or threatened discharge to any waters of the state including dry portions of the shoreline. At no time shall the Applicant or its contractors allow use of any vehicle or equipment, which leaks any substance that may impact water quality.
18. The Regional Water Board may add to or modify the conditions of this certification, as appropriate, to implement any new or revised water quality standards and implementation plans adopted and approved pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act or section 303 of the Clean Water Act.
19. In the event of any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this certification, the violation or threatened violation shall be subject to any remedies, penalties, process or sanctions as provided for under applicable state or federal law. For the purposes of section 401(d) of the Clean Water Act, the applicability of any state law authorizing remedies, penalties, process or sanctions for the violation or threatened violation constitutes a limitation necessary to assure compliance with the water quality standards and other pertinent requirements incorporated into this certification. In response to a suspected violation of any condition of this certification, the State Water Board may require the holder of any federal permit or license subject to this certification to furnish, under penalty of perjury, any technical or monitoring reports the State Water Board deems appropriate, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall bear a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports. In response to any violation of the conditions of this certification, the Regional Water Board may add to or modify the conditions of this certification as appropriate to ensure compliance.
20. In the event of any change in control of ownership of land presently owned or controlled by the Applicant, the Applicant shall notify the successor-in-interest of the existence of this certification by letter and shall email a copy of the letter to the following email address: [NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov)

The successor-in-interest must email the Regional Water Board Executive Officer at: [NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov) a written request for the ownership change and the effective date of the change. The request must contain the following:

- i) Effective date of ownership change;
- ii) Requesting entity's full legal name;

- iii) The state of incorporation, if a corporation;
  - iv) The address and phone number of contact person; and
21. Except as may be modified by any preceding conditions, all certification actions are contingent on: a) the discharge being limited to and all proposed mitigation being completed in strict compliance with the Applicant's Project description, and b) compliance with all applicable requirements of the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan).
22. The authorization of this certification for any dredge and fill activities expires on April 27, 2021. Conditions and monitoring requirements outlined in this certification are not subject to the expiration date outlined above, and remain in full effect and are enforceable.

If you have any questions or comments, please call Gil Falcone at (707) 576-2830 or Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653.

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Matthias St. John  
Executive Officer

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Weblink: State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2003-0017 -DWQ, General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredge and Fill Discharges That Have Received State Water Quality Certification can be found at:  
[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/water\\_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0017.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/water_quality/2003/wqo/wqo2003-0017.pdf)

Original to: Mr. Jon Stout, Airport Manager, Charles M Schulz – Sonoma County Airport, 2290 Airport Blvd., Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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