

January 20, 2010

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

California Department of Transportation
Highway 36 – Storm Damage Repair (Ridgetop Wall) Project
WDID No. 1B10007WNHU

Humboldt County

On January 13, 2010, 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 Highway 36 Storm Damage Repair (Ridgetop Wall) Project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with the Eel River Unit No.113.00, and Bridgeville Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 111.22.

The proposed project is located on Highway 36 from post mile (PM) 29.0 to 29.5, in Humboldt County. During the winter of 2005/2006, several storm events contributed to the failure of a fill slope and loss of the eastbound lane of Highway 36 at PM 29.20. The purpose of the proposed project is to restore the roadway to pre-storm conditions and improve the facility to prevent further highway deterioration. Caltrans proposes: relocating a drainage ditch; installing a 160-foot long tieback retaining wall; installing 170 feet of metal beam guard rail; installing rock slope protection; relocating utilities; excavating areas adjacent to and beneath the roadway; paving the roadway; and revegetating disturbed areas.

The proposed project will result in temporary and permanent impacts to an unnamed ephemeral tributary to Little Larabee Creek, a tributary to the Van Duzen River. Caltrans has determined the temporary impacts to waters of the U.S. and State would total approximately 200 feet² (100 linear feet). However, permanent impacts are only 72 feet² (12 linear feet). 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 proposes to off-set the impacts to waters of the U.S and State by planting 9,100 feet² (0.21-acres) of native trees and shrubs adjacent to a new overside drain and the riparian zone of the unnamed tributary to Little Larabee Creek.

The proposed project will be conducted in summer months during low flow conditions; however, a water diversion may be required. The majority of proposed project activity is scheduled to be conducted between June 14th, 2010 and November 5th, 2010; however, an additional work season maybe necessary. Limited project activities may be conducted year round. The entire project is expected to take 100 days to complete. The proposed in-channel work will only be conducted between June 15th and October 15th.

Caltrans has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 14 (linear transportation projects) and No. 13 (bank stabilization) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Caltrans has applied to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. Caltrans has determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review (Class 2 Categorical Exemption). In addition, Regional Water Board staff also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 2 Categorical Exemption) and anticipates filing a Notice of Exemption.

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 Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or jpuget@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.