

February 9, 2011

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

California Department of Transportation
Highway 1 - Greenwood Creek Bridge Replacement Project
WDID No. 1B03100WNME

Mendocino County

On June 9, 2009, 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 1 – Greenwood Creek Bridge Replacement Project (project). Additional project information was received on January 25, 2011. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with unnamed intermittent tributaries to Greenwood Creek located within the Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit (HU) No.113.00 (Greenwood Creek Hydrologic Sub-Area 113.61).

The proposed project is located on Highway 1 from post mile (PM) 33.4 to 33.9, in Mendocino County. The purpose of the proposed project is to replace the existing bridge, which has been identified as structurally deficient, at above-referenced section of Highway 1 with a three-span cast-in-place pre-stressed box girder bridge. The new bridge would be constructed on an alignment 6.7 feet east of the existing alignment, and would be 520 feet long, with 12-foot lanes and 6-foot shoulders. The new bridge includes bike railing and sidewalks. Two retaining walls are proposed within the project limits. A soldier pile retaining wall with timber lagging will be constructed in the Bonee Gulch area and a comparable type of wall just south of Bone Gulch. The wall at the southern location may be eliminated if it can be determined that a near-vertical cut would remain stable.

Construction access will use the existing Elk County Water District access road located east and beneath the existing bridge. The southern pier of the newly proposed bridge will be located near two existing municipal water supply wells for the Elk County Water District (ECWD). To avoid potential impacts to the water supply wells during construction Caltrans has provided funds to the ECWD to relocate and install two additional water supply wells.

Caltrans proposes 2.7 acres of ground disturbing activities including: slope excavation; bridge demolition and construction; culvert repair and replacement at three locations; construction of retaining wall(s); implementing erosion and sediment control, and revegetation activities. The proposed project will result in an additional 0.18 acres (approximately 7,841 ft²) of new impervious surface, primarily as a result of widening the bridge lanes and shoulder widths. Caltrans has incorporated post-construction storm water treatment Best Management Practices (BMPs) to the Maximum Extent Practicable (MEP) within the project, which provides the treatment of storm water runoff for 0.38 acres (16,600 ft²) of impervious surface.

The proposed project will result in temporary and permanent impacts to waters of the U.S and waters of the State. Caltrans has determined that impacts to wetlands identified as waters of the U.S. would total 174 ft² of permanent impacts and 741 ft² of temporary impacts. The impacts to streams identified as waters of the U.S. total 9 ft² of permanent impacts and 6,512 ft² (0.15 acres and 128 linear ft) of temporary impacts. Temporary impacts to riparian vegetation identified as waters of the State total 2.02 acres (87,991 ft² and 750 linear ft).

As mitigation to compensate for impacts associated with this project, Caltrans proposes both an off-site restoration project and on-site revegetation following construction. The off-site mitigation plan includes the restoration of an unnamed tributary to the Big River located within the Big River State Park. The restoration will include the removal of a failed culvert, the associated fill, the installation of a prefabricated steel bowstring truss bridge, and riparian revegetation. Approximately 250 linear feet of stream will be restored and all alluvial sediment behind the fill prism will be excavated and removed down to native slopes and stream channel/corridor. The restored stream channel is to be 20 feet wide beneath the bridge and sideslope and excavations upstream of the bridge would only occur as necessary to unbury or restore native slopes and match grades. In addition, plantings will occur outside of the stream channel, for a total of 1.24 acres of revegetation. The Big River Restoration project will be conducted in accordance with the Caltrans-Prepared *Off-site Coastal Wetland Mitigation at Big River State Park, Mendocino Mitigation and Monitoring Plan*, received January 25, 2011. Subsequent to the completion of bridge, culvert, and wall construction, Caltrans will perform on-site revegetation activities for areas disturbed at a 1:1 ratio. The on-site restoration will encompass approximately 2.6 acres and include riparian and wetland restoration. The on-site restoration will be conducted in accordance with Caltrans-prepared *Greenwood Creek Bridge Replacement Project Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal*, received September 9, 2010.

The proposed project construction activities are scheduled to be conducted in 2011 through the end of 2014. The entire project is expected to take approximately three years to complete; however, the proposed in-channel work will only be conducted between May 15th and October 15th, when flows are low. Additional avoidance and minimization measures in the form of work window restrictions associated with construction near Greenwood creek will be implemented as proposed by Caltrans in the application. For example Caltrans will preserve a riparian buffer with a minimum of 10 linear feet from each bank of Greenwood creek during construction. This buffer is to be left undisturbed, unless some trimming is necessary for taller species for equipment and construction clearance. Caltrans will utilize BMPs to provide erosion and sediment 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 BMPs will be implemented to ensure erosion is minimized and controlled.

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) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. Caltrans has also applied for a California Department of Fish and Game 1602 Streambed Alteration Agreement and to the California Coastal Commission for a Coastal Development Permit. In order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act, Caltrans certified an Initial Study/Negative Declaration in December, 2002 (State Clearing House No. 2002052090). Based on project changes and amended requirements, Caltrans certified a Subsequent Negative Declaration in January, 2004. Additional project changes resulted in the preparation of an Amended Negative Declaration, certified in May, 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.

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 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.