

May 17, 2011

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

California Department of Transportation  
Highway 96 – Ukonom Culvert Rehabilitation Project  
WDID No. 1A09149WNSI

Siskiyou County

On December 21, 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 96, Ukonom Culvert Rehabilitation Project (project). Additional project information was received in April and May, 2011. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States (U.S.) and waters of the State associated with wetlands and drainages within the Klamath River Hydrologic Unit, No.105.00 (Ukonom Sub-Area 105.31 and Seiad Valley Hydrologic Sub-Area No. 105.33).

The proposed project includes 85 drainage systems (culverts) located in Siskiyou County, on Highway 96 from post mile (PM) 0.42 to PM 11.90. Proposed construction activities include the installation of new culverts, replacement of existing culverts, installation of culvert liners, modification of culvert inlets and outlets, placement of asphalt concrete (AC) around inlets, and placement of rock slope protection (RSP) at the inlets and outlets to reduce erosion. Inlet modifications include installation of headwalls, flared end sections, and inlets. Existing pull-outs and shoulders will be used to stage equipment and materials. Caltrans has determined that total project permanent impacts to streams identified as waters of the U.S. and State will be approximately 0.09 acres (3, 920 feet<sup>2</sup>, 1,195 linear feet). The temporary project impacts to streams identified as waters of the U.S. and State will be approximately 0.047 acres (2,025 feet<sup>2</sup>, 613 linear feet). In addition, the project will result in a temporary impact to wetlands of 0.11 acres (4,640 feet<sup>2</sup>) and a permanent impact to wetlands of 0.025 acres (1,074 feet<sup>2</sup>, 211 linear feet). Also, the project will require the removal of 22 trees identified as riparian waters of the State for a total impact of 0.034 acres (1,500 feet<sup>2</sup>, 90 linear feet).

As mitigation to compensate for impacts associated with this project, Caltrans proposes both off-site mitigation and on-site revegetation following construction. The off-site mitigation plan includes wetland creation and stream enhancement near the confluence of O'Neill Creek and the Klamath River. The mitigation actions will include the construction of an off-channel alcove planted with wetland and riparian vegetation. The off-channel feature will provide wetland habitat as well as cold water refugia and rearing habitat for salmonids. In addition, the restoration effort will improve fish passage limitations along O'Neill Creek. The project will create 3,021 feet<sup>2</sup> of wetlands and 3,712 feet<sup>2</sup> of off-channel stream habitat, and enhance 1,400 feet<sup>2</sup> of stream habitat. The mitigation project will be conducted in accordance with the Caltrans-Prepared *Mitigation and Monitoring Proposal at O'Neill Creek Restoration Site*, dated April, 2011. Caltrans will perform on-site revegetation activities for wetland, stream, and riparian resources disturbed during the project. The on-site restoration will encompass approximately 4,140 ft<sup>2</sup> of wetlands restoration, 1,625 ft<sup>2</sup> (593 linear ft) of streams restoration, and 2,250 ft<sup>2</sup> (115 linear ft) of riparian restoration. The on-site restoration will be conducted in accordance with Caltrans-prepared *On-Site Restoration and Monitoring Proposal for the Ukonom Culvert Rehabilitation Project*, dated May, 2011.

Caltrans' contractor will be required to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) for construction and post-construction phases of the project to provide erosion and sediment control and pollution prevention throughout the project area. 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. The project will only be conducted in the dry season between May 15 and October 15; however, clear water diversions may be necessary if flowing water is encountered.

Caltrans has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 3 Non-Reporting (maintenance) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. In addition, Caltrans has applied for a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. In order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act, Caltrans certified an Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration in December, 2002 (State Clearing House No. 2009042004). Based on project changes and amended requirements, Caltrans certified an Addendum to Initial Study in July, 2010. 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 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](mailto: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.