June 13, 2011

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

Trinity Co. DPW – Hyampom Road Improvement Project, Segment 3
WDID No. 1A11027WNTR

Trinity County

On March 14, 2011, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Trinity County Department of Transportation (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, water quality certification for proposed activities associated with Segment Three of the Hyampom Road Improvement Project. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with James Creek and unnamed tributaries to Hayfork Creek in the Corral Creek Hydrologic Subarea No. 106.24.

The proposed project is located along Hayfork Creek and approximately 1.5 miles of Hyampom Road between Post Mile 6.8 and Post Mile 8.3. The proposed project involves road widening and realignment to create two 11-foot wide travel lanes with 2-foot wide shoulders and a paved inboard ditch. The road will generally be widened and realigned in the upslope direction away from Hayfork Creek. Rock slope protection (RSP) and retaining walls will be installed on the outboard side of the roadway above the ordinary high water elevation of Hayfork Creek. No fill or excavation activities are proposed below the ordinary high water elevation of Hayfork Creek.

The proposed project includes removal of an existing 42-foot long, 3-foot diameter corrugated metal culvert on James Creek. The existing culvert will be replaced with a 40-foot long, 20-foot wide, and 12-foot high bottomless arch culvert. The new culvert crossing will be located slightly upstream of the existing culvert as Hyampom Road is being widened away from Hayfork Creek. James Creek will be temporarily dewatered by installing a temporary sand bag barrier upstream of new arch culvert to route the stream into a temporary pipe that will carry the flows through the construction area and through the existing culvert.

Construction of the new arch culvert will require excavations along both sides of the James Creek stream channel to form and pour concrete footings and stem walls. The footings and associated excavations will be located above the ordinary high water elevation. Mechanically stabilized earth walls will be constructed over the arch culvert to contain and stabilize the new road fill materials. RSP will be placed along both sides of the James Creek channel around the inlet and outlet ends of the new arch culvert. A layer of light rock (6 inch diameter) will also be placed as channel lining at the outlet of the arch culvert to protect the bottom and banks of James Creek where the existing roadway fill and culvert will be removed.

Activities associated with installation of the proposed arch culvert and RSP will result in 360 square feet and 120 linear feet of permanent impacts to the James Creek streambanks. Activities associated with installation of the light rock channel lining will

result in 525 square feet and 35 linear feet of permanent impacts to the James Creek streambed. Activities associated with dewatering and temporary diversion of James Creek will result in 290 square feet and 139 linear feet of temporary impacts to the James Creek streambed.

Six new 24-inch diameter ditch relief culverts will be added to the widened and realigned section of Hyampom Road. Six existing 12-inch diameter culverts will also be replaced including four ditch relief culverts and two culverts on unnamed ephemeral tributaries to Hayfork Creek. New 24-inch diameter culverts will be installed with new drop inlets and light RSP outlet protection. These channels will be graded slightly to direct flows into the inlets of the new culverts. Activities associated with replacement of the two culverts on unnamed tributaries to Hayfork Creek and the installation of inlet and outlet protection for the new culverts will result in 162 square feet and 19 linear feet of additional permanent impacts to these existing culverted stream channels. Grading at the inlets of the unnamed tributaries will result in temporary impacts to 195 square feet and 30 linear feet of streambed.

A wetland seep emerges from a cut slope and flows in the roadside ditch to an ephemeral drainage where it pools in the ditch. The proposed project will realign the roadway into the cut bank and the slope with the seep will be cut back further. The existing wetland will be filled by the realigned road. A gravel underdrain will be installed at this location to convey the seep under the roadside ditch and into the new culvert on an unnamed tributary to Hayfork Creek. Installation of the new culvert and underdrain will drain the seep area and prevent wetlands from developing in the new ditch. Widening the roadway into the existing roadside drainage and cut slope will result in permanent impacts to 525 square feet of existing wetlands.

A Wetland Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (WMMP) was prepared to provide wetland mitigation for impacts within the entire Hyampom Road Improvement Project including wetland impacts in Segments 2, 3, 4, and 5. A 1.056 acre compensatory wetland mitigation area was created along Dinner Gulch within the Segment 5 project area to mitigate for the total loss of 0.24 acre of wetlands. Construction of the compensatory wetland mitigation area was completed in September 2010. An initial monitoring event conducted during 2010 showed that wetland conditions in the mitigation area are developing as evidenced by observations of continued growth of facultative and obligate wetlands indicator species, and onsite expansion of individual planted species.

The applicant has applied for authorization (File No. 2002-27452N) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under Nationwide Permit No. 14, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. On August 6, 2003, Trinity County approved a Final Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2002022062) for the project in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the

environment. The proposed project activities are scheduled to begin in May 2011 and the project is expected to take two years to complete.

The State of California determined that the water quality standards for the South Fork Trinity River are exceeded due to excessive sediment and temperature. The South Fork Trinity River and Hayfork Creek Technical Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for sediment were established in 1998 by the United States Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. Development of a South Fork Trinity River Temperature TMDL has not been scheduled. Roads and bank erosion are identified as sources contributing to the sediment impairment. In addition, activities that impact the riparian zone and reduce riparian vegetation are identified as sources contributing to increased stream temperatures. The primary adverse impacts associated with excessive temperature and sediment in the South Fork Trinity River pertain to cold freshwater habitat, primarily anadromous salmonid habitat. Activities authorized by this certification require implementation of Best Management Practices for sediment and turbidity control, and implementation of mitigation and impact avoidance measures as described above. Accordingly, the project is consistent with, and implements portions of the South Fork Trinity River TMDL.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed activities including maps and detailed design drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file are available for public review.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during 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, please contact staff member Dean Prat at (707) 576-2801 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.