July 6, 2011

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

Ferrari-Carano
Bank Stabilization, Riparian Revegetation, and Fish Habitat Project
WDID No. 1B11086WNSO

Sonoma County

On June 6, 2011, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Evan Engber of BioEngineering Associates on behalf of Ferrari-Carano Vineyards and Winery (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, water quality certification (Certification) for proposed activities associated with the Ferrari-Carano Bank Stabilization, Riparian Revegetation, and Fish Habitat Project (project). The proposed project will cause disturbances to approximately 0.772 acres, 497 linear feet, of waters of the United States and waters of the State associated with the Russian River within the Geyserville Hydrologic Subarea No. 114.25, Russian River Hydrologic Unit No. 114.00.

The proposed project site is located on the left (east) bank of the Russian River, approximately 300 feet downstream of the Geyserville Highway 128 Bridge, east of Geyserville, Sonoma County, California (APN 140-240-016), latitude 38.71274°N, longitude 122.89374°W.

The primary purpose of the proposed project is to stabilize 497 feet of severely-eroding riverbank, revegetate the riparian edge and enhance/create fish habitat.

The proposed project employs the use of bioengineering techniques to stabilize the bank. The proposed project consists of the construction of a combination of deflection and absorption structures as described below.

Eight vegetated boulder wing deflectors that are constructed of rock-and-live-willow, each 20 feet wide and 20 to 30 feet long with spacing between each of 20 to 30 feet. They will be built on a layer of willow stems that will project underwater from the perimeter of the structure, that will slow flow velocities and minimize erosive forces at the base. The first upstream structure, which receives the brunt of the storm flows, will have the additional protection of a log brush barrier along its upstream face. This will add additional washout protection for the rock as well as creating habitat for juvenile salmonids. The amount of rock will be minimized by integrating long live willow branches between the rock layers. The live branches will project out a minimum of 3 feet from each layer and completely surround the structure between each lift of rock. Approximately 1,500 to 2,000 live will branches will be used per structure which will continue to grow and increase the ability to absorb rather than pass on the energy of flood flows. The open spaces between the rocks will be filled with river bar gravel to provide a growing medium for the live willow branches. This gravel will be harvested

from the opposing gravel bar which is located on applicant's property. The amount of gravel needed is estimated to be less than 400 cubic yards.

The series of alcoves that will be created between the structures will be filled with trees that have been downed by the local bank erosion. Most of the trees will be installed with root wads intact, and will utilize the many fallen trees that are at the site. The trunk end of the trees will be buried underneath the rock and willow structures with the rootball extending into the wetted alcove. The alcoves will provide high flow refugia, shade, resting and feeding areas for fish, as well as protecting the bank from further erosion.

The top of bank will be sloped back up to six feet from the existing edge. All disturbed or constructed areas of the bank that result in bare soil, will be mulched and seeded with a native grass and wildflower mixture, and planted with native trees and shrubs. Existing mature trees will be protected in place, younger/smaller willow and cottonwood will either be transplanted further back from the edge or integrated as live material into the bank restoration design. Further mitigation measures will include removal of Arundo donax and Armenian blackberry from the project area. Work within the wetted channel will be isolated from the river by use of a continuous silt curtain that floats from the surface and is attached within the river bottom. Appropriate monitoring and contingency plans will be required. The structures and plantings will be monitored for at least five years; the plantings will have at least an 85% survival rate and the structure will be monitored for designed purpose; annual reports will be submitted to the Regional Water Board. Appropriate construction stormwater best management practices will be employed to prevent erosion and delivery of sediment from the site while it is being constructed and after it is finished. Work is proposed for the low flow season, between June 15 and October 15, and is expected to take approximately five weeks.

The project will reduce sediment delivery and increase shade and habitat, and reduce temperature; thus, no compensatory mitigation is required.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (File No. 2011-00206) to perform the project pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404, under NWP-13, Bank Stabilization. The applicant has also applied for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. The Sotoyome Resource Conservation District, as lead agency for CEQA, is preparing a Mitigated Negative Declaration for this project and will submit it to the State Clearinghouse in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board will consider the draft 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 Russian River is identified as impaired on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list. The Russian River is listed as impaired for sediment and temperature. 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 contributing to temperature impairment. Activities that will be authorized by the pending certification are designed to increase riparian vegetation and reduce sediment discharges from bank erosion. Actions authorized by this Order require implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for sediment and turbidity control and planting of more riparian zone shade vegetation at and near the project site. Accordingly, this Order is consistent with, and implements BMPs that would attenuate sediment and temperature adverse impacts.

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 notice and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.