

November 30, 2011

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

California Department of Transportation  
Highway 128 and 253 – Culvert Rehabilitation Project Phase Two:  
WDID No. 1B11189WNME

Mendocino County

On November 2, 2011, 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 Highways 128 and 253 Culvert Rehabilitation (52 Culverts) Project Phase Two. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the U.S. and waters of the State associated with intermittent, ephemeral and perennial streams located within the Russian River Hydrologic Unit No.114.00 (Ukiah Hydrologic Sub-Area 114.31) and Mendocino Coast Hydrologic Unit No. 113.00 (Navarro River Hydrologic Area 113.50).

The project is Phase Two of a three-phase culvert rehabilitation project within Mendocino County. A total of 274 culverts will be repaired or replaced as part of the entire rehabilitation project. The purpose of Phase Two is to upgrade or repair 52 culverts. A 401 Certification is required for 6 of the culverts located along Highway 128, and 12 of the culverts located along Highway 253. The proposed project will be conducted at various locations along Highway 128 from post mile (PM) 48.61 to PM 50.29 and from PM 3.3 to PM 13.26 along Highway 253. Activities proposed by Caltrans include: abandoning culverts, installing new culverts, rock slope protection, headwalls, and downdrains; excavating areas adjacent to and beneath the roadway; and paving the roadway.

Caltrans has determined that the total project permanent impacts to watercourses identified as other waters of the U.S will be 0.007 acres (213 linear feet). The temporary project impacts to watercourses identified as other waters of the U.S. will be approximately 0.113 acres (2,232 linear feet). In addition, the temporary impacts to wetlands identified as waters of the U.S. and State will total approximately 0.06 acres. The permanent impacts to wetlands identified as waters of the U.S. and State will total approximately 0.002 acres. Phase One construction activities will cumulatively result in approximately 0.6 acres of disturbed soil area (DSA).

Caltrans proposes to mitigate for Phase Two permanent impacts to 0.007 acres of Waters of the US and Waters of the State by funding the Robinson Creek Phase 3 Riparian Restoration Project (mitigation project) to be managed and monitored through the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District (MCRCD). The mitigation project would result in 1.8 acres of mitigation credit. Caltrans proposes to mitigate impacts for Phase 1 at a 3:1 ratio. Therefore, Caltrans will debit 0.021 acres of credit from the mitigation project, leaving 1.38 acres of remaining mitigation credit. Work on the mitigation project will be concurrent with work on the Caltrans Phase Two project.

Phase Two temporary impacts to wetlands and Other Waters of the US will be mitigated on-site, through native re-vegetation as appropriate for each location. Phase Two permanent impacts to 0.002 acres of wetlands were mitigated in the Phase One Project through purchase of 0.1 acres of wetland creation credit from the Desmond Mitigation Bank in Sonoma County.

Project activities will be conducted between May 15<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>; however, work within flowing drainages will be limited to between June 15<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>. The work is anticipated to take 120 days. 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 and potential pollution 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. 3 (maintenance projects) 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. On June 14, 2005, Caltrans certified a Negative Declaration (State Clearing House No. 2005042089) for the project in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document.

The Navarro River watershed is listed on the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list as impaired for sediment and temperature. In December 2000, the U.S. EPA established sediment Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for the Navarro River Watershed. The Russian River watershed is listed on the State of California Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list as impaired for sediment and temperature. Roads are a significant source of sediment in the watershed (directly, from surface erosion, and, indirectly, by triggering landslides). In addition, activities that impact the riparian zone and reduce riparian vegetation are identified as sources contributing to increased stream temperatures. A focus on measures to reduce sediment discharges to surface waters from roads in the watershed, and measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts on riparian zones is essential for achieving TMDL compliance.

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 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.

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