

October 4, 2012

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

Freeman Ranch – Stockwater Pump Installation
WDID No. 1A12161WNSI

Siskiyou County

On August 16, 2012, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Tom Freeman (Applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities associated with installation of a submersible pump in a water diversion ditch containing wetlands. The proposed project is located on the Freeman Ranch off Freeman Road in central Siskiyou County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with wetlands on irrigated agriculture land in the Shasta Valley Hydrologic Area No. 105.50.

The proposed project is a component of the larger Shasta River Tailwater Reduction Project (SRTRP). The SRTRP involves projects at seven locations on six separate ranches throughout the Shasta Valley Hydrologic Area. All components of the SRTRP are located on existing active agricultural lands. The objective of the SRTRP is to improve water quality in the Shasta River by decreasing temperatures and increasing dissolved oxygen through improved agricultural irrigation management. The SRTRP aims to achieve these objectives by reducing the amount of warm tailwater returned to the Shasta River and allowing more cold water to remain in the river by reducing agricultural irrigation diversions.

The proposed project is part of the *Freeman Gated Pipe and Tailwater Re-Use* component of the SRTRP which involves installation of approximately 2,700 linear feet of gated pipe within existing irrigation ditches to improve flood irrigation efficiency and installation of an additional 1,700 linear feet of underground PVC pipe to connect the existing pump facility to two new segments of gated pipe. The new underground PVC pipe will replace approximately 750 feet of existing underground water transmission line and the additional 950 feet of PVC pipe will be a new underground transmission line.

Installation of the submersible pump within the existing water diversion ditch will result in permanent impacts to 1 square foot of wetland. The proposed project will not result in any temporary impacts to waters of the United States. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented during installation of the pump. BMPs will include installation of silt screen and straw bales between the area of disturbance and the Shasta River for sediment and erosion control. Post-construction BMPs will include utilization of a vegetated buffer between the project area and Shasta River. The vegetated buffer will consist of grass, meadow, and/or forest plant material. The vegetated buffer will be approximately 50-feet wide and run parallel to the river for approximately 50 linear feet.

On March 30, 2011, the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH No. 2011022041) for the project in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document, BMPs, and any proposed changes incorporated into the project or required as a

condition of approval to avoid significant effects to the environment. The environmental document includes mitigation measures for the project's impacts to hydrology and water quality. The Applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to implement the project, pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The Applicant has also applied for a Lake and/or Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game.

The Shasta River watershed is listed on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list as impaired for temperature and organic enrichment/low dissolved oxygen. On June 28, 2006, Regional Water Board adopted a Resolution approving amendments to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) to establish an Action Plan for the Shasta River Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) addressing temperature and dissolved oxygen impairments in the Shasta River. Activities that impact stream bed, banks, and floodplains and reduce riparian vegetation are identified as sources contributing to increased stream temperatures. Such projects may involve removal of vegetation and/or channel alteration, and also have potential to increase sediment loads. 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. The proposed project is designed to improve water quality in the Shasta River by decreasing temperatures and increasing dissolved oxygen through improved agricultural irrigation management. Accordingly, this project is consistent with, and implements portions of the Shasta River TMDLs.

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 project including plans, maps, and photos. 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.