

April 5, 2013

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

Siskiyou RCD– Scott River Riparian Restoration Project, Spencer Property
WDID No. 1A13032WNSI

Siskiyou County

On February 25, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Siskiyou Resource Conservation District (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) for activities associated with streambank stabilization and riparian area restoration along the Scott River. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with the Scott River in the Scott Valley Hydrologic Subarea No. 105.42

The proposed project is located on property owned by John Spencer near the confluence of French Creek and Scott River, approximately 1.5 miles downstream of the bridge on Fay Lane over the Scott River. The purpose of the proposed project is to arrest streambank erosion along an approximately 800-foot long reach of the Scott River that is adversely impacting existing riparian areas. The project area is within known coho salmon habitat and continued loss of the streambank in the area could isolate some key pools in the Scott River and near the mouth of French Creek. Proposed activities involve planting riparian trees on the floodplain to enhance the riparian corridor of the Scott River and implementation of bioengineered streambank enhancement and riparian area restoration methods as described in *Streambank Bioengineering Field Guide for Low Precipitation Areas* (Hoag C., Fripp J. 2002). Enhancement of the riparian corridor will benefit in-stream habitat for coho salmon.

The proposed project will use a variety of bioengineering techniques to restore the lost riparian vegetation using methods that are designed to resist further loss of bank material. Proposed bioengineering techniques include rock vanes, live willow siltation baffles, live willow brush mattresses, deep planted live willow clusters, and live woven willow walls. The proposed techniques have proven successful in pilot projects along the Scott River. In-stream work will be conducted in a manner which minimizes or eliminates adverse impacts to aquatic habitat and water quality. Pole plantings and rooted stock will also be planted in areas outside of the active flowing channel.

The proposed project will result in temporary impacts to 480 linear feet and 1,344 square feet of streambank. The proposed project will not result in any permanent impacts to waters of the United States. The primary purpose of the proposed project is to restore and protect habitat in the Scott River. Compensatory mitigation is not required due to the nature of the proposed restoration activities. Non-compensatory mitigation measures include implementation during the summer when flows are low, and the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for materials staging and use of heavy equipment in a

stream channel. Proposed streambank stabilization activities are scheduled to occur during the summer of 2013 and are expected to take approximately 45 working days to complete. The riparian planting phase will be implemented during the late winter or early spring.

A significant portion of the project reach can be treated without adversely affecting the low-flow stream channel; however, any surface water flow that is present during implementation will be diverted around disturbed project areas using sand bags and/or clean washed gravel to protect water quality. If aquatic species are observed in the area they will be trapped for relocation and/or evaluated by Department of Fish and Wildlife staff. Delay of the project is an option if flows are high enough to threaten the aquatic habitat and water quality protection BMPs.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform the project under an Individual Permit, 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 Wildlife. On January 3, 2013, the Siskiyou Resource Conservation District approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration 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 describes avoidance and minimization measures, and mitigation measures for the project's impacts to biological resources, and hydrology and water quality. Monitoring will include photo documentation of project areas before and after implementation. Photo-point monitoring will also be conducted annually to provide information on treatment success, and information for assessing environmental protection, changes in the Scott River riparian corridor, and the effectiveness of the riparian planting methods for implementation of future management actions.

The Scott River watershed has been listed as impaired for sediment (1992) and temperature (1998) in accordance with section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, because the State of California determined that the water quality standards for the Scott River are exceeded due to excessive sediment and temperature. The *Action Plan for the Scott River Sediment and Temperature Total Maximum Daily Loads* includes sediment and temperature total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and describes the implementation actions necessary to achieve the TMDLs and attain water quality standards in the Scott River watershed within 40 years of United States Environmental Protection Agency approval (Sept. 8, 2006) of the Scott River TMDL Action Plan. 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 Scott River watershed pertain to cold freshwater habitat, primarily anadromous salmonid habitat. The purpose of the project is to prevent excessive streambank erosion that is adversely impacting riparian areas and to enhance the riparian corridor of the Scott River by planting riparian trees on floodplain areas. Proposed

activities also include implementation of BMPs and impact avoidance measures as described above. Accordingly, the proposed project is consistent with, and implements portions of the Scott 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, plans, 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.

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