

July 17, 2013

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

Root Property – Riparian Planting and Stockwater Improvement Project
WDID No. 1A13069WNSI

Siskiyou County

On June 3, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Beth Root (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, water quality certification for proposed activities associated with construction of a livestock watering lane and planting native riparian vegetation along Julian Creek and the Shasta River. The proposed project is located on the applicant's Root Ranch property off De Soza Lane, near Grenada, in central Siskiyou County. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with Julian Creek and the Shasta River in the Shasta Valley Hydrologic Area No. 105.50.

The proposed *Root Planting and Stockwater Project* (project) is a component of the larger Shasta River Riparian Protection and Enhancement Project (SRRPEP). The SRRPEP involves projects at six locations throughout the Shasta Valley Hydrologic Area. All components of the SRRPEP are located on existing active agricultural lands. The primary objective of the SRRPEP is to improve water quality in the Shasta River by decreasing temperatures and sediment loads through improved riparian vegetation. The SRRPEP aims to increase the amount of riparian vegetation along the Shasta River and its tributaries by installing riparian protection fencing along unfenced stream reaches, installing new livestock watering systems, and planting native riparian vegetation. By improving riparian vegetation these SRRPEP projects are expected to improve water quality and aquatic habitat in the Shasta River and its tributaries.

The proposed activities are located on a portion of the Root Ranch bound by the Shasta River to the north and northeast, Julian Creek to the southeast, and agricultural fields used for grazing and hay production to the south and west. Proposed disturbance along Julian Creek and the Shasta River is primarily associated with clump planting of native riparian vegetation including but not limited to willow, choke cherry, and native plum species. Native riparian vegetation will be planted along approximately 2,200 feet of Julian Creek and approximately 150 feet of the Shasta River. Planting areas are primarily in upland pasture above the high water mark of Julian Creek and the Shasta River. Planting areas will be located behind existing or new riparian protection fencing to ensure higher propagation and survival rates.

The applicant has already installed riparian protection fencing along portions of Julian Creek and the Shasta River, which created the need for installation of new livestock watering systems. The new watering systems will consist of two new cisterns to supply water to three new troughs. Solar pumps at each cistern will supply water to the troughs.

A livestock watering access lane and a 150 linear foot section of additional riparian protection fencing that will also be constructed along the Shasta River. Fencing will consist of T-posts and barbed wire set back approximately 35 feet from the Shasta River, consistent with the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District's (SVRCD) riparian fencing specifications. The watering access lane will consist of a 24-foot wide gap in the new fence to allow livestock to continue to water from the river at a specific area with constructed improvements for that purpose.

The watering access lane will be constructed in an area with low banks and a solid river bottom. The streambank will be minimally graded to create a 5:1 or flatter slope and excavated approximately 12 inches deeper than final grade. Geotextile fabric will be installed over the excavated surface and covered with 12 inches of compacted rock to restore the grade, protect the streambed, and reduce erosion. The new barbed wire fencing will be tied to the edges of the watering access lane and temporary panels will be used to define the edges of the access lane.

Construction of the proposed watering access lane will result in permanent impacts to approximately 870 square feet of Shasta River streambed. The proposed project will not result in any temporary impacts to waters of the United States. The proposed project will reduce livestock access to the river and riparian areas, and will limit livestock access to a specific watering location on the Shasta River that has been designed and constructed to minimize adverse impacts associated with ongoing livestock watering in a stream. The proposed project is considered to be self-mitigating and has been designed to improve riparian vegetation and water quality in the Shasta River. Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be implemented during construction to prevent adverse impacts to the Shasta River and may include installation of silt screen and straw bales between areas of disturbance and the Shasta River for sediment and erosion control.

On December 14, 2012, the SVRCD approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration (SCH No. 2012102037) 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 biological resources, geology and soils, and hydrology/water quality. The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers to perform this project under Nationwide Permit No. 23 pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. The applicant has also obtained 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 riparian vegetation improvement and improved agricultural practices. Accordingly, the proposed 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 activities including maps, design plans, and photos of the project areas. 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.