

July 19, 2013

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

Harris Quarry
WDID No. 1B13070WNME

Mendocino County

On June 4, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Mr. Frank Dutra (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities associated with expansion of an existing rock quarry. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with seasonal wetlands and unnamed seasonal water courses tributary to Forsythe Creek, within the Forsythe Creek Hydrologic Sub-Area, Upper Russian River Hydrologic Area No. 114.33. The Project is located at approximately 16410 Highway 101, Willits, Mendocino County, at latitude 39.337114°N, and longitude 123.310697°W. Temporary impact to bed and bank of creeks is approximately 63 linear feet, and permanent impact to approximately 1,322 linear feet. Impact to wetlands is approximately 0.007 acres temporary impact, and 0.0524 acres of permanent impact.

The primary purpose of the project is to expand the capacity of the existing quarry and construct a processing plant adjacent to the quarry. The quarry will expand from 11.5 acres to 30.6 acres. The proposed mining area is estimated to contain approximately 6,000,000 cubic yards of minable rock and that it would take about 30 years to remove this amount of material at 200,000 cubic yards per year. The proposed project includes a processing plant near the existing quarry, reconstruction of a haul road and construction of an interconnecting haul road, and improvements to Highway 101. Improvements to Highway 101 are being mandated by Caltrans as mitigation for the expansion of the quarry, which will address safety concerns about entering and exiting the quarry site, which is only accessible from Highway 101. These improvements must conform to the existing alignment. The improvements to the highway will affect existing drainage channels along the highway and along the current haul/entrance road to the quarry.

Mitigation for the effects of the project on waters of the state, including the impacts on linear watercourse features and seasonal wetlands, consists of three types of mitigation:

- 1) Reconstruction of drainage channels to replace impacted constructed channels,
- 2) Seasonal wetland mitigation site, to replace impacted seasonal wetlands, and
- 3) Forsythe Creek mitigation site, to increase overall mitigation.

The design of the proposed mitigation for each of these categories is based on replacing the apparent function of these features, and the additional Forsythe Creek mitigation to add to the mitigation package. The restoration of a portion of Forsythe Creek (approximately 0.76 acres/350 feet long) will provide additional off-site mitigation of the waters of the state affected by the project. This mitigation area will include stabilization and enhancement of the geometry of the stream channel, enhancement of wetland areas, and revegetation of the area with native riparian plant species. Total mitigation ratios are 2.12:1 (mitigation to impact) by area for seasonal wetlands, and 2.91:1 for impacts to linear watercourse features.

The project also includes post-construction stormwater treatment features to remove contaminants and sediment from storm water, and to infiltrate storm water at the project site. Features include vegetated buffer strips, vegetated/grass lined swales, and a bio-infiltration basin.

The project is planned for summer-fall 2013. Work is planned to last twelve (12) months.

The Applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers for a Clean Water Act, section 404 permit. The Applicant has also applied to California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a Streambed Alteration Agreement.

Mendocino County, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has produced a Revised Environmental Impact Report and filed the Notice of Determination with the State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2006112087) on April 13, 2012, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

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 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 Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 within 21 days of the posting of this notice.