

October 3, 2013

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

Trinity County DOT – East Connector Roadway Project
WDID No. 1A13090WNTR

Trinity County

On July 15, 2013, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the Trinity County Department of Transportation (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, water quality certification for proposed activities associated with construction of the East Connector Roadway in Weaverville. This proposed new two-lane roadway will provide a minor arterial route along the east side of Weaverville between Highway 3 and Highway 299. The proposed project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with wetlands, East Weaver Creek, and Lance Gulch in the Weaver Creek Hydrologic Subarea No. 106.32.

The primary purpose of the proposed new roadway is congestion relief. Weaverville's traffic issues are associated with the large volumes of traffic using Highway 299 and Highway 3. The current street pattern of predominantly dead-end streets requires most local trips to travel on the state highways, thereby increasing turning movements and congestion on the highways. The large volume of traffic on the highways results in increased delays for local traffic attempting to enter the highways from side streets. The lack of alternate routes to the highways creates congestion and can inhibit emergency response efforts.

The proposed project involves construction of approximately 1.25 miles of new two-lane arterial roadway with 12-foot wide lanes and 6 to 8-foot wide shoulders that will include bike lanes. The new roadway will connect Highway 299 in southeast Weaverville to Highway 3 in northern Weaverville. The new road will cross East Weaver Creek, a perennial tributary to Weaver Creek, on a new bridge. The new bridge will have three spans with two piers in the stream channel. The piers will be cast-in-place concrete on spread footings. Rock slope protection will be installed around the bridge abutments for scour protection. Temporary falsework for bridge construction will be installed outside the low flow channel. Bridge construction activities will result in temporary impacts to waters of the United States; however, all permanent piers and abutments will be located above the elevation of ordinary high water.

A temporary stream crossing over East Weaver Creek may be installed during bridge construction activities. The temporary crossing will consist of a flat railcar or similar bridge placed on temporary approaches located outside the active stream channel. Bridge construction activities will be conducted during the dry season. Temporary falsework and temporary crossing structures will be installed after June 15 and will be removed by October 15.

The proposed new roadway will cross Lance Gulch, an ephemeral tributary to Weaver Creek, at two locations. Lance Gulch is not a fish bearing stream within the project area due to the numerous barriers downstream. Box culverts sized to accommodate a 100-year storm event will be installed at both Lance Gulch crossing locations. The box culverts will

be cast-in-place or pre-cast concrete with concrete bottoms. Temporary diversion of Lance Gulch may be necessary during culvert construction. A coffer dam may be installed upstream of the project area and flexible pipe will be used to temporarily convey stream flows around the active work area.

On March 4, 2003, the Trinity County Planning Department certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR SCH No. 2001032073) for the project in order to comply with CEQA. The Regional Water Board has considered the environmental document. The project may have the following potentially significant effects on the environment: increased erosion until final landscaping is established; increased impervious surface area and associated increase in runoff and pollutants; filling or disturbance of wetlands; removal of riparian vegetation; introduction of noxious weed species; and, impacts to aquatic species from construction activities in or near streams.

Mitigation measures identified in the EIR as necessary to reduce or eliminate significant effects on the environment include: implementation of a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and Best Management Practices (BMPs) to avoid or minimize mobilization of sediment and other pollutants; restoration of temporary impacts to pre-construction conditions; installation of post-construction storm water treatment measures to reduce pollution and runoff intensification; and, compensatory mitigation for impacts to waters of the United States. Mitigation measures identified in the EIR will be incorporated as conditions of approval in any water quality certification Order issued for the project.

Compensatory mitigation is required for the proposed impacts to waters of the United States. Proposed compensatory mitigation includes: in-kind establishment of 0.491 acre of seasonal wetlands onsite within four wetland complexes; restoration of all temporary impact areas, riparian enhancement activities along East Weaver Creek and Lance Gulch; and, creation of a meander bend within an existing artificially channelized section of Lance Gulch. Two new 24-inch diameter plastic culverts will also be installed to convey overflow from the constructed wetland mitigation complexes under the new roadway. These culverts will be installed while the channels are dry. Noncompensatory mitigation will include the use of BMPs for sediment and erosion control, and for operation of heavy equipment in wetlands and stream channels.

The proposed project will result in permanent impacts to 4,182 square feet of seasonal wetlands. The proposed project will also permanently impact 15,136 square feet and 2,316 linear feet of streambed, and temporarily impact 4,252 square feet and 122 linear feet of streambed. The applicant has applied for authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (File No. 2002-268720N) to perform this project under Nationwide Permit No. 14 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.

The Trinity River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for sediment was established in 2001 by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in accordance with section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, because the State of California determined that the water quality standards for the Trinity River are exceeded due to excessive sediment. Roads and bank erosion are identified as sources contributing to the sediment impairment. The primary adverse impacts associated with excessive sediment in the Trinity River pertain to

cold freshwater habitat, primarily anadromous salmonid habitat. Proposed activities include implementation of BMPs for sediment and erosion control, and implementation of wetland and riparian mitigation measures as described above. Accordingly, the project is consistent with, and implements portions of the Trinity 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, 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.

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