

September 12, 2014

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

Austin Creek Gravel Extraction and Salmonid Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Project
WDID 1B12006WNSO

Sonoma County

On August 21, 2014, the North Coast Regional water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Wendel Trape, Diamond "T" Natural Resources, LLC (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated with the Austin Creek Gravel Extraction and Salmonid Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Project (project). The proposed project would cause disturbances to waters of the United States and the state associated with Austin Creek, tributary to the Lower Russian River (114.11). The project is located at 600 Austin Creek Road in Cazadero, at latitude 38.474861°N and longitude 123.048969°W. Temporary impacts to waters of the United States and state would be approximately 1.22 acres or 3,060 linear feet with up to 10,000 cubic yards of gravel removed.

The purpose of the project is aggregate extraction and improvement of salmonid habitat. The project would involve mining gravel bars 1, 2, 3, and 5, using the horseshoe skimming method. The skimming is designed to minimize changes to the gravel bar form that affect channel forming flows. The upstream end and outer edge of the gravel bar will not be disturbed, which will allow the bar to grow with future recruitment of gravel.

The project is designed to mitigate the gravel extraction by increasing pool depth and complexity through utilization of the horseshoe skimming method. The project also includes visual monitoring of changes to geomorphology and habitat structure by resource agencies. The project will employ best management practices to prevent or reduce any discharges during and after construction. Activities would occur in the fall of 2014. This project is for a one-time implementation of the gravel skimming operation. The applicant will apply for a new, longer term permit for subsequent years after this year.

The applicant has applied for Clean Water Act Section 404 authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The applicant has received a Lake and Streambed Authorization Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (1600-2009-0143-R3).

The Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management District, acting as lead agency under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), approved a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project on September 16, 2004 (SCH 2004082120).

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. Information about the project was originally posted to the Regional Water Board web site on September 4, 2014. Staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail by 5:00 p.m. on September 26, 2014. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Kaete King at (707) 576-2848 or Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653.

The project is scheduled to start as soon as possible to allow construction of fish habitat alcoves in compliance with the timelines in required permits from other agencies. Under Title 23, California Code of Regulations, Section 3858(a): "The executive director or the executive officer with whom an application for certification is filed shall provide public notice of an application at least twenty-one (21) days before taking certification action on the application, unless the public notice requirement has been adequately satisfied by the applicant or federal agency. If the applicant or federal agency provides public notice, it shall be in a manner and to an extent fully equivalent to that normally provided by the certifying agency. If an emergency requires that certification be issued in less than 21 days, public notice shall be provided as much in advance of issuance as possible, but no later than simultaneously with issuance of certification." Due to the beneficial nature of the alcove construction and the uncontrollable timing constraints this year, 401 Water Quality Certification will be issued during the 21-day public comment period. If you have any questions, please contact staff member Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653 or Kaete King at (707) 576-2848 by September 26, 2014. This public notice was originally posted on September 4, 2014, and has been updated to reflect current conditions, as detailed in this paragraph.