

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

**California Department of Transportation
State Route 299 Cedar Gap Curve Improvement Project
40.9073061, -123.7541531
WDID No. 1B15007WNHU, ECM PIN CW-812893
Caltrans EA No. 01-0A320**

Humboldt County

On February 6, 2015, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) for activities related to the proposed State Route 299 Cedar Gap Curve Improvement Project (Project). The proposed Project would cause impacts to jurisdictional tributaries of the Lower Trinity River (Basin Plan Hydrologic Planning Sub-Area 106.12, Willow Creek).

The Project location is in Humboldt County between post-miles 30.0 and 30.8 on State Route 299. The purpose of the Project is to reduce the number and severity of vehicular collisions by improving curve radii, adding 8-foot shoulders, installing sinusoidal (rumble) strips, installing an open-graded asphalt roadway surface, and improving superelevation transitions.

Because Willow Creek runs alongside the eastbound lane, Caltrans must cut into the existing hillside along the westbound lane. Caltrans estimates that approximately 30,000 cubic yards of rock material will need to be hauled off-site. Project implementation would require 2.6 acres of trees be cleared and grubbed.

The Project is expected to be completed over two construction seasons in 2015 and 2016. The first construction season would last approximately 45 days and include removal of trees, earth moving, and controlled blasting, as needed. Activities during the second construction season would include excavation and construction of the new roadway, drainage modifications, landscaping, and placement of a biofiltration swale to treat storm water runoff from the roadway.

Currently, a hillslope wetland drains into a roadside drainage inlet through a channel that would be impacted by the hillslope excavation. As such, Caltrans has determined that the proposed Project would result in approximately 82 linear feet (0.002 acres) of permanent impacts to jurisdictional waters.

The Willow Creek watershed is within the Lower Trinity River hydrologic area. The Lower Trinity River watershed is included on the Clean Water Act section 303(d) list as impaired

for sediment and temperature. The TMDL identifies Caltrans facilities as a contributor to sediment in the watershed and recommends implementation of erosion control measures set forth in the Caltrans statewide National Pollutant and Discharge Elimination System storm water permit and implementation of routine maintenance measures to minimize sediment delivery. Caltrans would be required to obtain coverage under the statewide construction general permit to control sediment delivery during construction. The Project certification would include a requirement to install a biofiltration swale to capture roadway pollutants after construction is completed.

Caltrans would utilize appropriate erosion control, sediment control, and site management Best Management Practices to control pollutants during construction.

Project implementation would result in approximately 0.60 acres of new and 0.2 acres of reworked impervious surface area. To control roadway pollutants, post-construction, Caltrans would install a biofiltration swale with eighteen inches of engineered soil media to treat no less than 0.68 acres of impervious area.

Caltrans has applied for coverage under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit No. 14, pursuant to CWA, section 404. Caltrans has also submitted a section 1600 Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Regional Water Board, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that the Project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, (section 15302, *Replacement or Reconstruction*), and would file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse concurrent with issuance of the certification, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

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 phone calls and comments submitted in writing and received within a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this notice and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Brendan Thompson at (707) 576-2699 or Brendan.Thompson@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of Caltrans's proposed activities. The Regional Water Board's Project file includes the application for certification and additional details of the proposed Project, including maps and design drawings. Project documents and any comments received are on file and may be reviewed or copied at the Regional Water Board office, 5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A, Santa Rosa, California. Appointments are recommended for document review. Appointments can be made by calling (707) 576-2220.