August 6, 2015

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

California Department of Transportation
State Route 101 Cedar Creek Arch Culvert Repair Project
39.8467, -123.702[1]
WDID No. 1B15082WNME, ECM PIN CW-816328
Caltrans EA No. 01-0C370, EFIS No. 01-1200-0283

Mendocino County

On July 2, 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 101 Cedar Creek Arch Culvert Repair Project (Project).

The purpose of the Project is to preserve the integrity of the culvert bottom and to remove fish passage barriers through the length of the culvert.

Cedar Creek crosses beneath State Route 101 at approximately post-mile 89 through an approximately 21-foot high by 22.8-foot wide, 763-foot long single barrel, cast-in-place reinforced concrete arch culvert. The reinforced concrete culvert bottom has deteriorated and exposed the structural rebar. The outlet of the culvert includes a Denil fish ladder and reinforced concrete apron that drops approximately 10 feet above the natural stream below.

The culvert includes 24 reinforced concrete weirs that will be replaced with v-shaped vortex weirs to improve fish passage. At the culvert outlet, the existing concrete rock apron and Denil fish ladder will be removed and replaced with a concrete fishway to improve fish passage for all life stages. The fishway would be approximately 160 feet-long and 30 feet-wide and would fix the abrupt change in grade at the culvert outlet. 13 vortex grade control weirs would also be constructed downstream of the culvert with 10-foot spacing and an 8-inch drop between weirs. Two rock weirs spaced 25 feet apart with a 1-foot drop would be installed downstream of the vortex weirs to transition to the natural channel.

Caltrans would also construct an approximately 800-foot long, paved access road down to the creek. An unmaintained, overgrown dirt road currently exists in the roadway footprint

[1] WGS84 datum

area, requiring clearing and grading. The lower portion of the access road would be left permanently paved and result in approximately 9,600 square feet of impervious area. Caltrans has proposed to remove at least 9,600 square feet of impervious area elsewhere in the Cedar Creek watershed to compensate for the added impervious area.

Cedar Creek is a perennial stream that supports federally threatened Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) Evolutionary Significant Unit (ESU) coho salmon, federally threatened California Coastal (CC) Chinook Salmon ESU, and federally threatened Northern California (NC) ESU steelhead trout.

Project implementation would require stream diversion to provide work access. Caltrans is proposing to use an approximately 30-inch diameter pipe that would start diverting flows approximately 300 feet upstream of the culvert inlet and discharge approximately 250 feet downstream of the culvert outlet.

The proposed Project would result in approximately 925 linear feet (0.55 acres) of permanent impacts to Cedar Creek as a result of weir replacement and fishway construction. The proposed Project would also result in approximately 1,195 linear feet (0.81 acres) of temporary impacts to Cedar Creek as a result of stream diversion and grading for construction access upstream of the culvert. Compensatory mitigation is not required because the project includes fish passage improvements throughout the entire project area.

The proposed work would not result in the removal of live trees but would require removal of saplings, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation.

The Project is expected to require 220 days of construction. The Project is proposed to begin June 2016, and be completed by October 15, 2017.

Cedar Creek is a tributary of the Eel River. The Eel River is identified as impaired for sediment and temperature under Clean Water Act section 303(d). Erosion is identified as a source contributing to a source contributing to sediment impairment. Caltrans would utilize appropriate erosion control, sediment control, and site management Best Management Practices to control pollutants during construction and the drainage improvements would result in a net reduction in sediment contributions. Project implementation would not result in loss of effective shade along Cedar Creek. Accordingly, this certification would not certify any activities that would contribute to the Eel River sediment or temperature impairment.

Caltrans has applied for coverage under a non-reporting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit No. 27, *Aquatic Habitat Restoration, Establishment, and Enhancement Activities*, pursuant to CWA, section 404. Caltrans has applied for a Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Caltrans has also received a Biological Opinion, Essential Fish Habitat consultation, and

incidental take statement from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) dated May 4, 2015, to address potential adverse effects to SONCC ESU coho salmon, CC ESU Chinook salmon, and NC ESU steelhead trout (SWR-2012-3549).

On May 14, 2015, Caltrans signed a Notice of Determination approving a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project (SCH 2014122007) in order to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act.

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.