August 19, 2015

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

River Boulevard Stream Bank Restoration and Protection Project
WDID 1B15103WNSO

Sonoma County

On August 3, 2015, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Kimberlee Menary, Star Lightner and Ben Riddell, and Leslie Mills Risbrough and Rick Risbrough (applicants), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification (certification) and/or Waste Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects) for activities associated with the River Boulevard Stream Bank Restoration and Protection Project (project). The proposed project would cause disturbances to waters of the United States and the state associated with the Lower Russian River (114.11). The project is located at 20440, 20450, and 20470 River Boulevard in Monte Rio, at latitude 38.470039°N and longitude 123.005772°W. Permanent impacts to waters of the United States and state would be approximately 160 linear feet.

The purpose of the project is to restore ecological functions and bank stabilization measures along approximately 160 linear feet of bank along the north side of the Russian River, across three properties (Parcels 1-3). The river bank in this area has been altered significantly in the past. On the east side of the river, numerous docks, including the applicants', and stream bank protections, have been installed throughout the last sixty years. There are multiple floodwalls, intermittent rip-rap and broken concrete armoring protecting the residential properties through this stretch of the river. The rip-rap extends across multiple parcels upstream and downstream of the project area. The summer water elevation (SWE) is approximately three feet above the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) elevation.

On all 3 parcels, the proposed project design incorporates a combination of repair of the existing rip-rap erosion protection mat below the SWE, with installation of live willow coir lifts (Coir Lifts) above the SWE. The first three live coir lifts will be faced with two foot diameter rip-rap, and sandwiched between layers of horizontal willow branches. These willow branches are expected to grow and shade the bank repair area, reinforce the repair with their roots, and provide softening/roughening of the bank that is designed to absorb river flow energy, rather than deflect it. The 2.0' rip-rap adds the support necessary to sustain the natural river gravels in the top coir lifts until the willow roots can grow. Otherwise, the lifts would slump on installation and could easily fail through a type of liquefaction during the rise and drop of the river during winter storm event. The natural angle of repose for sandy gravels is twenty-seven degrees or fifty-one percent. The project site conditions require the coir lift to be installed at sixty-seven percent, therefore, the need for additional containment will be required in the first three rows until the willow root complex is established. On a previous project, the recruitment of sediment

caused by the projecting willow whips, created calm waters at the boundary interface, and covered the exposed rip-rap after the first year.

All 3 parcels have existing historic summer docks, which will be protected and maintained during the project work. The docks were constructed of steel pipe, which was hand driven into the river bed, with wood beams, girders, and decking. The wood components will be removed, leaving only the steel pipe, during the placement of the rip-rap below the SWE. On completion of the project, the wood components of the existing docks will be reinstalled.

The project incorporates restoration and bioengineering to mitigate for permanent impacts. The project will employ best management practices to prevent or reduce any discharges during and after construction. The project is expected to commence this summer and is expected to last 25 days.

The applicants have applied for Clean Water Act Section 404 authorization from the United States Army Corps of Engineers. The applicants have also applied for a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the United States Army Corps of Engineers.

The North Coast Regional Water Board, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, has determined that the project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption, 15304-Minor Alterations to Land, and will file a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse concurrent with issuance of the 401 Water Quality Certification, 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. 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 Kaete King at (707) 576-2848 or Stephen Bargsten at (707) 576-2653.