

April 12, 2016

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

**California Department of Transportation
State Route 96 Siskiyou 3 Bridges Rail Upgrade Project
41.870220, -122.817166; 41.842496, -123.197284; 41.863501, -123.310559¹
WDID No. 1A15041WNSI, ECM PIN CW-815018
Caltrans EA No. 02-4E650, EFIS No. 02-1200-0012**

Siskiyou County

On January 19, 2016, 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 96 3 Bridges Rail Upgrade Project (Project).

Project Description

The purpose of the proposed project is to bring the bridge rails up to current design standards for three bridges located on State Route 96 (SR 96). The Project locations are located at Thompson Creek, Seiad Creek and Beaver Creek, between the communities of Happy Camp and Gottville in Siskiyou County at post-miles (PM) 52.48, 60.17 and 88.26.

Proposed Project activities include the following:

Thompson Creek Bridge (PM 52.48)

- Widen the foundation system (piers, abutments and retaining walls).
- Place rock slope protection (RSP) to protect foundations, piers and abutments.
- Remove existing bridge railing.
- Widen existing bridge deck by 4-feet and 1-inch on each side to obtain a total bridge width of 36-feet.
- Construct new bridge railing that meets current safety standards.
- Replace guardrail on both sides of the bridge to meet current safety standards.
- Selective vegetation removal along the highway to bring bridge sight distance up to current safety standards.

Seiad Creek Bridge (PM 60.17)

- Widen the foundation (piers, abutments and retaining walls).

¹ WGS84 datum

- Place RSP to protect foundations, piers and abutments.
- Remove existing bridge railing.
- Widen the existing bridge deck by 3-feet and 10-inches on the upstream side and by 7-feet and 1-inch on the downstream side to obtain a total bridge width of 44-feet.
- Construct new bridge railing that meets current safety standards.
- Replace guardrail on both sides of the bridge to meet current safety standards.
- Selective vegetation removal along the highway to bring bridge sight distance up to current safety standards.

Beaver Creek Bridge (PM 88.26)

- Widen the foundation (piers, abutments and retaining walls).
- Place RSP to protect foundations, piers and abutments.
- Remove existing bridge railing.
- Widen the existing bridge deck by 5-feet on both sides to obtain a total bridge width of 36-feet.
- Construct new bridge railing that meets current safety standards.
- Replace guardrail on both sides of the bridge to meet current safety standards.
- Selective vegetation removal along the highway to bring bridge sight distance up to current safety standards.

Impacts

The proposed Project would result in approximately 735 linear feet (0.14 acres) of permanent impacts to the stream banks of Beaver Creek, Thompson Creek, and Seiad Creek as a result of bridge widening and RSP placement. The proposed Project would result in approximately 550 linear feet (0.17 acres) of temporary impacts to the riparian areas and stream bed of Beaver Creek, Thompson Creek, and Seiad Creek as a result of construction access and riparian disturbance.

Proposed Mitigation

Caltrans will mitigate for permanent impacts to stream banks by incorporating willow plantings into the RSP at each bridge abutment. All temporary impacts to riparian areas and stream beds will be revegetated as stated in the Revegetation and Monitoring Plan dated April 2015.

Post-Construction Storm Water Treatment

This project will add a total of 0.162 acres of new impervious surface at the three bridge locations. Caltrans shall install biofiltration strips at each bridge location to treat a total of 0.173 acres of impervious surface.

Construction Timing

The Project is expected to require 300 days of construction. The Project is proposed to begin in the spring of 2017, and be completed in the fall of 2019.

Disturbed Ground Area

Project implementation will result in greater than one acre of disturbed soil area. Caltrans will apply for coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General

Permit for Storm Water Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order No. 2009-0009-DWQ) and prepare a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan detailing best management practices (BMPs) to control pollution from the Project area during construction. All temporarily disturbed areas within the Project area shall be appropriately stabilized and/or replanted with appropriate native vegetation.

Total Maximum Daily Load and Water Impairment

The Klamath River is identified as impaired for sediment and temperature under Clean Water Act Section 303(d). At present, Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) have not been established for this water body. Bank erosion is identified as a source contributing to the sediment impairment. Removal of riparian vegetation is identified as a source contributing to temperature impairment. Activities that would be authorized by the certification would be designed to reduce removal of riparian vegetation and reduce sediment discharges from bank erosion.

Other Agency Permits

Caltrans has applied for coverage under a reporting U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit No. 14, *Linear Transportation Projects*, pursuant to section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Caltrans has applied for a Section 1600 Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and a Biological Opinion and Biological Assessment from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

CEQA Compliance

On August 13, 2015, Caltrans signed a Notice of Determination approving a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2015042057) 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 Brandon Stevens at (707) 576-2377 or Brandon.Stevens@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.