

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Quality
Water Quality Certification Program

**Public Notice
Of Application for Water Quality Certification**

Pursuant to federal law (Title 33, United States Code, Section 1341; Clean Water Act Section 401), applicants for a federal license or permit for activities which may discharge to waters of the United States must seek Water Quality Certification from the state or Indian tribe with jurisdiction. Such Certification is based on a finding that the discharge will meet water quality standards and other applicable requirements. In California, Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Regional Board) issue or deny Certification for discharges within their geographical jurisdiction. The State Water Resources Control Board has this responsibility for projects affecting waters within multiple RWQCB jurisdictions. The following information is provided in satisfaction of the public notice requirements of Section 3858, Title 23, of the California Code of Regulations, which govern the State's Certification Program.

Applicant: Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District

Applicant Contact: Kim Batchelder
Telephone: (707) 565-7360
Email: KBATCHEL@sonoma-county.org

Project Name: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project

Date of Application: 4/3/2009

Affected Regions: Region 1 (North Coast) and Region 2 (San Francisco Bay)

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)
North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project**

On July 3, 2008, the State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) received an application from Kim Batchelder, on behalf of Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District (applicant), requesting Federal Clean Water Act, section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities consisting of a 4.25-mile trail on the north slope of Sonoma Mountain in southeastern Sonoma County, connecting on the east with Jack London State Historic Park (JLSHP) and the Jacobs Ranch on the west, by traversing six properties: Jacobs Ranch, Cooper's Grove, Sonoma Mountain Woodlands, Wilroth, Skiles Ranch, and JLHSP. There are two potential alternative alignments for a segment of the western portion of the trail, one of which would pass through a seventh property owned by Sonoma State University. The project permanently impacts 0.006 acre (264 sq ft) of ephemeral stream channel as a result of nine wet-crossings along the proposed

trail alignment and approximately 52 square feet of seasonal drainage impacts associated with road improvements at Jacobs Ranch.

The trail would include 16 creek crossings of which three would require new bridges, (1) a 42-ft bridge at the South Fork of Matanzas Creek; (2) a 26-ft bridge in the southwestern part of the Wilroth Property; and (3) a 32-ft bridge crossing a small tributary on the northern portion of Cooper's Grove property; and, (4) a six-ft wood bridge to cross a small wetland area at the east end of the trail in Jack London State Historic Park.

The crossings that are not bridged would be located at seasonal streams where the topography of the stream corridor allows a gentle approach and exit into the stream channel. Wet crossings would be constructed of native rock, and would include inlets and energy dissipaters to line the stream channel but not impede flow.

A wooden driveway bridge on the South Fork of Matanzas Creek will be replaced to meet current building codes. The existing bridge and abutments would be removed, and a new longer single span bridge would be constructed on new concrete foundations at each end, to eliminate the constriction of the creek by the existing bridge abutments. The new bridge would consist of a modified railroad flatcar with a wood or concrete deck, and would span approximately 24 to 30 feet.

Existing failing culverts will be replaced with properly sized culverts with gravel bottoms to improve habitat conditions for aquatic organisms and to convey a discharge equal to or in excess of a 100-year flow event.

Compensatory mitigation will consist of three restoration projects designed to reduce erosion and improve the functional performance of streams within the trail corridor. Also, there is a proposed reforestation project to mitigate for the number of trees scheduled to be removed from the trail route during construction. Below is a brief description of those projects.

- 1) Matanzas Creek Gully Head Repair on Jacobs Ranch. An 525 sq. ft. (15'x35') incised headwall and escarpment at the Cooper's Grove property will be regarded to a reasonable angle of repose and armored with cobbles to reduce the impact of water coming from the neighboring property and to alleviate the erosion of the headwall.
- 2) Stream Restoration on Sonoma Mountain Woodland. During the winter of 2005-2006, flood waters carried significant debris down a drainage leading into the south central property line of the Sonoma Mountain Woodlands property. The debris was caught by a barbed wire fence across this property border causing the stream water to back up and erode the area around the jam. In order to restore the natural flow of the stream channel, the debris will be cleared and scattered uphill and a fence line will be

- reinstalled that will not prevent debris from naturally washing down the stream channel. This, in turn, will prevent the trail from being severely eroded at the approach into or departure from the creek crossing.
- 3) Road Decommission on Skiles Ranch. Several road spurs have been identified that will be decommissioned during the construction of this portion of the trail. The restoration of the original topography will allow water to flow naturally across the decommissioned roads.
 - 4) A reforestation project will mitigate at a 2:1 ratio for the number of trees larger than 9 inches DBH scheduled to be removed from the trail route during construction.

At a minimum, the following construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be incorporated into the final project plans in order to reduce and control soil erosion: work in and around waterways will be conducted during the dry season (April 15th to October 15th); installation of construction barrier fencing to preclude equipment entry into sensitive areas; installation of silt fencing or fiber rolls to prevent sediment loss from immediate work area; topsoil salvage and reapplication; and seeding and mulching.

Because the project construction would disturb more than one acre, storm water discharge originating from the project site during construction activities is subject to regulation under the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (US EPA) National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) program. As required by NPDES regulations, the project applicant will apply for coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board General Construction Permit, and subsequently prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP).

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 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 Darren Bradford at (916) 341-5558, or at dbradford@waterboards.ca.gov, or Bill Orme at (916) 341-5464, or at borme@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.

State Water Resources

Control Board Staff Contact:

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Note: No regulatory decision on the application is implied or intended in this public notice.