
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

November 29, 2018

Mr. Chris Brungardt
RTI Solutions, Inc.
268 Bush Street, #77
San Francisco, CA 94104
Chris.brungardt@rticable.com

Dear Mr. Brungardt:

Subject: Notice of Applicability (NOA) for Coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board General 401 Water Quality Certification Order No. SB17002GN for US Army Corps of Engineers 2017 Certified Nationwide Permits.

File: RTI - Eureka Marine Cable Survey Project
WDID No. 1B11152WNHU, CW-851634

On September 17, 2018, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received a 2012 Certified Nationwide Permit Notification Form, Notice of Intent (NOI) to comply with the terms of, and obtain coverage under, the General 401 Water Quality Certification Order No. SB17001GN for 2017 Nationwide Permits (General 401 Order) for RTI's (Applicant) Eureka Marine Cable Survey Project (Project). On September 17, 2018, the NOI was deemed complete. The Project is located within the Humboldt Bay-Frontal Pacific Ocean Hydrologic Area 110.00. The Project survey area boundary can be found as Figure 1 at the end of this document.

Project Purpose and Description:

The primary purpose of the Project is to determine the suitability for the installation of a transpacific fiber optic cable. The survey will determine the sea floor conditions and if those conditions will allow for burial of a potential future cable to a depth of approximately three feet. A future cable, if installed, would be authorized by a separate certification. The Project will occur between April 2019 and December 2022.

The Project activities will be performed by a ship with the necessary surveying equipment to conduct the following:

1. Ocean floor profile: The survey will utilize side scan and multi-beam sonar to determine the topography (or bathymetry) of the ocean floor;
2. Sub-bottom profiling: The survey will utilize the side scan sonar, gravity coring method to determine the density of the top layer of the ocean floor. Gravity coring is the process of releasing and retrieving a steel rod equipped with a coring tip to collect sample materials from the ocean floor. A gravity corer consists of a steel tube, approximately 2.5 inches in diameter, approximately six feet long and weighs approximately 100 pounds. It is equipped with a plastic liner to retain the core sample. The penetrating end of the tube is fitted with a cutter and a concave spring-steel core-catcher to retain the sample when the corer is retracted from the soil and recovered to the ship. The device is released from the ship and allowed to freefall and penetrate the ocean floor. It is then recovered to the survey vessel and the core sample retrieved is analyzed. The frequency of the sub-bottom profiling tests depends on the variability of the ocean floor. Off the shore of Eureka, it is expected that the ocean floor and sub-bottom will be made up of sand and mud, so these tests will be needed infrequently. Sub-bottom profiling is expected to be taken approximately every 5,000 feet for a total of approximately 12 samples. Each sample will disturb approximately nine square inches.; and
3. Grab Samples: Small grab samples (approximately 12 square inches) will be taken to confirm the makeup of the ocean floor. Approximately four samples per cable alignment will be taken for a total of 16 samples.

The total area of ground disturbance for the survey activities is estimated to be approximately 0.0006 acres.

The Applicant has applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for coverage under Nationwide Permit 6.

Concurrent with this certification, the Regional Water Board, as lead California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) agency, filed a Notice of Exemption with the State Clearinghouse for a Categorical Exemption, 15304 Minor Alterations to Land, pursuant to CEQA guidelines.

Receiving Water: Pacific Ocean

Filled Excavated Area: Temporary Area Impacted: 0.0006 acres

Latitude/Longitude: N40° 56' 6.077", W124° 12' 22.928"
N40° 53' 7.389", W124° 9' 28.327"
N40° 45' 52.740", W124° 13' 48.561"
N40° 43' 27.945", W124° 20' 7.064"

Regional Water Board staff has determined that the proposed activities may proceed under the General 401 Order. Please contact Brandon Stevens at (707) 576-2377 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Matthias St. John
Executive Officer

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General 401 Water Quality Certification Order No. SB17001GN for 2017 Nationwide Permits:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/generalorders/nwp_go.pdf

cc: State Water Resources Control Board, Stateboard401@waterboards.ca.gov
Jennifer Siu, EPA Region 9, Siu.Jennifer@epa.gov
Holly Costa, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Holly.N.Costa@usace.army.mil
Brian Bergfalk, Bergfalk Land, LLC, Brian@bergfalkland.com

Figure 1 – Marine Survey Area

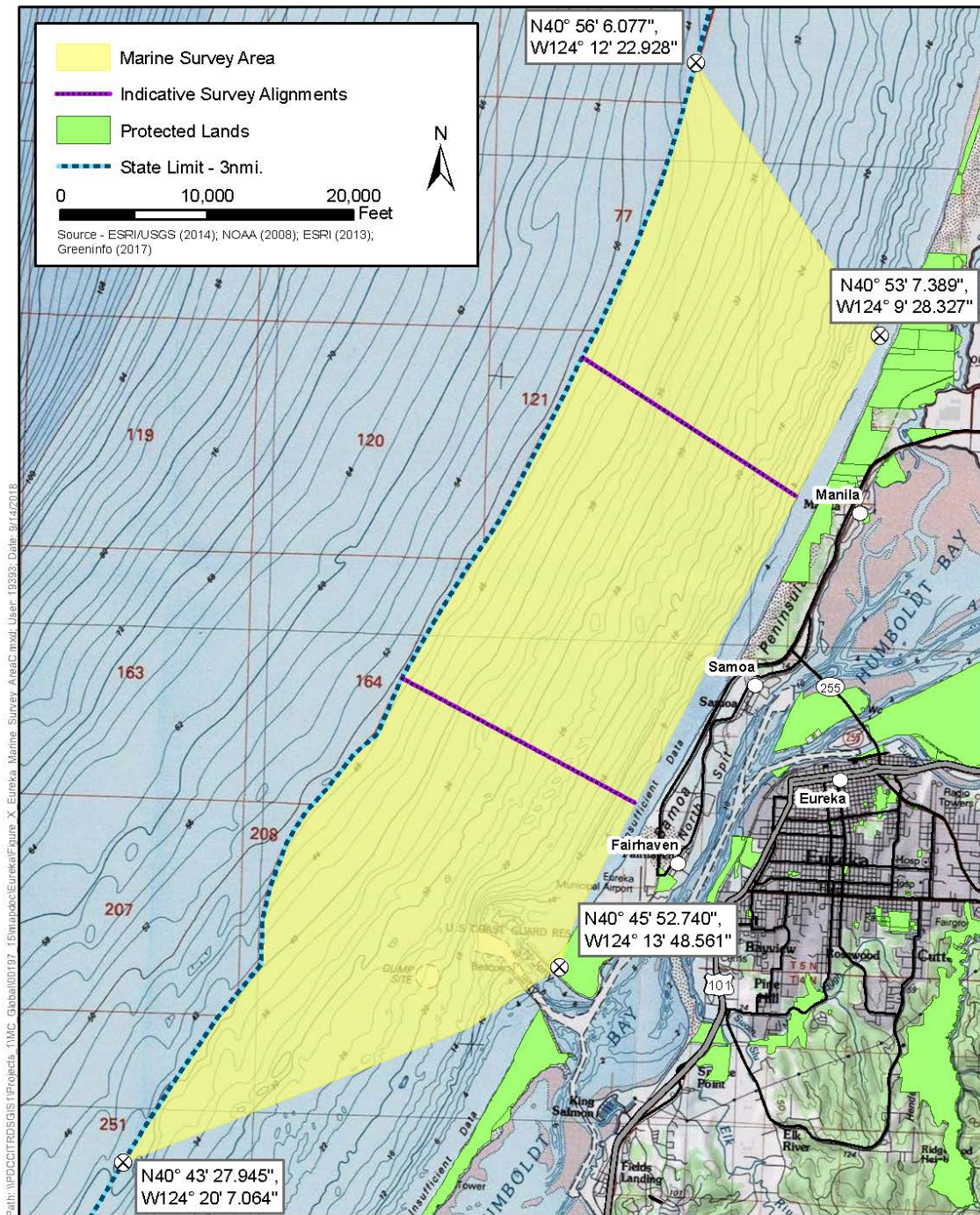


Figure 2
Potential Eureka Marine Survey Area