
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

June 25, 2021

Marisa Parish Hanson
Smith River Alliance
P.O. Box 2129
Crescent City, CA 95531
Marisa@smithriveralliance.org

Dear Marisa Parish Hanson:

Subject: Notice of Applicability (NOA) for Coverage under the State Water Resources Control Board General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects SB12006GN

File: Morrison Creek Tributary Fish Passage Project
WDID No. 1A21085WNDN; CW-873581

This letter is to certify coverage of the Morrison Creek Tributary Fish Passage Project (Project) under the General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects (General 401 Order); Order No. SB12006GN. The overall goal of the Project is to remove an undersized culvert that is a partial barrier to fish passage and replace it with an appropriately sized structure that allow passage at all migration flows.

Background

On April 16, 2021, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received a Notice of Intent (NOI) from Marisa Parish Hanson, Smith River Alliance (Applicant) to comply with the terms of, and obtain coverage under, the General 401 Order. On June 9, 2021, supplemental information was provided and the NOI was deemed complete.

Project Location

The Project is located on a small unnamed tributary that flows into Morrison Creek approximately 4,500 linear feet upstream of the Morrison Creek and Smith River confluence. This stream is fed by multiple smaller tributaries that flow from the steep coastal foothills east of Highway 101. The Project is located downstream of Highway 101 and upstream of S Fred Haight Drive at 41.903218° N, 124.138439° W, within the Lower Smith River Hydrologic Unit 103.11.

Project Description

The Project will replace a three-foot corrugated metal pipe, 20 feet in length and set at an inverse slope of 1.1-percent, with an appropriately sized aluminum box culvert (12' 5"

wide by 7' 4" tall and 22' 5" long). The culvert will be embedded three feet below the design channel bed to provide continuity of the channel without creating a significant constriction of channel width. Channel grading will occur upstream and downstream of the culvert replacement for a total of no more than 100 linear feet of disturbance. The new crossing will result in an increased road surface of approximately two feet that will extend approximately 50 feet beyond the crossing in both directions. A channel spanning log will be removed near the upstream extent of the project to appropriately set the channel grade.

Vegetation disturbance will occur on both banks during construction and result in removal of four mature alders, shrubs, and Eucalyptus. Disturbance will be minimized to the greatest extent possible and mulch and silt fencing will be used post-construction to prevent soil erosion. In addition to installation of the culvert, four large wood pieces with rootwads attached will be installed as bank stabilization and habitat enhancement features upstream and downstream of the new culvert. Concrete rubble located around the current culvert will be removed from the channel. Engineered streambed material will be added to grade the culvert if the substrate on site is not of the appropriate size ratios to match the designs.

Large wood material will be sourced on site from a mature Eucalyptus grove in the project area. In addition to the four used on site, seven additional trees will be removed to be used on a different stream restoration project. Impacts from Eucalyptus removal, in addition to the in-stream activities, will be restricted to no more than 499 feet. Most of the removed Eucalyptus are located on the outer edge of the grove, at least 70 feet from the stream, and will not present a risk of sediment discharge to the stream. As such, the Eucalyptus tree removal is accounted for in the acreage of the project size but not in the linear feet calculations.

Sediment will be removed from the rootwads prior to transport and installation in the stream to prevent discharge to the stream.

Access to the construction site will occur on either side of the stream channel as needed. The site is anticipated to be dry but will be dewatered following the design guidelines outlined in the NOI, if needed.

Project Size

The total Project size is approximately 0.454 acres and 216 linear feet. The Project size does not exceed five acres or 500 linear feet, which is what is allowed for coverage under the General 401 Order and associated California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) categorical exemption (section 15333).

Project Impacts

The Project will result in temporary impacts to approximately 0.45 acres and 200 linear feet and permanent impacts to approximately 0.004 acres and 16 linear feet of water of the state.

Project Associated Discharge

Approximately 52 cubic yards of engineered stream material and rock slope protection and an aluminum box culvert (12' 5" wide by 7' 4" tall and 22' 5" long) will be discharged to waters of the state.

Project Time Frame

Start Date: July 1, 2021

Completion Date: December 31, 2022

Number of Workdays: Approximately 80 days

Seasonal Work Window: July 15 through October 15, with the possibility of modification or extension with Regional Water Board approval.

Agency Permits

The Applicant has applied to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for a Nationwide Permit 27 and to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for a Streambed Alteration Agreement.

Notice of Applicability & Project Determination

Regional Water Board staff has determined that the proposed activities as described in the NOI are categorically exempt from CEQA review and may proceed under the General 401 Order.

Receiving Water: Unnamed stream within Lower Smith River Hydrologic Unit 103.11

Project Size: Approximately 0.454 acres and 216 linear feet

Temporary Impacts: Approximately 0.45 acres and 200 linear feet

Permanent Impacts: Approximately 0.004 acres and 16 linear feet

Latitude/Longitude: 41.903218° N, 124.138439° W

Certification Expiration: **June 24, 2026**

Monitoring and Reporting Schedule

The proposed actions outlined in the Morrison Creek Tributary Fish Passage Project will require pre- and post-project monitoring to evaluate project effectiveness and overall impacts. Monitoring will be conducted from prior to project implementation to after the completion of construction, and through the first winter flow season.

Photo points will be established prior to construction that can easily be revisited post construction. Post-implementation, as-built topographic surveys of certain project elements, such as the culvert, channel gradient, and LW pieces, will be conducted to document that construction followed plans according to design. Construction monitoring will include quantifying and materials that are removed and added to the stream. The area of riparian impacts will be quantified, as well as by plant species removed by quantity and type. The site will be visited early in the winter season to assess and monitor the effectiveness of BMPs aimed at preventing erosion and soil delivery to the active stream channel.

The findings from all monitoring data collected prior to, during, and post-project construction will be summarized in a report the spring after project construction. The report will identify and discuss any problems that occurred that impacted the projects ability to achieve performance standards and what corrective measures, if any, were needed to complete the Project.

A Notice of Completion (NOC) shall be submitted by the applicant no later than 30 days after the Project has been completed. A complete NOC includes at a minimum: photographs with a descriptive title, the date each photograph was taken, the name of the photographic site, the WDID number indicated above, and success criteria for the Project. The NOC shall demonstrate that the Project has been carried out in accordance with the Project description as provided in the applicant's NOI. Please include the Project name and WDID number with all future inquiries and document submittals. Document submittals shall be made electronically to NorthCoast@waterboards.ca.gov.

The State Water Resources Control Board General 401 Water Quality Certification Order for Small Habitat Restoration Projects SB09016GN can be found at: www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/generalorders/shrpcert032713.pdf.

Please call Jake Shannon at (707) 576-2673 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Matthias St. John
Executive Officer

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