

**STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD  
CENTRAL COAST REGION**

**STAFF REPORT FOR REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 7-8, 2005**

Prepared on June 3, 2005

**ITEM: 28**

**SUBJECT: WAIVER OF WASTE DISCHARGE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ST. FRANCIS YOUTH CENTER TIMBER HARVEST, THP NO. 1-01-081 SCR/SCL, SANTA CRUZ COUNTY AND SANTA CLARA COUNTY, BOARD ORDER NO. R3-2005-0103**

**KEY INFORMATION:**

<b>Timber Harvest Type:</b>	<b>Selective Harvest - Timber Harvest Plan</b>
<b>Harvest Area:</b>	<b>104 acres</b>
<b>Water Courses:</b>	<b>Three Class II and one Class III streams</b>
<b>Watershed:</b>	<b>Hughes Creek and Blackhawk Canyon</b>
<b>Forester:</b>	<b>Roy Webster</b>
<b>Landowner:</b>	<b>St. Francis Youth Center</b>
<b>Eligibility Criteria Rank:</b>	<b>Tier II</b>

**SUMMARY**

Staff proposes conditions necessary to allow a waiver of discharge requirements for 104 acres of selective timber harvest adjacent to Hwy 52 and straddling the Santa Cruz/Santa Clara County lines. Conditions include requirements to maintain and repair all erosion-related devices and to monitor (visual and photo documentation) a multitude of sites in the harvest area. These requirements will accomplish water quality and fisheries protection.

**DISCUSSION**

On February 14, 2005, Regional Board staff received a request from Roy Webster, Registered Professional Forester (RPF), for Water Quality regulation of the proposed St. Francis Youth Center Timber Harvest Plan (St. Francis THP). The proposed project involves selective harvest of 104-acres. The St. Francis THP covers approximately 1% percent of the 9,830-acre watershed (Hughes Creek - CalWater

3305.100302). In the last 10 years approximately 13% of the watershed has been selectively harvested. A small area of the plan is located on a ridge top within the Blackhawk canyon watershed, however no watercourses are present in this area. Hughes Creek flows to Salsipuedes Creek then to College Lake and finally the Pajaro River. Only the Hughes Creek watershed was considered for cumulative effects.

Regional Board staff inspected the proposed area of harvest on July 11, 2001. The plan was approved by CDF on November 29, 2001. This was before the Regional Board issued individual waivers for timber harvest activities. On November 12, 2004 Roy Webster requested a one-year extension of the St. Francis THP. No harvest activities have yet taken place. Originally, part of the plan area was zoned as special use (SU). This area was changed to timber production zone (TPZ) in May 2005.

The plan proposes both ground based (53 acres) and helicopter logging (51 acres). The use of helicopters in steep areas minimizes ground

disturbance and the associated roads and skid trails. This plan has no watercourse crossings. There is a 100 foot no-cut zone adjacent to Hwy 152 (Hecker Pass Road) and a 75% canopy retention requirement for Class II Watercourse and Lake Protection Zones (WLPZ).

Regional Board staff evaluated the proposed St. Francis THP using the Eligibility Criteria (Attachment 3). The revised Eligibility Criteria includes factors that address soil erosivity of the timber harvest areas and cumulative impacts from non-timber harvest activities.

The proposed St. Francis THP falls into Tier II of the Eligibility Criteria. Operations will be in a watershed with a medium cumulative effects ratio. The proposed St. Francis THP has a high drainage density index and the proposed activities will result in a "low soil disturbance factor" if winter operations occur.

Water Board staff propose a set of individual conditional waiver requirements (Attachment 1) and a monitoring and reporting program (Attachment 2) for Water Board consideration. The proposed monitoring and reporting program will include implementation and effectiveness monitoring and forensic monitoring (as necessary).

Implementation and effectiveness monitoring will include visual observation of roads, landings, skid trails, water diversions, all watercourse confluences, known landslides, and all mitigation sites in the timber harvest plan area. The discharger will also be required to visually monitor and photograph the crossings on Hecker Pass Road (SR 152) immediately downstream of the helicopter harvest areas to ensure that harvest activities do not cause blockage of these culverts (see map attached to MRP).

The proposed St. Francis THP has no landings within a Class I or II Watercourse or Lake Protection Zone (WLPZ). There are no other areas where Water Board staff feels photo monitoring is appropriate.

The Discharger shall submit reports to the Water Board by November 15 of each year. The Discharger shall submit reports to the Regional Board within forty-eight (48) hours of a significant erosion event, of impact to water quality, or non-

compliance with the conditional waiver requirements.

The proposed St. Francis Timber Harvest Plan and the conditions contained in Order No. R3-2005-0103 will be in the public interest. The conditional waiver requirements can be terminated at any time. This waiver expires on July 8, 2010.

### **CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)**

The above-referenced THP was submitted by Roy Webster, a Registered Professional Forester, and was granted discretionary approval by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF). The Secretary of the Resources Agency has certified that CDF's timber harvest plan regulatory program can function as a substitute for an Environmental Impact Report or a negative declaration. (CEQA Guidelines § 15251.) CDF considered all the potential significant environmental effects of the Plan and made a finding that the timber operations will not have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore the above-referenced THP serves as a substitute negative declaration for the proposed timber harvest. CDF consulted with Regional Board staff when it developed the THP. The Regional Board staff has considered the THP and recommends the THP proponent or their authorized representative (Discharger), as a condition of this waiver, comply with all requirements of the THP.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends adoption of Order No. R3-2005-0103, Individual Conditional Waiver Requirements, and Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2005-0103 for proposed Timber Management Plan (1-01-081 SCR/SCL).

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Proposed Board Order No. R3-2005-0103
2. Proposed Monitoring & Reporting Program R3-2005-0103
3. St. Francis Youth Center Eligibility Criteria Chart and Spreadsheets.

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