



California Regional Water Quality Control Board Los Angeles Region



Linda S. Adams
Agency Secretary

Recipient of the 2001 *Environmental Leadership Award* from Keep California Beautiful

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

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Mr. Larry Rasmussen
21070 Centre Point Parkway
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR PROPOSED SPIRIT HILL SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT (Corps' Project No. 2008-00835-VN), SANTA CLARITA RIVER, CITY OF SANTA CLARITA, LOS ANGELES COUNTY (File No. 08-059)

Dear Mr. Rasmussen:

Board staff has reviewed your request on behalf of Larry Rasmussen (Applicant) for a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification for the above-referenced project. Your application was deemed complete on September 3, 2008.

I hereby issue an order certifying that any discharge from the referenced project will comply with the applicable provisions of sections 301 (Effluent Limitations), 302 (Water Quality Related Effluent Limitations), 303 (Water Quality Standards and Implementation Plans), 306 (National Standards of Performance), and 307 (Toxic and Pretreatment Effluent Standards) of the Clean Water Act, and with other applicable requirements of State law. This discharge is also regulated under State Water Resources Control Board Order No. 2003 - 0017 - DWQ, "General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredge and Fill Discharges that have received State Water Quality Certification" which requires compliance with all conditions of this Water Quality Certification.

The Applicant shall be liable civilly for any violations of this Certification in accordance with the California Water Code. This Certification does not eliminate the Applicant's responsibility to comply with any other applicable laws, requirements and/or permits.

Should you have questions concerning this Certification action, please contact Valerie Carrillo, Lead, Section 401 Program, at (213) 576-6759.

[Original signed by]

November 19, 2008

Tracy J. Egoscue
Executive Officer

Date

California Environmental Protection Agency



Our mission is to preserve and enhance the quality of California's water resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

DISTRIBUTION LIST

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ATTACHMENT A

Project Information
File No. 08-059

1. Applicant: Mr. Larry Rasmussen
21070 Centre Point Parkway
Santa Clarita, CA 91350

Phone: (661) 259-5606 Fax: (661) 259-4065
2. Applicant's Agent: Ms. Jan Heppert
Lockhart & Associates Consultant
27676 Carballo
Mission Viejo, CA 92692

Phone: (949) 233-5348 Fax: (949) 367-0754
3. Project Name: Spirit Hill single-family residence construction
4. Project Location: City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County
- | <u>Longitude</u> | <u>Latitude</u> |
|------------------|------------------|
| 34° 23' 16.44"N | 118° 25' 21.59"W |
| 34° 23' 17.04"N | 118° 25' 38.44"W |
| 34° 23' 04.74"N | 118° 25' 20.99"W |
| 34° 23' 04.94"N | 118° 25' 36.99"W |
5. Type of Project: Construction of single family home with outbuildings
6. Project Purpose: The purpose of the proposed project is to construct a single-family residence on an approximately 40-acre parcel of undeveloped land.

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7. Project Description:

The proposed project consists of developing a single-family residence with four outbuildings within a parcel approximately 40 acres in size. The home site will be centrally located within the 40 acres. The areas where the home and out buildings will be constructed will consist of 10 acres of graded area. Of the 10 acres, 2.8 acres will consist of impermeable surface area upon project completion. The site for the home was chosen in order to minimize impacts to drainages and to obtain the best view within the property boundaries. Approximately 75% of the property site will remain in a natural state and preserved. Development of the 40 acres site was planned by environmental consultants and engineers in order to minimize impacts and reduce overall grading as shown in the report, Jurisdictional Delineation of The Spirit Hill Property, prepared by ECORP Consulting, Inc., March 28, 2008.

A total of 0.258 acres of waters of the U.S., i.e. 7,028 linear feet of ephemeral drainage, have been identified on the project site. Impacts from the project are to 0.052 acres or 2,010 linear feet, due to grading for the home and associated infrastructure, such as the access road.

Impacts to drainages are only at upper reaches of the small, narrow ephemeral drainages. There are five (5) main ephemeral drainages (Drainages A through E) on the property site, which total 0.258 acres of waters of the U.S. The following percentage of each drainage will be preserved:

- Drainage A: 56% preserved
- Drainage B: 40% preserved
- Drainage C: 64% preserved
- Drainage D: 83% preserved
- Drainage E (longest consecutive drainage): 100% preserved

A natural spring on the project site has also been avoided.

Of the 0.258 acres of waters on the proposed project site, 0.052 acres of impact will occur due to construction and development.

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Within the 40-acre property, there is an existing dirt access road. The road to be constructed for the home site will remain in the footprint of the already existing road but will be constructed of asphalt. Locations where the road crosses the ephemeral drainages will remain in the current configurations of a 12" pipe under the road to convey seasonal flows.

The County of Los Angeles has approved the oak tree plan for the proposed home site. 365 Coast Live Oak trees were surveyed within 200 feet of proposed impacts. Of those 365 trees: 211 would not be impacted; 103 trees would be in an encroachment zone; and 51 trees would be removed. The applicant has retained an oak tree specialist to minimize the impacts to the oaks, identify oak trees killed by the 2006 fire, and to devise a mitigation plan for saving and transplanting as many oaks as possible.

The property contains a natural spring near the northwest corner. The mitigation to off-set the impacts of this project call for restoration (enlargement and enhancement) of this spring area. Currently the spring is unvegetated and with some restoration, the spring habitat could be improved. Fires in 2006 severely impacted the vegetation and habitat within the spring area, as well as throughout the entire property. In a time span of many years, the spring would likely recover naturally. However, the silt and ash impacts have slowed down the natural recovery process and vegetation and associated habitat have not shown any success in the past two years. Mitigation plans are currently in process and will include some excavation of the pond area to make it larger and have more sloping sides so that wildlife can more easily access the water source. The area around the pond will be also be vegetated with native riparian associated vegetation to help the spring along in its recovery process. The size of the mitigation area is proposed to be at least 0.18 acres in size. Final mitigation plans will be submitted and approved the Regional Board prior to implementation.

8. Federal Agency/Permit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
NWP No. 29 (Permit No. 2008-00835-VN)
9. Other Required Regulatory Approvals: California Department of Fish and Game
Streambed Alteration Agreement

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10. California Environmental Quality Act Compliance: The County of Los Angeles, Regional Planning Commission, approved the project's Mitigated Negative Declaration, Project number R2007-01655-(5), (SCH No. 2008041135) on June 4, 2008
- The Notice of Determination was finalized on June 23, 2008.
11. Receiving Water: Tributaries to Sand Canyon Wash, tributary to the Santa Clarita River (Hydrologic Unit No. 403.51)
12. Designated Beneficial Uses: MUN*, IND, PROC, AGR, GWR, FRSH, REC-1, REC-2, WARM, WILD, RARE, WET
- *Conditional beneficial use
13. Impacted Waters of the United States: Non-wetland waters (unvegetated streambed): 0.06 permanent acres
14. Dredge Volume: None
15. Related Projects Implemented/to be Implemented by the Applicant: The Applicant has not identified any related projects carried out in the last 5 years or planned for implementation in the next 5 years.
16. Avoidance/Minimization Activities: The Applicant has proposed to implement several Best Management Practices, including, but not limited to, the following:
- The Applicant will avoid any construction or grading activities during rain events or when water is present in any ephemeral drainages.
 - Erosion control BMPs will be implemented during grading in order to provide temporary stabilization and not allow for any sedimentation within drainage courses.

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- All conditions of the CDFG Streambed Agreement will be followed relating to project BMPs for impacts to water quality and associated habitat.
- An Oak Tree Plan has been developed for the entire property (40 acres) to provide restoration and avoid impacts to the maximum extent feasible.

17. Proposed Compensatory Mitigation:

The mitigation to off-set the impacts of this project call for enlargement and enhancement of this spring area within the property. Current conditions are an unvegetated mud and dirt area. Mitigation plans are currently in process and will include some excavation of the pond area to make it larger and have more sloping sides so that wildlife can more easily access the water source. The area around the pond will be vegetated with native riparian associated vegetation. The size of the mitigation area is proposed to be at least 0.18 acres in size. Final mitigation plans will be submitted and approved by the Regional Board.

18. Required Compensatory Mitigation:

The Applicant will be required to provide compensatory mitigation at a ratio of 3:1 for any permanent impacts associated with the proposed project. The impacts to ephemeral drainages are 0.06 acres. Mitigation will be 0.18 acres of creation and enhancement in the area of the on-site spring. A complete Mitigation Plan will be submitted to Regional Water Quality Control Board for approval prior to implementation.

See *Attachment B, Conditions of Certifications, Additional Conditions* for modifications and additions to the above proposed compensatory mitigation.

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Conditions of Certification File No. 08-059

STANDARD CONDITIONS

Pursuant to §3860 of Title 23 of the California Code of Regulations (23 CCR), the following three standard conditions shall apply to this project:

1. This Certification action is subject to modification or revocation upon administrative or judicial review, including review and amendment pursuant to §13330 of the California Water Code and Article 6 (commencing with 23 CCR §3867).
2. This Certification action is not intended and shall not be construed to apply to any activity involving a hydroelectric facility and requiring a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license or an amendment to a FERC license unless the pertinent Certification application was filed pursuant to 23 CCR Subsection 3855(b) and the application specifically identified that a FERC license or amendment to a FERC license for a hydroelectric facility was being sought.
3. Certification is conditioned upon total payment of any fee required pursuant to 23 CCR Chapter 28 and owed by the Applicant.

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS

Pursuant to 23 CCR §3859(a), the Applicant shall comply with the following additional conditions:

1. The Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board copies of any other final permits and agreements required for this project, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (ACOE) Section 404 Permit and the California Department of Fish and Game's (CDFG) Streambed Alteration Agreement. **These documents shall be submitted prior to any discharge to waters of the State.**
2. The Applicant shall adhere to the most stringent conditions indicated with either this certification, the CDFG's Streambed Alteration Agreement, or the ACOE Section 404 Permit.
3. The Applicant shall comply with all water quality objectives, prohibitions, and policies set forth in the *Water Quality Control Plan, Los Angeles Region (1994)*.
4. The Avoidance/Minimization activities proposed by the Applicant as described in Attachment A, No. **16**, are incorporated as additional conditions herein.

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5. The Applicant and all contractors employed by the Applicant shall have copies of this Certification, the approved maintenance plan, and all other regulatory approvals for this project on site at all times and shall be familiar with all conditions set forth.
6. Fueling, lubrication, maintenance, operation, and storage of vehicles and equipment shall not result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. At no time shall the Applicant use any vehicle or equipment which leaks any substance that may impact water quality. Staging and storage areas for vehicles and equipment shall be located outside of waters of the State.
7. All excavation, construction, or maintenance activities shall follow best management practices to minimize impacts to water quality and beneficial uses. Dust control activities shall be conducted in such a manner that will not produce downstream runoff.
8. No construction material, spoils, debris, or any other substances associated with this project that may adversely impact water quality standards, shall be located in a manner which may result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. Designated spoil and waste areas shall be visually marked prior to any excavation and/or construction activity, and storage of the materials shall be confined to these areas.
9. All waste and/or dredged material removed shall be relocated to a legal point of disposal if applicable. A legal point of disposal is defined as one for which Waste Discharge Requirements have been established by a California Regional Water Quality Control Board, and is in full compliance therewith. Please contact Rodney Nelson, Land Disposal Unit, at (213) 620-6119 for further information.
10. The Applicant shall implement all necessary control measures to prevent the degradation of water quality from the proposed project in order to maintain compliance with the Basin Plan. The discharge shall meet all effluent limitations and toxic and effluent standards established to comply with the applicable water quality standards and other appropriate requirements, including the provisions of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act. This Certification does not authorize the discharge by the applicant for any other activity than specifically described in the 404 Permit.
11. The discharge shall not: a) degrade surface water communities and populations including vertebrate, invertebrate, and plant species; b) promote the breeding of mosquitoes, gnats, black flies, midges, or other pests; c) alter the color, create visual contrast with the natural appearance, nor cause aesthetically undesirable discoloration of the receiving waters; d) cause formation of sludge deposits; or e) adversely affect any designated beneficial uses.

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12. The Applicant shall allow the Regional Board and its authorized representative entry to the premises, including all mitigation sites, to inspect and undertake any activity to determine compliance with this Certification, or as otherwise authorized by the California Water Code.
13. Application of pesticides must be supervised by a certified applicator and be in conformance with manufacturer's specifications for use. Compounds used must be appropriate to the target species and habitat. All pesticides directed toward aquatic species must be approved by the Regional Board. Pesticide utilization shall be in accordance with State Water Resources Control Board Water Quality Order Nos. 2004-0008-DWQ and 2004-0009-DWQ.
14. The Applicant shall not conduct any construction activities within waters of the State during a rainfall event. The Applicant shall maintain a **five-day (5-day) clear weather forecast** before conducting any operations within waters of the State.
15. If rain is predicted after operations have begun, grading activities must cease immediately and the site must be stabilized to prevent impacts to water quality, and minimize erosion and runoff from the site.
16. The grading, stabilization and re-vegetation will be phased to limit the exposed or working face such that the graded area can be stabilized within 24 hours after the first prediction of rain during the 5-day forecast or within 24 hours after final grading of the phased area.
17. The Applicant shall utilize the services of a qualified biologist with expertise in riparian assessments during all construction activities involving vegetation clearing. The biologist shall be available on site during construction activities to ensure that all protected areas are marked properly and ensure that no vegetation outside the specified areas is removed. The biologist shall have the authority to stop the work, as necessary, if instructions are not followed. The biologist shall be available upon request from this Regional Board for consultation within 24 hours of request of consultation.
18. No activities shall involve wet excavations (i.e., no excavations shall occur below the seasonal high water table). A minimum **5-foot** buffer zone shall be maintained above the existing groundwater level. If construction or groundwater dewatering is proposed or anticipated, the Applicant shall file a **Report of Waste Discharge** to this Regional Board and obtain any necessary NPDES permits/Waste Discharge Requirements prior to discharging waste. Sufficient time should be allowed to obtain any such permits (generally 180 days). If groundwater is encountered without the benefit of appropriate permits, the Applicant shall cease all activities in the areas where groundwater is present, file a Report of Waste Discharge to this Regional Board, and obtain any necessary permits prior to discharging waste.

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19. All project/maintenance activities not included in this Certification, and which may require a permit, must be reported to the Regional Board for appropriate permitting. Bank stabilization and grading, as well as any other ground disturbances, are subject to restoration and revegetation requirements, and may require additional Certification action.
20. All surface waters, including ponded waters, shall be diverted away from areas undergoing grading, construction, excavation, vegetation removal, and/or any other activity which may result in a discharge to the receiving water. If surface water diversions are anticipated, the Applicant shall develop and submit a **Surface Water Diversion Plan** (plan) to this Regional Board. The plan shall include the proposed method and duration of diversion activities, structure configuration, construction materials, equipment, erosion and sediment controls, and a map or drawing indicating the locations of diversion and discharge points. Contingency measures shall be a part of this plan to address various flow discharge rates. The plan shall be submitted prior to any surface water diversions. If surface flows are present, then upstream and downstream monitoring for the following shall be implemented:
 - pH
 - temperature
 - dissolved oxygen
 - turbidity
 - total suspended solids(TSS)
 - Downstream TSS shall be maintained at ambient levels
 - Where natural turbidity is between 0 and 50 Nephelometric Turbidity Units (NTU), increases shall not exceed 20%. Where natural turbidity is greater than 50 NTU, increases shall not exceed 10%.

Analyses must be performed using approved US Environmental Protection Agency methods, where applicable. These constituents shall be monitored for on a daily basis during the first week of diversion and/or dewatering activities, and then on a weekly basis, thereafter, until the in-stream work is complete.

Results of the analyses shall be submitted to this Regional Board by the 15th day of each subsequent sampling month. A map or drawing indicating the locations of sampling points shall be included with each submittal. Diversion activities shall not result in the degradation of beneficial uses or exceedance of water quality objectives of the receiving waters. Any such violations may result in corrective and/or enforcement actions, including increased monitoring and sample collection.

21. The Applicant shall restore **all areas** of TEMPORARY IMPACTS to waters of the United States and all other areas of temporary disturbance which could result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to waters of the State. Restoration shall include grading of disturbed areas to pre-project contours and revegetation with native species. Restored areas shall be monitored and maintained with native species as necessary for five years. The Applicant

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shall implement all necessary Best Management Practices to control erosion and runoff from areas associated with this project.

22. The Applicant shall provide COMPENSATORY MITIGATION to offset the proposed permanent impacts to **0.06 acres** of vegetation within waters of the United States/Federal jurisdictional wetlands by creating or restoring riparian habitat/Federal jurisdictional wetland habitat at a minimum 3:1 area replacement ratio (**0.18 acres**). There is no temporal loss of habitat as a result of implementation of this project. This information shall be submitted to this Regional Board for approval prior to any disturbance within waters of the United States.
23. The Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board **Annual Mitigation Monitoring Reports** (Annual Reports) by **January 1st** of each year for a minimum period of **five (5) years** following this issuance of 401 Certification or until mitigation success has been achieved and documented. The Annual Reports shall describe in detail all of the project/construction activities performed during the previous year and all restoration and mitigation efforts; including percent survival by plant species and percent cover. The Annual Reports shall describe the status of other agreements. At a minimum the Annual Reports shall include the following documentation:
 - (a) Color photo documentation of the pre- and post-project and mitigation site conditions;
 - (b) Geographical Positioning System (GPS) coordinates in decimal-degrees format outlining the boundary of the project and mitigation areas;
 - (c) The overall status of project including a detailed schedule of work;
 - (d) Copies of all permits revised as required in Additional Condition 1;
 - (e) Water quality monitoring results (as required) compiled in an easy to interpret format;
 - (f) A certified Statement of “no net loss” of wetlands associated with this project;
 - (g) Discussion of any monitoring activities and exotic plant control efforts; and
 - (h) A certified Statement from the permittee or his/her representative that all conditions of this Certification have been met.
24. Prior to any subsequent maintenance activities within the project areas, including clearing, maintenance by-hand, and/or the application of pesticides, the Applicant shall submit to this Regional Board a NOTIFICATION of any such activity. Notification shall include: (a) the proposed schedule; (b) a description of the existing condition/capacity; (c) the area of

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proposed temporary impact within waters of the State; (c) a description of any existing aquatic resources (e.g., wetland/riparian vegetation); and (d) any proposed compensatory mitigation. Notifications must be submitted a minimum of **three (3) weeks** prior to commencing work activities.

25. All applications, reports, or information submitted to the Regional Board shall be signed:
- (a) For corporations, by a principal executive officer at least of the level of vice president or his duly authorized representative, if such representative is responsible for the overall operation of the facility from which discharge originates.
 - (b) For a partnership, by a general partner.
 - (c) For a sole proprietorship, by the proprietor.
 - (d) For a municipal, State, or other public facility, by either a principal executive officer, ranking elected official, or other duly authorized employee.

26. Each and any report submitted in accordance with this Certification shall contain the following completed declaration:

“I declare under penalty of law that this document and all attachments were prepared under my direction or supervision in accordance with a system designed to assure that qualified personnel properly gather and evaluate the information submitted. Based on my inquiry of the person or persons who managed the system or those directly responsible for gathering the information, the information submitted is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true, accurate and complete. I am aware that there are significant penalties for submitting false information, including the possibility of fine and imprisonment for knowing violations.

Executed on the _____ day of _____ at _____.

(Signature)
(Title)”

27. All communications regarding this project and submitted to this Regional Board shall identify the Project File Number **08-059**. Submittals shall be sent to the attention of the 401 Certification Unit.
28. Any modifications of the proposed project may require submittal of a new Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification application and appropriate filing fee.

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29. Coverage under this Certification may be transferred to the extent the underlying federal permit may legally be transferred and further provided that the Applicant notifies the Executive Officer at least 30 days before the proposed transfer date, and the notice includes a written agreement between the existing and new Applicants containing a specific date of coverage, responsibility for compliance with this Certification, and liability between them.
30. The Applicant or their agents shall report any noncompliance. Any such information shall be provided verbally to the Executive Officer within 24 hours from the time the Applicant becomes aware of the circumstances. A written submission shall also be provided within five days of the time the Applicant becomes aware of the circumstances. The written submission shall contain a description of the noncompliance and its cause; the period of noncompliance, including exact dates and times, and if the noncompliance has not been corrected; the anticipated time it is expected to continue and steps taken or planned to reduce, eliminate and prevent recurrence of the noncompliance. The Executive Officer, or an authorized representative, may waive the written report on a case-by-case basis if the oral report has been received within 24 hours.
31. *Enforcement:*
 - (a) In the event of any violation or threatened violation of the conditions of this Certification, the violation or threatened violation shall be subject to any remedies, penalties, process or sanctions as provided for under State law. For purposes of section 401(d) of the Clean Water Act, the applicability of any State law authorizing remedies, penalties, process or sanctions for the violation or threatened violation constitutes a limitation necessary to assure compliance with the water quality standards and other pertinent requirements incorporated into this Certification.
 - (b) In response to a suspected violation of any condition of this Certification, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) or Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) may require the holder of any permit or license subject to this Certification to furnish, under penalty of perjury, any technical or monitoring reports the SWRCB deems appropriate, provided that the burden, including costs, of the reports shall be a reasonable relationship to the need for the reports and the benefits to be obtained from the reports.
 - (c) In response to any violation of the conditions of this Certification, the SWRCB or RWQCB may add to or modify the conditions of this Certification as appropriate to ensure compliance.
32. This Certification shall expire five (5) years from date of this Certification. The Applicant shall submit a complete application prior to termination of this Certification if renewal is requested.