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April 13, 2012

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Mr. Allan Steinle
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Albuquerque District, Regulatory Branch
4101 Jefferson Plaza NE
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87109-3434

**Re: Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification
United States Army Corps of Engineers 2012 Nationwide Permits**

Dear Mr. Steinle:

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) has examined both the February 21, 2012 final notice of the Reissuance of Nationwide Permits (NWP) under the Clean Water Act (CWA) §404, issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ("Corps") (*see* 77 FR 10184) and the February 23, 2012 Corps Albuquerque District public notice of the final NWP and NMED's intent to consider certification of those permits under the CWA §401 (Certification). Certification is required by CWA §401 to ensure that the NWP are consistent with state law, comply with the state Water Quality Standards (20.6.4 NMAC), the Water Quality Management Plan/Continuing Planning Process, including Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), and the Antidegradation Policy. Certification is also required to comply with General Condition 25 (Water Quality) and General Condition 27 (Regional and Case-By-Case Conditions) of the NWP.

The following conditions are necessary to assure compliance with the applicable provisions of the Clean Water Act §§301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 and with applicable requirements of State law. Compliance with the terms and conditions of the permit and this certification will provide reasonable assurance that the permitted activities will be conducted in a manner which will not violate applicable water quality standards and the water quality management plan and will be in compliance with the antidegradation policy. The State of New Mexico certifies that the discharge will comply with these provisions and requirements upon inclusion of the following conditions in the permit:

Conditional Section 401 Certification of NWPs:

1. Activities in intermittent and perennial surface waters of the state require notification to the NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau. The notification must include: 1) detailed construction plans (including proposed in-channel excavations and temporary diversions); 2) a description of potential adverse water quality impacts (including turbidity, which is a measurement of the amount of suspended material in water, as well as oil, grease, or hydraulic fluid, and all other potential contaminants); 3) a description of methods to be used to prevent water quality impacts (including detailed Best Management Practices, which must be designed to minimize sediment, oil, grease, and other pollutants from entering the water); 4) any surface water monitoring procedures; and 5) for any unavoidable surface water impacts, conceptual mitigation plans.
2. Fuel, oil, hydraulic fluid, lubricants, and other petrochemicals must not be stored within the 100-year floodplain and must have a secondary containment system capable of containing twice the volume of the product. Appropriate spill clean-up materials such as booms and absorbent pads must be available on-site at all times during construction.
3. All heavy equipment used in the project area must be pressure washed and/or steam cleaned before the start of the project and inspected daily for leaks. A written log of inspections and maintenance must be completed and maintained throughout the project period. Leaking equipment must not be used in or near surface water. Refuel equipment at least 100 feet from surface water.
4. Work in the stream channel should be limited to periods of no flow. Work during low-flow periods must have prior approval by the NMED. Requests for such approval must describe planned methods to minimize turbidity and to avoid spills. Releases from dams must be incorporated into the work schedule to avoid working in high water.
5. Temporary crossings should be restricted to a single location and perpendicular to and at a narrow point of the channel to minimize disturbance. Heavy equipment must be operated from the bank or work platforms and not enter surface water, unless otherwise approved in writing by NMED. Heavy equipment must not be parked within the stream channel. Unless otherwise approved by NMED, directional borehole (horizontal) drilling must be used instead of open-cut trenching for the placement of utility lines or other buried structures crossing the channel. Requests for such approval of deviations must include a description of planned methods to minimize turbidity, to avoid spills, and to salvage any drilling equipment that cannot be withdrawn from beneath the channel.
6. Unless otherwise approved by NMED, flowing water must be temporarily diverted around the work area, but remain within the existing channel to minimize erosion and turbidity and to provide for aquatic life movement. Diversion structures must be non-erodible, such as sand bags, water bladders, concrete barriers, or channel lined with geotextile or plastic sheeting. Dirt cofferdams are not acceptable diversion structures. Requests for such approval of deviations must include descriptions of planned methods to minimize turbidity,

to avoid spills, and to provide a continuous zone of passage for aquatic life through or around the project area in which the water quality meets all applicable criteria including turbidity.

7. All asphalt, concrete, drilling fluids and muds, and other construction materials must be properly handled and contained to prevent releases to surface water. Poured concrete must be fully contained in mortar-tight forms and/or placed behind non-erodible cofferdams to prevent contact with surface or ground water. Appropriate measures must be used to prevent wastewater from concrete batching, vehicle wash-down, or aggregate processing entering the watercourse. Dumping of any waste materials in or near watercourses is prohibited.
8. Protective measures must be used to prevent blast, ripped or excavated soil or rock from entering surface water. Construction excavation dewatering discharges are to be uncontaminated and include all practicable erosion control measures and turbidity control techniques.
9. Work or the use of heavy equipment in wetlands must be avoided or minimized unless the impacts are to be mitigated. Construction activities in wetlands must be scheduled during low water or winter (frozen) conditions. Unless otherwise approved by NMED, wetland crossings must be restricted to a single location and constructed perpendicular to and at a narrow point of the wetland. Requests for such approval of deviations must include descriptions of planned methods to minimize turbidity and avoid spills. Wetland vegetation and excavated material (top soil) must be retained and reused to improve seeding success. Permeable fills should be designed and installed when practicable, and flows to wetlands must not be permanently disrupted. Fill materials must be clean and consist of coarse material with minimal fines. Ditches or culverts in wetlands must have properly designed, installed and maintained siltation or sedimentation structures at the outfall.
10. During repair, demolition, treatments, or cleaning activities of bridges or associated structures (e.g., deck, pier, abutment, and wing walls), materials must be kept out of the channel. Before removing a bridge or related structures, impermeable containment material (e.g., plastic sheet, canvas, tarpaulins or other catchment devices) must be secured under the bridge and on the banks to capture any debris that may fall into the stream channel. Sandblasting operations must include vacuum systems on the bridge and associated structures must be completely bagged to collect all lead paint and concrete debris. Any debris that falls onto the containment area or channel must be properly disposed in accordance with the New Mexico Solid Waste Regulations (20.9.1 NMAC). Applicable Material Safety Data Sheets of water repellants and surface finish treatments must be maintained at the project area.
11. Bridges, culverts and structures at stream crossings must be properly designed, installed and maintained to allow passage of sediment, bedload, and woody debris, and to prevent erosion problems or diversion of the stream from its natural channel. Unless otherwise approved by NMED, projects must not alter the natural stream channel size or shape (width, depth, gradient, direction or meander pattern), streamflow velocity (sediment transport rates), or water flow capacity. Requests for such approval of deviations must include descriptions of

planned methods to minimize turbidity and avoid spills, as well as to stabilize modified hydraulic geometry.

12. Culverts at stream crossings must be designed and installed to prevent upstream headcutting, downstream channel incision, and erosion of the streambanks or the crossing. Culverts should be designed to pass 100-year flow events. Culvert design must allow for the passage of fish and other aquatic organisms. The road grade at culvert stream crossings must prevent the diversion of the stream from its channel in the event of culvert failure due to plugging or the exceedance of capacity. If the flow overtops the road, it must return to its natural channel instead of running down the road into a new channel.
13. Excavated trenches must be backfilled and compacted to match the bulk density and elevation of the adjacent undisturbed soil.
14. Unless otherwise approved by NMED, all areas adjacent to the watercourse that are disturbed because of the project, including temporary access roads, stockpiles and staging areas, must be restored to pre-project elevations. Disturbed areas outside the channel that are not otherwise physically protected from erosion must be reseeded or planted with native vegetation. Stabilization measures including vegetation are required at the earliest practicable date, but by the end of first full growing season following construction. Native woody riparian and/or wetland species must be used in areas that support such vegetation. Measures to prevent damage by beavers, wildlife, or livestock are required until trees are established. Plantings must be monitored and replaced for an overall survival rate of at least 80 percent by the end of the second growing season. Once established, native plants adapted to the site must be able to thrive with no supplemental water or treatment. Requests for approval of deviation from this condition must include descriptions of planned methods to minimize turbidity and avoid spills, as well as final grading plans.
15. A copy of this Certification must be kept at the project site during all phases of construction. All contractors involved in the project must be provided a copy of this certification and made aware of the conditions prior to starting construction.
16. The NMED must be notified at least five days before starting construction to allow time to schedule monitoring or inspections. The NMED must be notified immediately if the project results in an exceedance of applicable Standards.

Denial of Certification of NWP

NMED denies Certification of NWP for any activities in Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW) designated in 20.6.4.9 NMAC, and NWP 16 (Return Water From Upland Contained Disposal Areas). Although state WQS provide for temporary and short-term degradation of water quality in an ONRW under very limited circumstances if approved by the Water Quality Control Commission as specified at 20.6.4.8.A NMAC, the approval process required for these activities does not lend itself for use for projects covered under these NWP. This condition is necessary to ensure that no degradation is allowed in ONRWs by requiring proposed discharges

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of dredged or fill material to be reviewed under the individual permit process. Also, in accordance with General Condition 25 of the Nationwide Permits, a project-specific Certification must be obtained (see 33 CFR 330.4(c)) for discharges authorized under NWP 16 prior to construction. The NMED requires a complete CWA §404 application prior to commencing the water quality certification review in these cases. This certification process will be conducted pursuant to NMAC 20.6.2.2002.

Please contact Neal Schaeffer of my staff at (505)476-3017 should you have any question.

Sincerely,



James P. Bearzi
Chief
Surface Water Quality Bureau

JPB: cns

xc: Tom Nystrom, Wetlands, Region 6, USEPA
Jill Wick, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
401 Certification File 897

