

Notice of Exemption

2019078041

To:

Office of Planning and Research,
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of Los Angeles

From:

State of California Department of Water
Resources
770 Fairmont Ave
Glendale, CA 91203-1035

Project Title: Santa Clara River Stream Gage Installation and Operation Project

Project Applicant: State of California Department of Water Resources

Project Location - Specific: The proposed Santa Clara River stream gaging station is located on a private bridge crossing the Santa Clara River and on nearby uninhabited and bare ground areas upland of the river streambank, at the entrance to the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) property at 8237 Soledad Canyon Rd, Acton, CA 93510. The Santa Clara River is 83 miles long, and its source of water comes from the San Gabriel Mountains. The river runs westward, from north to northwest of Los Angeles, flows into the Oxnard Plain and into the Santa Barbara Channel of the Pacific Ocean. Its tributaries are San Francisquito Creek, Castaic Creek, Piru Creek, and Sespe Creek.

According to the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5' quadrangle, the legal description is Township 4N, Range 13W (34°26'18.84"N 118°16'41.27"W).

Projection Location – City: Acton

Projection Location – County: Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: Under the hydrological data collection objective of the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), the Department of Water Resources (DWR) will deploy a network of stream gages in high and medium priority groundwater basins to reduce data gaps in the existing stream gage network. The enhanced network would provide essential data to improve water management- including groundwater recharge, and to protect fish and wildlife. The Santa Clara River is in the high priority Santa Clara River Valley East Basin (4-004.07). The project consists of installation of a National Electrical Manufacturer Association (NEMA) Box, which houses the Data Collection Platform (DCP) to store/upload the data, a satellite and GPS antenna, solar panels to power the station and the conduit which links to a radar sensor attached to the side of the private bridge above Santa Clara River. The sensor uses radar technology to detect the depth of flow in the stream.

The data collection equipment will be housed in a 30in. x 30in. x 10in. steel NEMA box on the bank of the channel. The box is mounted on two 2 in. diameter galvanized iron pipes embedded in a hole approximately 8 inches in diameter by 3 feet deep, filled with concrete. A satellite antenna, transmitter and solar panels are attached to the NEMA box. A conduit will run from the NEMA box to the radar sensor mounted to the side of the bridge.

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The installation will take no more than a few days, will be minimally intrusive, and will not result in impacts to habitats and/or wildlife. Powered hand tools are used to drill the holes where the NEMA box will be mounted on, sledgehammers are used to pound the pipes in place, and pre-mixed concrete is poured to secure the NEMA box. Powered hand tools are used to secure the radar sensor onto the side of bridge. After installation, staff will visit the site after storm events to take depth and flow measurements necessary to develop a rating curve. DWR staff will operate and maintain the gaging station, visiting the site for routine maintenance and repairs and to download data manually for verification purposes, up to six times per year. The data collected from the station will be available publicly through the California Data Exchange (CDEC) and the Water Data Library and shared with local agency partners if requested.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: State of California Department of Water Resources

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: State of California Department of Water Resources

Exempt Status: Categorical Exemption. 15306. Information Collection

Reason why project is exempt: DWR has obtained an encroachment permit and permission from MRCA to install the radar sensor onto the bridge. The NEMA box and supporting electrical equipment would be installed on uninhabited and bare ground areas upland of the river streambank. Nearby plants consist of typical wetland/riparian plants like *Baccharis salicifolia* (Mulefat) and *Populus fremontii* (Fremont's Cottonwood) and will not be disturbed. The installation of the stream gage will not significantly disturb the local ecology. No heavy equipment will be utilized, and ground disturbance will be minimal aside from the mounting of the NEMA box. Impacts to plants, wildlife, or cultural resources will be minimal. The presence of *Empidonax traillii extimus* (Southwestern Willow Flycatcher) has been surveyed in the field, but installation of the stream gage data collection equipment and sensor will take place outside of the migratory bird nesting season, February 1 - August 30. *Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni* (Unarmored Threespine Stickleback) has been known to occur in the waters, however, activities will take place outside of the waters in the stream and the radar sensor will not interfere with the fish activity. There will be no removal of vegetation or sediment or any other work in Santa Clara River or any other jurisdictional waters, and therefore no regulatory permits will be required.

A list of special status plant and wildlife species with the potential to occur within the project area has been compiled based on a literature search and California Department of Fish and Wildlife's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Field surveys were conducted to identify potential biological resources within the project vicinity.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Potential to occur
<i>Dodecahema leptoceras</i>	Slender-Horned Spineflower	Endangered	Endangered	Not surveyed in the field.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Status	State Status	Potential to occur
<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni</i>	Unarmored Threespine Stickleback	Endangered	Endangered	Not surveyed in the field. Has been known to occur in the area. The radar sensor would not interfere with animal activity.
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	Endangered	Endangered	Surveyed in the field through identification of their song. The stream gage and supporting data collection equipment operates silently and would not interfere with animal activity.
<i>Euphydryas editha quino</i>	Quino Checkerspot Butterfly	Endangered	None	Not surveyed in the field.
<i>Anaxyrus californicus</i>	Arroyo Toad	Endangered	None	Not surveyed in the field.
<i>Catostomus santaanae</i>	Santa Ana Sucker	Threatened	None	Not surveyed in the field.
<i>Rana draytonii</i>	California Red-Legged Frog	Threatened	None	Not surveyed in the field.
<i>Polioptila californica californica</i>	California Coastal Gnatcatcher	Threatened	None	Not surveyed in the field.

Best Management Practices:

1. No vegetation will be removed as part of the project.
2. No heavy equipment will be used as part of the proposed activities
3. No work will take place within the flowing channel of Santa Clara River.
4. Excavated material will not be removed from Santa Clara River.
5. Construction activities will take place outside of CDFW's migratory bird nesting, February 1 to August 30

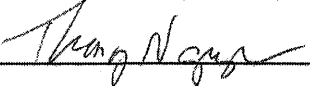
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Lead Agency Contact Person: Albert Lu

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (818) 549-2330

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving this project? Yes No

Signature:  Date: 7/9/2019 Title: CHIEF, SOUTHERN REGION OFFICE

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority Cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

JULY 10 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE