

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044
1400 Tenth Street, Room 2
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Inland Deserts Region
Bishop Field Office
787 N. Main Street, Suite 220
Bishop, CA 93514

Project Title: Mill Creek Vegetation Maintenance

Project Location: The project will be located on California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("CDFW") property east of the community of Rovana, south of Pine Creek Road, and north of Vanadium Ranch Road in northern Inyo County, State of California; the Project is located in Sections 19 and 20, Township 6 South, Range 31 East MDBM, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Rovana quadrangle map.

Project Description: CDFW proposes to perform vegetation maintenance activities on approximately 5,000 linear feet of Mill Creek (also known as the south branch of Pine Creek). Mill Creek is controlled and diverted from the north (main) branch of Pine Creek with a diversion structure and conveys water and associated appropriated water rights downstream to where it is used for irrigated agriculture in Round Valley and eventually joins the Owens River. Maintenance activities will include cutting back woody riparian vegetation, particularly dead branches, which overhangs the stream and may cause blockages and flooding. Debris that has already fallen may be removed as well. The work will be completed using hand tools, chainsaws, and chippers. The purpose of the project is to maintain vegetation along the creek in a way that preserves the wildlife habitat and reduces the likelihood of flooding during the high stream flows that occur during spring snowmelt. During extreme runoff events flooding in Mill Creek may result in damage to public infrastructure such as roads and bridges, cause increased erosion, and impair habitats for fish and wildlife. The work will be conducted on an ongoing basis between October 1 and March 15 to avoid potential for the disturbance of nesting birds. The project will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, remove mature, healthy, scenic trees, or cause significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying out Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial:
 Declared Emergency:
 Emergency Project:
 Categorical Exemption: Section 15301 and 15304

Reasons why Project is exempt:

The project is *Class 1, §15301* (Existing Facilities) Exempt; the Project includes maintenance of a wildlife habitat area and stream channel to protect fish and wildlife resources.

The project is *Class 4, §15304* (Minor Alterations to Land) Exempt; the Project will result in minor alterations to vegetation which will not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Alisa Ellsworth, CDFW, (760) 872-1173

Signature:  **Date:** 1-8-20
Chris Hayes, Environmental Program Manager

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: JAN 09 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE