

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Rm 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
Native Plant Program
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Project Title: *Sidalcea oregana* ssp. *valida* Stewardship and Seed Viability, Propagation, and Bulking Project

Project Location: The Project will take place in Sonoma County at the remaining wild population of Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom at Deerfield Ranch Winery, located at 10200 Sonoma Highway in Kenwood, Sonoma County (38.405949, -122.542783). Seeds will be germinated and grown at the Sonoma Ecology Center nursery located at Sonoma Garden Park (19996 7th Street East, Sonoma, CA 95476) and bulked seeds will be temporarily stored at the nursery, then sent to the University of California Botanical Garden for long-term conservation storage and use for future projects. Any plants germinated and grown will be kept at the nursery.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to Sonoma Ecology Center Permit No. 2081(a)-20-013-RP pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to address the following tasks: (1) stewardship activities to promote the continued viability of the remaining confirmed population of Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom, such as: population monitoring, collecting seeds for conservation and restoration purposes, expanding the fencing around the population, removing thatch, and monitoring groundwater levels; (2) studies to determine the viability of seeds collected in 2001, 2007, and 2019 to understand how long seeds can remain viable in storage; (3) germination trials on approximately ten percent of the seeds collected in 2007 and 2019, followed by growing the plants to maturity for bulk seed collection; and (4) installing groundwater monitoring stations to supplement those previously installed in the Kenwood Marsh near the remnant population and former outplanting sites nearby. These stations will allow monitoring of changes in seasonal groundwater levels to identify what may be needed to sustain Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom.

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

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Minona Heaviland, Environmental Planner, Sonoma Ecology Center

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Section 15306 and 15307, Classes 6 and 7

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities and actions to restore and enhance populations of the California endangered Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom. The Project will facilitate the recovery of the Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom through stewardship and by collecting seeds for long-term conservation storage and propagating plants to bulk up seed stock for future restoration projects. The Project will also increase scientific knowledge of the species by allowing an investigation into successful propagation techniques for the species. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Kenwood Marsh checkerbloom are not negatively impacted by the Project.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Raffica La Rosa

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 206-4502

Signature:  **Date:** 1/13/2021
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Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

Signed by Lead Agency Date Received for filing at OPR: _____