

Notice of Exemption

To:

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

County Clerk
Santa Barbara County

From:

State of California Department of Water
Resources
770 Fairmont Ave, Suite 200
Glendale, CA 91203-1035

Project Title: Installation and Operation of Carpinteria Creek Stream Gage – Calle Ocho Footbridge

Project Applicant: State of California Department of Water Resources (DWR)

Projection Location – City: Carpinteria

Project Location – County: Santa Barbara

Project Location - Specific: The proposed site location is the Carpinteria Creek in the city of Carpinteria about 0.4-miles upstream of the outlet of Carpinteria Creek into the Pacific Ocean. The project location is generally described by latitude and longitude coordinates of 34.392723, -119.514268 and is in the Public Land Survey System T4N R25W, San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian, and is mapped on the United States Geological Survey Carpinteria 7.5' quadrangle. The Project would be constructed and operated on property owned by the City of Carpinteria, which granted permission for this Project.

Carpinteria Creek is an approximately 8.1-mile-long stream in Santa Barbara County originating from its headwaters in the Santa Ynez Mountains. It flows primarily in a southwesterly direction. Carpinteria Creek is perennial for most of its length, but it is intermittent at the proposed location.

The proposed gaging station would be installed on the Calle Ocho pedestrian foot bridge, which crosses over Carpinteria Creek. Initial installation would require technicians to briefly access Carpinteria Creek on foot.

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 proposes to deploy a network of stream gages in high and medium priority groundwater basins to reduce data gaps in the existing stream gage network. The improved network would provide essential data needed to improve water management and to help protect fish and wildlife. The proposed station would monitor water levels in Carpinteria Creek and collect data for analysis of groundwater recharge and flooding in the Carpinteria groundwater basin.

The proposed project consists of installation of a stage sensor, wire weight gage, and monitoring equipment housed in a NEMA stainless steel enclosure - which contains the Data Collection Platform to store the data, radio to transmit the data, and a battery to power the sensor. A GPS antenna sits on top of the NEMA box. A solar panel and Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES) antenna would sit atop the pole supporting the NEMA box. The stage sensor is a radar that emits pulses that are

reflected by the water surface and received by the antenna as echoes. The small wire weight gage would be mounted next to the sensor enclosure on the side of the bridge. Alternatively, the sensor could be mounted underneath the bridge, however the wire weight gage must be on the side of the bridge to be accessible by technicians. The NEMA Box itself would be mounted on two 2" diameter galvanized iron pipes which would be embedded in a hole approximately 8" diameter by 2' deep, filled with concrete during installation. A 1" steel or PVC pipe conduit would connect the NEMA box to the stage sensor.

The installation would take no more than a few days, would be mounted mostly on existing infrastructure of the footbridge, would be minimally intrusive, and would result in minimal impact to habitats, wildlife, aesthetics, and to the waters of the State or the US. Handheld power tools would be used to dig the hole embedding the galvanized iron pipes and mounting the equipment to the footbridge.

Department of Water Resources (DWR) staff would 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 in a year. Additionally, after initial installation, staff would visit the site after storm events to take depth and flow measurements necessary to develop a rating curve. The data collected from the station would be available publicly through the California Data Exchange Center 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 Information Collection, Class 6, 15306, Title 14 CCR

Reason why project is exempt: 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 of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). A Field survey was conducted to identify potential biological resources within the project vicinity and determined a minimal probability of special status species on the proposed Project site. The nearby encompassing area has the potential to serve as optimal habitat for *Vireo bellii pusillus*, *Anaxyrus californicus*, and *Rana draytonii*. During installation of the proposed project, the crew would take caution traversing into the creek to avoid disturbing any toad creatures or habitat. The local biota consists of typical wetland/riparian species of the Santa Barbara coastal region. No existing native vegetation would be removed. The installation of the stream gage would not significantly disturb the local ecology. No large machinery equipment would be utilized, and ground disturbance would be minimal. The proposed construction activities would take place outside of nesting season (February 15 to September 15) to mitigate impact to the local and migratory bird population. The stage sensor and wire gage would be mounted discreetly as to preserve the aesthetics of the Calle Ocho Footbridge. No pedestrian or vehicle traffic restrictions would be necessary for the installation or operation of the proposed project. A dig alert would be called prior to any digging, as there exists a high-pressure gas pipeline near the proposed location. Impacts to biological, water, air, aesthetic and cultural resources would be minimal. There

would be minimal impact to the streambed and streambank in the Carpinteria Creek. Therefore, no environmental regulatory permits would be required.

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: Thang (Vic) Nguyen **Date:** 9/17/2021 **Title:** Manager, 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.