

**Notice of Exemption**

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. 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:** Bakersfield Cactus Panorama Vista Preserve Population Expansion Project (Project)

**Project Location:** The Project is located at the 937-acre Panorama Vista Preserve (PVP) in Kern County at 901 East Roberts Lane, Bakersfield, CA. Bakersfield cactus pads will be collected from California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) element occurrence #66 and from a 2014 outplanting site 0.5 miles north (both within the PVP). The pads will be stored and then propagated at an onsite nursery at (35.14629, -118.99321). Planting will occur within 76 acres immediately north and east of the 2014 outplanting site.

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to River Partners [Permit No. 2081(a)-21-006-RP] pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to expand the Bakersfield cactus population at the PVP through propagation and to monitor the reproductive success of propagated individuals. Project activities include collecting pads from the existing Bakersfield cactus population at the PVP, propagating the pads at an on-site nursery, outplanting the propagated cactus pads in unoccupied habitat in the PVP, and monitoring and documenting the survivorship and reproduction of the outplanted cacti. In early 2022, the Permittee will collect no more than 250 pads (less than 2% of the estimated total number of pads). The cut cactus pads will be stored at the on-site nursery for one to three weeks until the cut ends have callused over to protect the pads from disease. The pads will then be potted in small plastic containers (4 x 4 x 6 in) with a custom cactus soil mixture. The propagated cacti will grow in the nursery for about one year before they are outplanted in winter 2022-2023. A total of approximately 27 experimental plots with nine plants each will be randomly placed throughout the study area. Each month for two growing seasons, data will be collected to document plant vigor and phenology. In the fall of 2023 and 2024, data on plant survivorship, height, and width will be collected. Photographs will also be taken throughout the project to make incidental observations. Plant reproduction will be assessed in the spring each season to document which plants flowered and which plants produced seed.

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

**Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Emily Mullins, Restoration Ecologist, River Partners

**Exempt Status:**

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

**Reasons why project is exempt:** The Project will facilitate the recovery of the California endangered Bakersfield cactus by attempting to establish additional self-sustaining populations of the species within its historic range and is being undertaken as a research project that will consist of experimental management activities and scientific reporting of results. The activities are expected to have a net conservation benefit and are not expected to result in a serious or major disturbance to any environmental resource. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Bakersfield cactus are not impacted, and that reintroduced populations are adequately protected.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Raffica La Rosa

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

**Signature:** 

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*Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager*

**Date:** 12/13/2021

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_