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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: Lost Cannon Ditch Maintenance

Project Location: The project will be located on the Little Antelope Valley Unit of the Slinkard/Little Antelope Wildlife Area and BLM land approximately 1.5 miles west of the community of Walker along Highway 395 in northern Mono County, California. The Project is located in Sections 24 and 25, Township 8 North, Range 22 East and Sections 19, 30 and 31, Township 8 North, Range 23 East MDBM, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Risue Canyon and Coleville quadrangle maps.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife ("CDFW") proposes to perform maintenance activities on up to approximately 2.5 linear miles of the Lost Cannon Ditch, an irrigation ditch which conveys adjudicated water rights from Lost Cannon Creek to irrigated meadows on the Little Antelope Valley Unit of the Slinkard/Little Antelope Wildlife Area. This area burned during the 2020 Slink fire, which has experienced subsequent debris flows during precipitation events impacting the proposed project area. Maintenance activities will include cutting of vegetation (except healthy mature trees), and removal of infilled sediment. Vegetation work will be completed using hand tools, chainsaws, and a brush mower. A backhoe will be used to remove the sediment that was deposited in the ditch. No work will occur in flowing water and any spoils generated will be moved away from the ditch beyond potential high storm flows. Staging areas will be located within previously disturbed areas. Herbicide will be applied to the stumps of woody shrub species after cutting. If work is conducted between March 15th and July 31st bird clearance surveys will be conducted by a qualified staff biologist prior to beginning work. The purpose of the project is to increase the efficiency of this section of irrigation ditch and remove excess materials deposited from the debris flow.

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 man-made ditch that is needed to convey water to a wildlife habitat area to protect plant and wildlife resources. The project will not expand the existing use of the irrigation ditch.

The project is *Class 4, §15304* (Minor Alterations to Land) Exempt*;* the Project will result in minor alterations to federal and state lands managed with emphasis on wildlife habitat enhancement, and resulting in improvement of habitat for plant and wildlife resources on the CDFW Wildlife Area. The project will not involve removal of heathy mature trees.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Aaron Johnson, Aaron.Johnson@Wildlife.ca.gov, (760) 920-7473

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Signature: Aaron Johnson **Date:** 2/7/2022

Aaron Johnson, Senior Environmental Scientist

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