



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
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Attachment to Notice of Exemption

Establishment of Unarmored Threespine Stickleback and Southern Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog at Bluff Lake, California. Restoration Management Permit No. 2081(a)-2022-0001-R6.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), by and through its Inland Deserts Regional Manager, has taken final action to issue the Restoration Management Permit (RMP) for the Establishment of Unarmored Threespine Stickleback and Southern Mountain Yellow-Legged Frog (Covered Species) Project at Bluff Lake (Project) relying on the Class 7 Categorical Exemption under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Project facilitates the release of Covered Species into Bluff Lake and provides for Covered Species management and monitoring by the Permittee, The Wildlands Conservancy. CDFW and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will be primarily responsible for efforts to reestablish Covered Species on the site. Permittee will assist whenever possible and to the extent resources are available in carrying out Covered Species management activities in Bluff Lake including maintenance or improvement of habitat conditions throughout the duration of the RMP. Activities covered by the RMP include restoration, management, operations, maintenance, and monitoring activities designed to benefit the Covered Species and other species. Specific activities conducted by the Permittee include ranger patrols, vegetation and invasive species management, installation of a floating dock to assist with management and monitoring of Covered Species, restoration of Siberia Creek, and related activities adjacent to Bluff Lake. The Project is expected to assist with conservation of the Covered Species and contribute to their recovery; and will provide a net conservation benefit to the Covered Species.

Class 7 Categorical Exemption

The Class 7 Categorical Exemption, in general, applies to actions taken by regulatory agencies for protection of natural resources. A project is exempt from further review under CEQA if it is an action taken by a regulatory agency “to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process includes procedures for protection of the environment.” (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15307.)

CDFW has determined that its issuance of the RMP is an activity that falls within the Class 7 Categorical Exemption. CDFW expects implementation of the activities covered by the RMP to benefit, aid the conservation of, and assist in the recovery of Covered Species. The RMP will facilitate establishment and management of a new protected habitat for Covered Species at Bluff Lake, which will result in increased Covered Species populations that can become a source population for future translocations while authorizing Permittee to carry out necessary management actions at the Bluff Lake Reserve. The RMP includes avoidance and minimization measures and monitoring and reporting requirements for protection of the environment.