

Notice of Exemption

To:

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

County Clerk
Riverside County

From:

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

Project Title: Installation and Operation of Bautista Creek Stream Gage – Blackburn Canyon Site

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

Projection Location – City: Hemet

Project Location – County: Riverside

Project Location - Specific: The proposed site is located approximately 10 miles south- southeast of the City of Hemet along Bautista Road. The project location is generally described by latitude and longitude coordinates of 33.696282, -116.851525, is in the Public Land Survey System T5S R1E S35, San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian, and is mapped on the United States Geological Survey Blackburn Canyon 7.5' quadrangle. The Project would be constructed and operated on property owned by McMillan Farm Management, which granted permission for this Project.

Bautista Creek is an approximately 9.8-mile-long intermittent stream in Riverside County originating from its headwaters in the San Jacinto Mountains. It flows primarily in a northwesterly direction.

The proposed gaging station would be installed adjacent to a culvert on Bautista Canyon Road where it crosses over Bautista Creek. Initial installation and subsequent maintenance would require technicians to briefly access Bautista 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 Bautista Creek and collect data for analysis of groundwater recharge and flooding in the Bautista groundwater basin.

The proposed project consists of installation of a Pillbox enclosure, which contains the Data Collection Platform to store the data, radio to transmit the data, battery to power the unit, desiccant container, and a gas purge compressor that generates a steady pressure of air through the bubbler line that is used to calculate the stage height when surface water is flowing. The bubbler conduit would run parallel to the slope of the streambank, secured in place by 0.5" diameter U-shaped rebar anchors. The conduit would meet the streambed and extend less than one foot across the streambed. Solar panels, a GPS

antenna on top of a pole extending from the Pillbox as well as a Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES) antenna. The PillBox itself will be installed on top of the stream bank in a 3 ft square by 8 inches deep concrete pad using hand tools.

The installation would take no more than two to three days without the use of heavy equipment, 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 for the concrete pad.

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 habitat upon which the proposed project would be installed on is heavily disturbed and generally unsuitable for native flora and fauna. The local biota consists of typical wetland/riparian species of the Riverside region, such as *Encelia farinosa*, *Acmispon glaber*, and *Eriogonum fasciculatum*. 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. No pedestrian or vehicle traffic restrictions would be necessary during the installation or operation of the proposed project. Impacts to biological, water, air, aesthetic and cultural resources would be minimal. There would be minimal impact to the streambed and streambank in Bautista 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 Nguyen Date: 5/9/2022 Title: Regional Manager, Southern R

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.