

**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:** The Origin and Genetic Makeup of a California Rare Plant: Merced Clarkia (*Clarkia lingulata*) (Project)

**Project Location:** Plant material collection of Merced clarkia (*Clarkia lingulata*) for the Project will take place in Mariposa County along the Merced River near the Ferguson Ridge along Highway 140 in the Kinsley and El Portal U.S. Geological Survey quadrangles. The approximate coordinates of the center of the entire search area are 37.66758° North, -119.84005° West. All leaf tissue and half of the seeds collected will be temporarily stored in a refrigerator at the Vargas-Hernandez laboratory at the Department of Biological Sciences at California Polytechnic University, Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt). The other half of the seeds will be temporarily stored at -80 degrees Celsius in the BioCore facility. All germination activities will occur at the Dennis K. Walker Greenhouse. Two germinated voucher specimens will be stored at the Humboldt Vascular Plant Herbarium. Leaf tissue DNA will be extracted at the Vargas-Hernandez laboratory. A maximum concentration of 50 ng/uL of leaf tissue DNA will be exported to Rapid Genomics (747 SW 2nd Avenue, Suite 314, Gainesville, FL 32601) for library preparation and sequencing. Phylogenomic analyses will be performed at the Cal Poly Humboldt Department of Biological Sciences computational facility.

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to Oscar M. Vargas-Hernandez, Permit No. 2081(a)-22-003-RP pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to collect Merced clarkia leaf tissue from between 6 and 24 individuals (approximately 1-2 leaves per individual), and up to 10 seeds from a single plant or from the whole population. The purpose is to identify the species origin of Merced clarkia, evaluate its genetic variability, compare it with two-lobed clarkia (*C. biloba*), and to germinate two voucher specimens from the seeds stored in the Vargas-Hernandez laboratory for the Humboldt Vascular Plant Herbarium. Seeds stored in the BioCore facility will be used for future germination activities to produce a plant specimen for whole genome sequencing.

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

**Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Oscar M. Vargas-Hernandez, Assistant Professor of Botany and Herbarium Director, California Polytechnic University, Humboldt

**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Section 15306, Class 6

**Reasons why project is exempt:** The Project consists of basic data collection and research for a genetic study to identify the species origin of the California endangered Merced clarkia and to evaluate genetic variability of the species for conservation purposes. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Merced clarkia are not impacted.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Mariel Boldis

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 720-1245

**Signature:**   
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**Date:** 6/17/2022

Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

Signed by Lead Agency

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