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Notice of Exemption

To: County Clerk
County of Santa Clara

From: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Project Title: Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area Habitat Enhancements

Project Location: Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area Open Space Preserve

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Same

City: Mountain View **County:** Santa Clara

Project Description

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) proposes the Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area Habitat Enhancements Project (Project) to improve habitat for western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*) and other breeding shorebirds at the Stevens Creek Shoreline Nature Study Area (Preserve). The Project site is located within the City of Mountain View in Santa Clara County and is located west of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ames Research Center, east of Stevens Creek, and south of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. A segment of the San Francisco Bay Trail travels along levees to the north and west of the property.

The 55-acre Preserve is owned and managed by the District. The Preserve's main habitat type is expansive salt panne, which is not a native habitat to the San Francisco Bay Area, but has become a naturalized habitat that benefits nesting shorebirds. The Preserve is not hydrologically connected to Stevens Creek or the San Francisco Bay, and acts as a stormwater retention basin for runoff from the NASA facility during wet months. Approximately half of the site is unvegetated and is nesting habitat for the western snowy plover, which is federally threatened and a California species of special concern.

The District proposes two habitat improvements within the Preserve, which would be conducted on an ongoing basis:

1. Introduce materials on the unvegetated basin substrate, such as oyster shells or gravel, to increase camouflage coverage for western snowy plover. The material would be transported via truck to levees adjacent to the Preserve and would be carried and spread by hand or hand tools.
2. Increase the texture of the unvegetated basin substrate through 'mud stomps'. Manual stomping within the salt panne provides divots and ridges in which plovers build their nests, provides camouflaging texture, and reduces exposure to predators. Stomping activities would be completed by teams of volunteers during the fall or winter

months when the surface is wet.

All work will occur outside of western snowy plover nesting season (March 1 to September 1). All staff and volunteers will receive biological awareness training and worksite supervision from a qualified biologist prior to beginning work and a qualified biological monitor will be present on-site during work to check for special status species. Work will not occur if special status species are detected within the work area.

CEQA Compliance


In accordance with the State CEQA guidelines, the project is categorically exempt from CEQA under the following section. Furthermore, none of the exceptions to the categorical exemptions identified under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 apply to the proposed project.

Section 15304 - Minor Alterations to Land

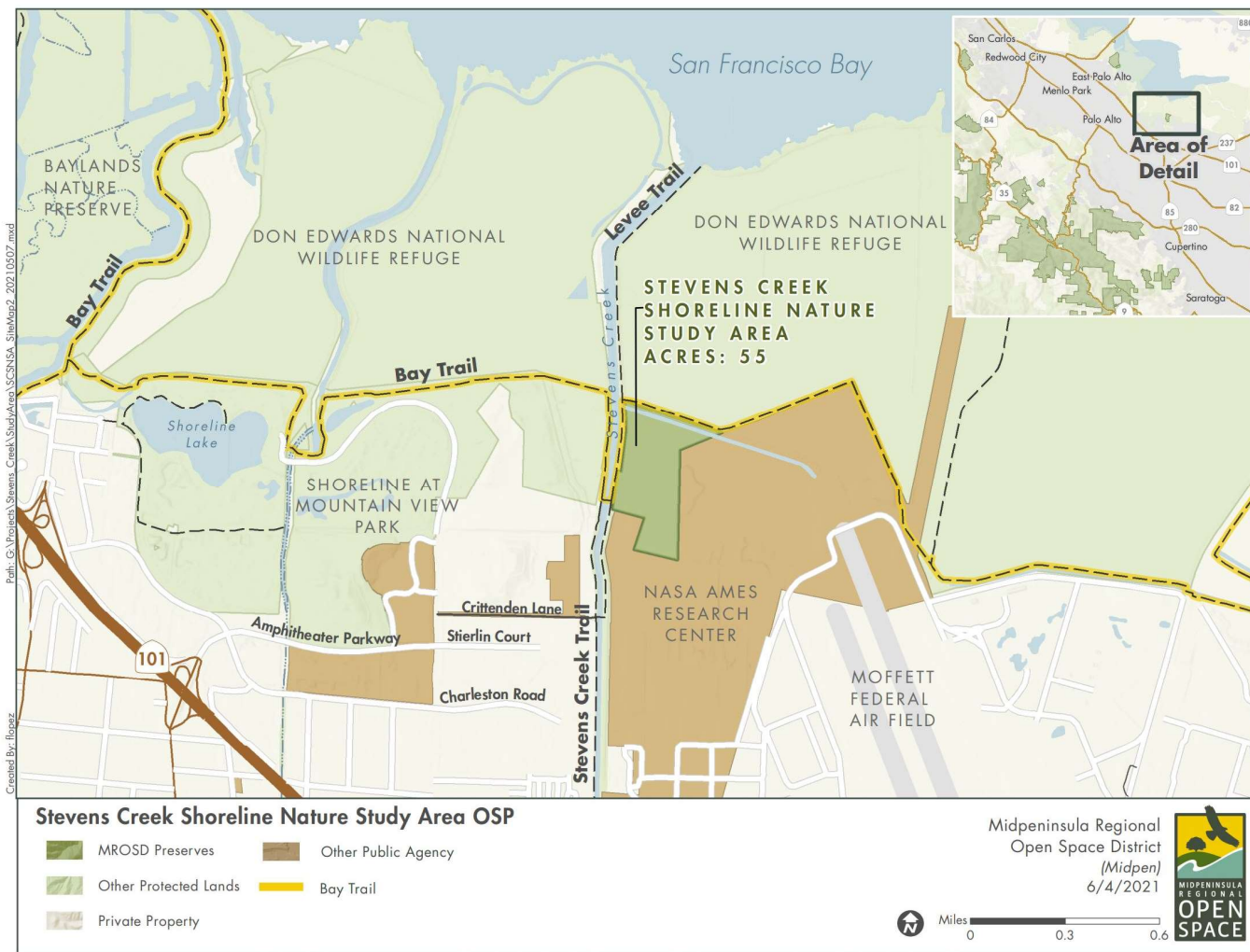
This exemption consists of minor alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Project activities would be limited to the two activities described above to improve habitat for western snowy plover, and is consistent with this exemption.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Mattea Curtis, mcurtis@openspace.org, (650) 772-3647

- Attachments:** Figure 1 – Project Area
Figure 2 – Photo – Oyster Shell Enhancements with Plover Nest
Figure 3 – Photo – Oyster Shell Enhancements

Signature: 
Kirk Lenington, Natural Resources Manager

Date: 09/20/22



While the District strives to use the best available digital data, these data do not represent a legal survey and are merely a graphic illustration of geographic features.

Figure 1 - Project Area



Figure 2 – Photograph – Oyster Shell Enhancements in Similar Project



Figure 3 – Photograph – Oyster Shell Enhancements with Plover Nest