

**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:** Slender-horned Spineflower Germination, Seed Bulking, and Direct Seeding Trial (Project)  
CDFW Permit No. 2081(a)-22-008-RP

**Project Location:** The Slender-horned Spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*) Germination, Seed Bulking, and Direct Seeding Trial (Project) will take place in San Bernardino County in the Upper Santa Ana River Wash (34.09269, -117.15436). Seed germination and storage activities will take place in Los Angeles County at the California Botanic Garden nursery facilities in Claremont, CA (34.11095, -117.71466).

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) permit to San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District (Permit No. 2081(a)-22-008-RP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to conduct slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*) germination, seed bulking, and direct seeding trials. Project activities will refine establishment methodologies and increase available seed resources for reintroduction and recovery efforts consistent with the development of a restoration plan for the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The germination trial will begin in November 2022 at California Botanic Garden nursery facilities using seed collected in spring 2022 from the Upper Santa Ana River Wash under authority of CESA Permit No. 2081(a)-16-024-RP. Approximately five hundred plants are expected to be propagated from the trial and will be transplanted in January 2023 into a seed bulking plot established within the Upper Santa Ana River Wash Plan Preserve. All seeds will be harvested at the end of the growing season in 2023 to provide seed resources for future HCP reintroduction efforts. The Project will also conduct a direct seeding trial in November or December 2022 to examine the effectiveness of hand dispersing and raking-in on slender-horned spineflower establishment within the Upper Santa Ana River Wash. If establishment is successful, monitoring and site maintenance will be incorporated into the Upper Santa Ana River Wash HCP to be conducted over the course of 30 years.

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

**Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Milan Mitrovich, Land Resource Manager, San Bernardino Valley Water Conservation District

**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Sections 15306 and 15307, Classes 6 and 7

**Reasons why project is exempt:** The Project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities, as well as actions to support the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of the endangered slender-horned spineflower. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of slender-horned spineflower are not impacted, and that introduced populations are adequately protected.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Joanne Heraty

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 594-4574

**Signature:**  \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 11/22/2022

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Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_