

Notice of Exemption**Appendix E**

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: South Fork Merced River Trails SNC1413-RT

Project Location – Specific: Sierra National Forest; Bass Lake Ranger District of Mariposa County, within the South Fork of the Merced River Watershed

Project Location - City: Between Yosemite National Park and the local communities of Mariposa, Midpines, Bootjack/Darrah, Ponderosa Basin, Jerseydale/Mariposa Pines, and Fish Camp

Project Location - County: Mariposa County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will provide funding to Mariposa Trails to implement the South Fork Merced River Trails Project (project), which is located within the South Fork of the Merced River Watershed, Mariposa County, entirely on public lands managed by the Sierra National Forest. This project has been designed to provide trail access to local grasslands, woodlands, forests, and rivers. The project elements include: (1) restoration and maintenance of approximately 18 miles (60 acres) of existing nonmotorized recreational trails; (2) installation of wayfinding signs, directional signs, place-name signs, mileage signs, and cultural interpretation signs; and (3) creation of an online and paper trail-user map with locally relevant themes about trail safety and fire. The project is also an opportunity to establish partnerships, protect cultural resources, strengthen the local tourist-based economy, and to benefit disadvantaged communities and other underserved populations. Primary partners include the Sierra National Forest (SNF), the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation, and the Sierra Freepackers.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Mariposa Trails

Exempt Status:

Categorical Exemption. State CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1) – Existing Facilities

Reasons why project is exempt:

The South Fork Merced River Trails Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15301, Class 1, which consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. The minor alterations of existing facilities proposed by the project consist of maintaining existing recreational trail access through trail drainage improvements, the installation of various signs, and creation of a trail-user map with locally relevant themes about trail safety and

fire. SNC has independently reviewed the project and determined that none of the exceptions to the Class 1 categorical exemption apply to the project.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
- 2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes No

Signature:  _____ Date: 12/12/2022 Title: Chief Deputy Executive Officer

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.