
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

Project Title: Butano Creek Backfield Floodplain and Streamflow Enhancement Project

Project Location: The Project is located along Butano Creek at 37°14'13.55" N and 122°22'43.23" W, on an actively farmed property owned by the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST). The project address is: 4350 Cloverdale Road in Pescadero, San Mateo County, California, in the Pigeon Point, California U.S

City and County: Pescadero, San Mateo County

Description of Nature and Purpose of Project:

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District designed this Project to benefit Central California Coast coho salmon, Central California Coast steelhead trout, California red-legged frog, San Francisco garter snake, and other native species as well as implement recommendations from the Pescadero-Butano Sediment TMDL. The Project includes floodplain reconnection, improved channel complexity, and instream low enhancement components, all of which will have direct and indirect benefits to instream and adjacent floodplain and terrestrial habitats. The Project will create 4.2 acres of stage zero floodplain by lowering the current floodplain surface by as much as several feet, allowing the stream to access the lowered floodplain during winter baseflow conditions. The Project will place 15 to 20 habitat structures (roughness elements) within the newly created floodplain surface and adds in-channel habitat features, including one engineered logjam and several post-assisted log structures/living riffles to improve complexity and arrest incision. The Project will also increase dry-season (June-October) flows in Butano Creek by expanding an existing off-channel storage pond from 3.5 to 14 acre-feet, and establishing a forbearance agreement.

Name of Person, Board, Commission or Department Proposing to Carry Out Project:

San Mateo Resource Conservation District
80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Lead Agency Responsible Agency

Contact Person: Christina Kelleher Telephone: 650-712-7765 ext. 127

EXEMPT STATUS:

X Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) Pub. Resources Code, 21080.56

Remarks: See next page.

Date of Determination: 6/20/2022

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to State and Local requirements.

Christina Kelleher

3/30/2023

Christina Kelleher, Conservation Project Manager

REMARKS:

The CDFW Director has concurred with the Lead Agency (San Mateo Resource Conservation District) Determination that the Project meets the qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive (Concurrence).

The proposed Project will conserve, restore, protect, or enhance and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat on which they depend. This project includes floodplain reconnection and flow enhancement component, both of which will have direct and indirect benefits to instream and adjacent floodplain and terrestrial habitats. The following provides a brief description of the project and an explanation for why the project has qualified for the Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (Pub. Resources Code, 21080.56).

Project Description

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District designed this Project to benefit Central California Coast coho salmon, Central California Coast steelhead trout, California red-legged frog, San Francisco garter snake, and other native species as well as implement recommendations from the Pescadero-Butano Sediment TMDL. The Project includes floodplain reconnection and flow enhancement components, both of which will have direct and indirect benefits to instream and adjacent floodplain and terrestrial habitats. First, the Project will create 4.2 acres of stage zero floodplain by lowering the current floodplain surface by as much as several feet, allowing the stream to access the lowered floodplain during winter baseflow conditions. This improved connection will also increase the stream's access to an additional 100 acres of historic floodplain, providing access 2.5 times as frequently as current conditions allow and offering low velocity aquatic habitat for juvenile coho salmon and steelhead. More frequent inundation of Butano Creek's floodplain environment will also enhance adjacent wetlands and is expected to benefit special-status herptiles. The Project will place 15 to 20 habitat structures (roughness elements) within the newly created floodplain surface and adds in-channel habitat features, including one engineered logjam and several post-assisted log structures/living riffles to improve complexity and arrest incision. The Project's second objective is to increase dry-season (June-October) flows in Butano Creek. Restoring flow during this critical window and meeting the farm's existing irrigation needs requires a substantial change in water diversion practices, from the present regime, which relies on dry-season withdrawals, to one requiring wet-season withdrawals only by improving water storage for subsequent dry-season irrigation. With implementation of the Project, dry-season diversions will no longer occur. The Project will facilitate this transition by expanding capacity at an existing off-channel storage pond, from 5.2 to 13 acre-feet, and establishing a forbearance agreement that institutes this new regime. The Project will reduce instantaneous diversion rates by 0.22 cubic feet per second from April to May and 0.51 cubic feet per second from June to October, returning an estimated 2 acre-feet of water to the stream each month and increasing dry-season flows by 124 percent.

Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) Pub. Resources Code, 21080.56

The CDFW Director has concurred with the Lead Agency (San Mateo Resource Conservation District) Determination that the Project meets the qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive (Concurrence).

The Project meets the following conditions: (1) the Project is exclusively to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend; or is exclusively to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife; (2) the Project may have public benefits incidental to the Project's fundamental purpose; (3) the Project will result in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment; and (4) Project construction activities are solely related to habitat restoration. The Project is consistent with and its implementation will further CDFW's mandate as California's trustee agency for fish and wildlife, including the responsibility to hold and manage these resources in trust for all the people of California. CDFW has provided a written concurrence that is available upon request.