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Notice of Exemption

To:
Office of Planning and Research
CEQA Submit

From:
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Watershed Restoration Grants Branch
Street Address:
1010 Riverside Pkwy
West Sacramento, CA 95605

For U.S. Mail:
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Project Title: Upper Truckee River Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project

Project Location (El Dorado County): The Upper Truckee River Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project (Project) is located in the Meiss Inventoried Roadless Area on National Forest Service land, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit (LTBMU), centering on 38.75829, -120.02346. The Project area covers 5 miles of perennial stream in the upper portions of the Upper Truckee River below the confluence of Showers Lake Outlet to a waterfall at 38.78341, -120.02682 and the outlets of Showers Lake and Round Lake. The Project area is approximately 9 miles south of the City of South Lake Tahoe, south of California Highway 89 and north of California Highway 88.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has awarded USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit a grant (Agreement #Q2296030) for the Project. The Project will benefit Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT, *Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi*), a federally threatened fish, by eradicating non-native trout species, such as brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), from five miles of the Upper Truckee River watershed. The Project will accomplish eradication of non-native trout through electrofishing and gillnetting in stream segments temporarily isolated from flow with dewatering and diversion. When complete, the Project will provide enhanced habitat for LCT with a well-connected heterogeneous stream system in which the species may exhibit lacustrine and stream life history phases and produce higher population densities, thereby increasing the probability of long-term persistence of the species.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit

Exempt Status: ☒ Statutory Exemption: Public Resources Code section 21080.56

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project meets all of the eligibility criteria of Section 21080.56: (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 incidental public benefits; (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. On March 17, 2023, pursuant to Section 21080.56, subdivision (e), the Director of CDFW received a request from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Lahontan Region, to concur with the Board's determination as lead agency that the Project meets the qualifying criteria set forth in Section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) through (d), inclusive. On March 30, 2023, the Director of CDFW concurred with that determination.

CDFW Contact Person: Treva Porter, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), (916) 358-2938, Treva.Porter@wildlife.ca.gov

Signature: DocuSigned by: Matt Wells 613C2E6C801C4EB... *Date:* 4/14/2023

Matt Wells, Branch Chief

Date received for filing at OPR: _____