

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
Capitola, CA 95010

County Clerk
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street, Room 210
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Project Title: Seascape Woody Material Removal Project

Project Locations – Specific Seascape Uplands, a 190-ac preserve off San Andreas Road in Aptos, California.

Project Locations – City: Unincorporated **Project Locations - County:** Santa Cruz County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: Seascape Uplands Pond (Pond 1) is a small (0.3-acre), seasonal pond. Castillo Pond (Pond 2) was built in 1999 as mitigation for the Uplands at Seascape residential development. It covers ~0.35 acre and holds water year-round except during extended drought periods. Bonita Pond (Pond 3) was built in 1999 as mitigation for the Uplands at Seascape residential development. Santa Cruz long-toed salamander larvae were first documented in the Seascape pond in 1974. Numbers have fluctuated over time but have generally been in decline over the last few years due to a decrease in solar exposure from surrounding woody vegetation (Phase I) and due to the ponds filling with sediment and detritus (Phase II), reducing pond capacity and deeper water habitat that is beneficial to the species. The project entails cutting select woody material surrounding Ponds 1, 2, and 3 in specified locations to increase solar exposure. No root masses will be removed during project activities.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Resource Conservation District (RCD) of Santa Cruz County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: RCD of Santa Cruz County

Exempt Status: (Check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption (Sec. 15301 Class 1; 15303 Class 3; 15304 Class 4; 15333 Class 33)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number.

Reasons why project is exempt: None of the activities will have a significant effect on sensitive areas or resources. Upon consultation with CDFW and the Service, best management practices, including timing of activities, will be employed to avoid impacts to protected species and activities will not include disturbance to the aquatic habitat, wetlands restoration or disturbance. Activities are less than 5 acres. All of the projects have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and therefore shall be exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

Lead Agency Contact Person: James McKenna, Board President, RCD of Santa Cruz County **Telephone:** 831-464-2950

If filed by applicant:

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: 9/13/23 Title: Board President

Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR:

Signed by Applicant