



## REMARKS:

The Butano Creek Habitat Enhancement at Camp Butano (project) will enhance instream habitat for various aquatic species that are native to the Pescadero-Butano watershed. This project will build on the RCD's efforts to implement creek enhancement projects to improve habitat and support the recovery of endangered Central California Coast (CCC) coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and threatened CCC steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). Additionally, this project will directly address recommendations to improve water quality articulated in the 2019 Pescadero-Butano TMDL.

The following provides a brief description of the project and an explanation for why the project qualifies for exemption from CEQA environmental review Class 33 [CEQA State Guidelines, Sections 15333]. This section of the guidelines describes Small Habitat Restoration Projects that do not exceed 5 acres in size and are constructed for the purpose of maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, and wildlife.

### Project Description

This project will support CCC coho salmon and CCC steelhead recovery by installing large wood and other habitat features to improve habitat conditions for these species and other aquatic wildlife.

The project is located in the Pescadero-Butano watershed, which is a key watershed for the recovery of both coho salmon and steelhead, and lack of instream wood was identified as a major limiting factor for success in NMFS's recovery plans for the species. The project will increase large wood habitat and improve habitat for salmonids; added features will create high- and low-flow refugia, slow flows, sort and store sediment, provide cover in pools, and create new pools. These actions provide the diversity of habitat fish need throughout their lifecycle to thrive.

Up to 13 habitat features will be installed along approximately 2000 feet of Butano Creek at the Camp Butano Creek property impacting approximately 1 acre. On-site wood will be utilized where feasible, with the possibility of importing some wood from nearby sources of already downed trees. Redwood and Douglas-fir trees will be the primary source of large wood, with some other species included such as alder. For some features, installation will be accomplished via direct felling methods as described in Carah et al., 2014, which rely on the use of handheld equipment. For other features, installation will be accomplished through the use of heavy equipment to place and anchor materials. These structures may require creek dewatering to keep wildlife safe from harm during installation.

For all project activities, care will be taken to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive habitat. Implementation is expected to occur over a 3- to 6-week work period between August 2 and October 31 of 2024 or 2025.

### Class 33 (CEQA State Guidelines, Section 15333) Small Habitat Restoration Projects

Class 33 consists of projects not to exceed five acres in size to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife. The following four bullets list the criteria for projects to meet Categorical Exemption 15333 as described in the CEQA Statute and Guidelines.

- (a) There would be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to section 1506.*

The proposed project is designed specifically to benefit threatened and endangered fish. The project would provide higher functioning aquatic and riparian habitat for species that may spawn, nest, forage, or transit the project vicinity.

To the maximum extent possible, temporary and localized impacts to sensitive habitats would be minimized by implementing mitigation measures and construction-related best management practices. Construction will occur during the dry season, minimizing the potential for erosion and any construction-related effects on aquatic species. Additionally, erosion control measures such as fiber rolls will be installed to further reduce the risk of sedimentation resulting from project activities. Disturbed areas will be winterized and re-vegetated as needed following construction.

The project does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment and would not substantially reduce the habitat or threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of any endangered, rare or threatened species; or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory.

*(b) There are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed.*

No hazardous materials are known to the site or project vicinity.

*(c) The project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.*

The proposed project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with effects of past, current, and probable future projects because all such projects comply with requirements of regulatory permits issued for the purpose of protecting natural resources. Overall, the project would provide for higher functioning aquatic and riparian habitat. The project would not adversely affect farmland, public services, geologic stability, soils, or health risk. There are no known or planned overlapping projects in the vicinity that would have environmental impacts to which the proposed project would add cumulatively.

*(d) Examples of small restoration projects may include, but are not limited to:*

*(3) stream or river bank revegetation, the primary purpose of which is to improve habitat for amphibians or native fish*

The project would be exempt under the above-cited classifications as it involves restoration of Butano Creek for the primary purpose of habitat improvement for native fish through the placement of a maximum of 13 variably sized large wood structures and a graded alcove. This wood augmentation has been designed to increase habitat complexity, an essential habitat factor identified in NMFS's recovery plans for CCC coho salmon and CCC steelhead. The project is designed to improve salmonid spawning and rearing habitat, develop high flow refugia, and enhance floodplain connectivity. The project will further improve creek health and ecological function for native species.

- CEQA State Guidelines Section 15300.2 states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. As described above, there are no unusual circumstances

surrounding the proposed project that would suggest a reasonable possibility for a significant environmental effect.

## REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Game. 2009. California Salmonid Stream Habitat Restoration Manual, Part XII. Design and Implementation.

Carah, J., Blencowe, C., Wright, D., Bolton, L. 2014. Low-Cost Restoration Techniques for Rapidly Increasing Wood Cover in Coastal Coho Salmon Streams, North American Journal of Fisheries Management

Seymour, G. 2014. Fish Passage Improvements at Memorial County Park, San Mateo County. MND Project.

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