

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: Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning (SNC 1646).

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 225,000-acre landscape planning project located on Stanislaus National Forest and Eldorado National Forest lands within El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine counties.

Project Location - City: Communities near the planning area include Murphy, Arnold, and Pioneer to the west of the project area and Kirkwood and Cape Horn to the east.

Project Location - County: Portions of El Dorado, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Alpine.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding Project #1646 Forest Projects Plan – Phase Two Environmental Planning, led by the Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority (UMRWA). The project is a landscape-scale planning project to conduct an environmental analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to analyze potential future projects to improve forest and watershed health on Stanislaus National Forest and Eldorado National Forest lands. UMRWA, in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, will generate a landscape level NEPA Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) document considering potential future forest and watershed-health projects on a minimum of 40,000 acres and up to 225,000 acres. While planning activities are already underway separate from SNC involvement, SNC funding would take the project from the public scoping stage to the DEIS. Specific actions include regular coordination and outreach with the two forests, the Technical Advisory Group, Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group members, and the local tribes. UMRWA would also oversee focused field surveys and consultation with the United States Department of Fish and Wildlife, modeling efforts underlying the DEIS analysis, and developing alternatives. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Project Applicant / Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Upper Mokelumne River Watershed Authority
Regine Miller, Project Manager
35 Court St, Suite 3. Jackson, CA 95642
(530) 277-3843

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262, Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306, Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planning activities under this project are resource surveys, data analysis and modeling, and outreach and coordination meetings towards the development of a Draft NEPA Environmental Impact Statement considering potential future forest and watershed-health projects, which have not yet been approved, adopted, or funded. The planning and due diligence activities to be carried out as part of the project involve no ground or resource disturbance. The project is Statutorily Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Governing Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorically Exempt under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

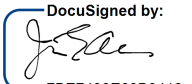
Lead Agency

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:  _____

Title: Chief Deputy Executive Officer _____

Date: 3/7/2024 _____

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.