

## 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:** Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project (SNC 1672).

**Project Location – Specific:** This project is an approximately 16,500-acre, landscape-level planning project located in the Georgetown Ranger District of Eldorado National Forest in Placer County within the Long Canyon Creek watershed, headwaters of the American River watershed. Planning area is just southeast of French Meadows Reservoir, project center approximately at -120.352 and 39.014 degrees.

**Project Location - City:** Planning area western boundary approximately 10 miles east of Foresthill and southwestern boundary approximately 1.5 miles north of Zuver.

**Project Location - County:** Placer

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) is funding the #1672 Long Canyon Watershed Protection Project, which is a landscape-level, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) environmental planning program led by Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) in the headwaters of the Middle Fork American River watershed. The project will conduct environmental compliance analyses for potential future projects to improve forest health and resilience, and reduce the threat of high-severity forest fires. The project is located on the Georgetown District of the Eldorado National Forest, southeast of French Meadows Reservoir, and east of Foresthill and Auburn. This project would complete NEPA/CEQA for potential future forest-restoration work to improve ecological resilience and protect water resources, nearby communities, and infrastructure in the Long Canyon Creek watershed. The project has four focal areas: 1) Long Canyon Creek Project; 2) Star Fire restoration; 3) Mosquito Fire restoration; and 4) Mosquito Fire recovery. The completed NEPA/CEQA would provide environmental compliance for potential future forest health and fuels-reduction treatments on approximately 6,200 acres within a 16,519-acre planning area. Funding from the SNC would provide project management and coordination/facilitation of the project leadership team; NEPA Proposed Action and scoping package; conduct archaeological field surveys and reports, organize references and prepare evaluations and reports (aquatic, wildlife, and botanical evaluations), management indicator species report, migratory bird report, water and soils report); prepare United States Fish and Wildlife Service Biological Assessment and Consultation; prepare the Administrative Draft environmental assessment, and prepare draft CEQA environmental documentation. 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:**

Placer County Water Agency  
Darin Reintjes, Director of Resource Management  
144 Ferguson Road, Auburn, CA 95604  
(530) 823-4891

**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 outreach and coordination meetings towards the development of a Draft NEPA Environmental Assessment and draft CEQA documents considering potential future forest health and resilience 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**

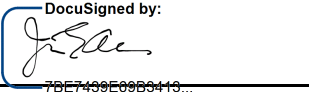
**Contact Person:** Mary Akens

**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.