

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: Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project (SNC 1679).

Project Location – Specific: Approximately 44,000-acre landscape planning project located in Sierra National Forest in Fresno County, east of Pine Flat Lake and west of Wishon Reservoir, in the area of Patterson Mountain. Project center approximately at -19.084 and 36.981 degrees.

Project Location - City: Southern project boundary by the community of Balch Camp, northern boundary approximately seven miles southwest of Shaver Lake.

Project Location - County: Fresno

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will provide funding to the National Forest Foundation (NFF) for the #1679 Bungalow Resilience and Fuels Reduction Planning Project. In partnership with Sierra National Forest (SNF), NFF will draft a proposed action for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis on roughly 44,000 acres of Forest Service land. The project will plan potential future implementation for fuel and vegetation management practices to reduce the risk of wildfire and protect forest resources and neighboring communities. The project is led by the NFF and will occur entirely on SNF lands within Fresno County, near the communities of Shaver Lake and Dinkey Creek, east of Pine Flat Lake and west of Wishon Reservoir. The NFF, partnering with a 3rd-party NEPA consultant, will complete surveys for cultural resources, biology, wildlife, and botany, complete data analyses, and draft a NEPA proposed action for the planning area, enabling the SNF to move forward with additional analysis and NEPA activities towards a potential future NEPA decision and forest health and resilience treatments. The project activities include only the planning, resource surveys, and environmental analysis to develop draft NEPA documents for potential future projects. There will be no ground or resource disturbance as part of this project. None of the planning or analysis activities to be conducted under this proposed project will have a legally binding effect on future activities or are for a possible future project, which an agency has already approved, adopted, or funded.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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

National Forest Foundation
Sarah Vaughan, California Program Manager, Southern Sierra
27 Ft Missoula Rd, #3, Missoula, MT 59804
(530) 919-8745

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 planning and design towards the development of draft NEPA documents 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 Categorical 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.

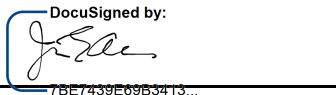
Lead Agency

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.