

This notice was posted on 03/28/2024  
and will remain posted for a period of thirty days  
through 04/28/2024

Deva Marie Proto, County Clerk  
BY: *MJ Vanecko*  
Mary Damon, Deputy Clerk



Doc No.49-03282024-071

## NOTICE OF CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 565-1900 Fax (707) 565-1103

Sonoma County proposes to carry out the following project. Pursuant to Section 23A of the Sonoma County Code, it has been determined that this project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA):

<b>Project Title:</b> Outdoor Cannabis Cultivation; File No. UPC17-0081	To:	County Clerk- Recorder Office	Office of Planning and Research
<b>Public Agency:</b> Sonoma County		County of Sonoma	
<b>Project Applicant:</b> Russian River Farms, Inc., Chris Coogan		585 Fiscal Drive, Room 103 Santa Rosa, CA 95403	P.O. Box 3044, Room 113 Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
<b>Applicant Address:</b> 6855 Covey Road, Forestville, CA 95436			
<b>Project Location:</b> 20077 Sweetwater Springs Road, Guerneville CA 95446			
<b>Date of Approval:</b> March 14, 2024			

### DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF THE PROJECT:

Request for a limited term, conditional Use Permit including 10,000 square feet of outdoor cannabis cultivation, accessory cannabis propagation, and self-distribution of site-grown cannabis on a 25.51-acre parcel. This permit would allow for up to two (2) full-time and up to (2) seasonal employees to serve the cultivation site. The site is currently operating under the County's Penalty Relief Program.

### EXEMPT STATUS:

Categorical Exemption. Section 15301 Existing Facilities and Section 15304 Minor Alterations to Land.

### REASON WHY THIS PROJECT IS EXEMPT:

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the CEQA Guidelines pursuant to the Provisions of Title 14 of the California Administrative Code, Existing Facilities and 15304, Minor Alterations to Land as the project involves continued seasonal outdoor cultivation with negligible expansion (less than 400 square feet) on an area consisting of less than one percent of the project site. The use requires only minor improvements consisting of the installation of security fencing and would not involve the removal of vegetation or construction of new structures.

The proposed project is located on a site designated as a groundwater availability of Class 4, which are areas characterized by low or variable groundwater yield. The project site was reviewed by O'Connor Environmental in a groundwater report dated June 11, 2018, which concluded that the project would not result in impacts to groundwater availability, offsite wells, or streamflow levels in nearby Porter Creek, a USGS designated blue line stream. The project would not result in impacts to groundwater due to the small scale of the operation resulting in an estimated water demand of 1.15 acre-feet per year, which represents approximately 8% of estimated groundwater recharge and 5% of groundwater storage. Impacts to offsite wells is unlikely due to the substantial distance from the nearest well, measured at over 750 feet. Similarly, the project well is located over 1,100 feet from the nearest tributary to Porter Creek, which indicates project activity would be unlikely to cause interaction with surface water and depletion of streamflow.

The proposed project is located in the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and designated as a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by CalFire. Impacts resulting from wildfires are exacerbated by poor access that limits emergency

response, activity that exposes substantial numbers of individuals to heightened fire risk, or additional impacts from installation of additional infrastructure to serve the project. The proposed project is an outdoor cannabis cultivation, which is a commercial operation that is similar to agricultural uses as it involves the seasonal planting and harvesting of plants directly in the ground or in raised containers. The project site is accessed via Sweetwater Springs Rd, which is a County maintained road with varying width and connects to two lane roads (Armstrong Woods Rd to the west and Westside Rd to the east). Further, the project would not exacerbate evacuation in the area as it would include a limited number of employees, with a maximum of two full-time employees and up to two additional seasonal employees to assist during peak harvest season, which is generally a period of about four weeks between the months of late August to early October. As discussed, the project does not propose any structures to serve the operation and existing infrastructure is present on the site including private access driveway and water tanks. Therefore, the project would not generate an increased risk of fire through its operation as an agricultural activity, subject a substantial number of onsite or offsite individuals to exacerbated fire risks by obstructing access for evacuation, or construct additional structures or install additional infrastructure to serve the operation.

The location of the proposed project in a Class 4 groundwater area and High Fire Hazard Severity Zone does not create an unusual circumstance because this type of agricultural activity in these areas is common in the County and the low impact of the activity, even in these areas, will not have a significant effect on the environment for the reasons described above. Given the entirety of the record and substantial evidence provided, no exceptions listed under CEQA Section 15300.2 apply.

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This Notice of Exemption is filed pursuant to the provisions of Section 15062 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:**



Digitally signed by Ken Compton  
DN: cn=Ken Compton, o=PRMD, ou,  
email=ken.compton@sonoma-  
county.org, c=US  
Date: 2024.03.27 13:58:37 -07'00'

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Ken Compton, Project Planner  
Permit and Resource Management Department  
Project Review Division  
(707) 565-2829



State of California - Department of Fish and Wildlife  
**2024 ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEE**  
**CASH RECEIPT**  
 DFW 753.5a (REV. 01/01/24) Previously DFG 753.5a

RECEIPT NUMBER: 49-03282024-071
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE NUMBER <i>(if applicable)</i>

**SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE. TYPE OR PRINT CLEARLY.**

LEAD AGENCY SONOMA COUNTY	LEAD AGENCY EMAIL	DATE 03/28/2024
COUNTY/STATE AGENCY OF FILING SONOMA	DOCUMENT NUMBER 24-0328-02	

PROJECT TITLE  
 OUTDOOR CANNABIS CULTIVATION - FILE NO UPC17-0081

PROJECT APPLICANT NAME RUSSIAN RIVER FARMS INC, CHRIS COOGAN	PROJECT APPLICANT EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER (707) 565-2829
PROJECT APPLICANT ADDRESS 6855 COVEY ROAD	CITY FORESTVILLE	STATE CA
		ZIP CODE 95436

PROJECT APPLICANT *(Check appropriate box)*

Local Public Agency   
  School District   
  Other Special District   
  State Agency   
  Private Entity

**CHECK APPLICABLE FEES:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Report (EIR)	\$4,051.25	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Mitigated/Negative Declaration (MND)(ND)	\$2,916.75	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Certified Regulatory Program (CRP) document - payment due directly to CDFW	\$1,377.25	\$ _____

Exempt from fee

Notice of Exemption (attach)  
 CDFW No Effect Determination (attach)  
 Fee previously paid (attach previously issued cash receipt copy)

<input type="checkbox"/> Water Right Application or Petition Fee (State Water Resources Control Board only)	\$850.00	\$ _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> County documentary handling fee		\$ _____ <b>\$50.00</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$ _____

**PAYMENT METHOD:**

Cash   
  Credit   
  Check   
  Other

TOTAL RECEIVED    \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **\$50.00**

SIGNATURE 	AGENCY OF FILING PRINTED NAME AND TITLE Mary Damon, Deputy County Clerk-Recorder
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