

## **Notice of Exemption**

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**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 2  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Inland Deserts Region  
Bishop Field Office  
787 N. Main Street, Suite 220  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Project Title:** Cartago Wildlife Area Fence Extension Project

**Project Location:** The project will be located at the Cartago Wildlife Area, East of Cartago, CA. The Project will be located in Section 31, Township 18 South, Range 37 East and Section 00, Township 16 South, Range 37 East MDM, USGS Olancho Quadrangle.

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (“CDFW”) proposes to extend already existing barbed-wire fencing at Cartago Wildlife Area to enclose the northern and eastern portions of the property. The proposed extension will result in approximately 1.5 miles of new fencing. The new fence will prevent trespass cattle grazing on the property and protect listed and Endangered plant species that occur on the property. Unauthorized cattle grazing poses a significant threat to the State Endangered plant, Owens valley checkerbloom (*Sidalcea covillei*), which occurs in multiple populations on the unfenced portions of the property. Fencing will occur outside of known checkerbloom populations.

The fence will be constructed to CDFW’s wildlife-friendly fencing standards. A pass-through gate will be installed in the fence to allow for pedestrian access into the Wildlife Area. Bird clearance surveys will be conducted within 3 weeks prior to initiating any project activities. If active nests are found they will be sufficiently buffered, or the treatment will be deferred or modified. An archaeology survey has been completed along the proposed fence alignment and found no significant resources.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Person or Agency Carrying out Project:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial:
- Declared Emergency:
- Emergency Project:
- Categorical Exemption: 14 CCR, Section 15304, 15307, and 15308

**Reasons why Project is exempt:**

This project is Categorically Exempt from CEQA review pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4, consists of minor alterations in land on existing officially designated wildlife management areas. The proposed project meets the requirements of this exemption; therefore, no further CEQA review is required.

The project is *Class 4, §15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) Exempt*; the Project will result in minor alterations to land and vegetation on an officially designated wildlife area that will result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources.

The project is *Class 7, §15307* (Actions by regulatory agencies for Protection of natural resources) Exempt; the Project includes actions taken by CDFW for the protection of natural resources on a designated wildlife area.

The project is *Class 8, §15308* (Actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment) Exempt; the Project includes actions taken by CDFW for the protection of the environment on a designated wildlife area to protect wildlife habitat.

Review by CDFW staff and contracted environmental specialists confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resource, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the CDFW is kept on file at the Bishop Field office.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Aaron Johnson, CDFW, (760) 872-1171

**Signature:** DocuSigned by: Aaron Johnson **Date:** 4/12/2024  
Aaron Johnson, Senior Environmental Scientist

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_