

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From Lead Agency:
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

To: Nevada County Clerk
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 210
Nevada City, CA 95959

Project Title: Little Deer Creek Landscape Resilience Project (SNC 1637)

Project Location – Specific: T16N, R9E, Sections 17, 19, and 20

Project Location - City: Nevada City

Project Location - County: Nevada

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to the Yuba Watershed Institute to improve forest health conditions through active forest management on land managed by the Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) near Nevada City, California. The project would involve hand cutting, pile burning, and mechanical mastication. This project would improve landscape-level forest resilience on approximately 147 acres managed by the BLM and 48 acres managed by the BYLT. Expected outcomes from the project would be to increase ecological resiliency to disturbances, restore vegetation composition, reduce likelihood of large high-severity wildfires, reduce wildfire threat to surrounding communities, reduce risk of water-quality degradation from high-severity wildfires, increase forest-carbon sequestration in the project area, and protect community-recreation resources.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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

Yuba Watershed Institute
Chris Friedel, Executive Director
P.O. Box 2198, Nevada City, CA 95959

Exempt Status:

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Minor Alterations to Land

Statutory Exemption: Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1)

Reasons why project is exempt:

The portion of the project on private lands is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15304, Class 4, which consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation, which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor land alterations proposed by the project consist of forestry treatments to reduce hazardous fuels and improve forest health. The project has been independently reviewed and the SNC has determined that none of the exceptions in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 would apply. Additionally, under Pub. Resources Code, Section 4799.05, subd. (d)(1), CEQA does not apply to prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel-reduction projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under NEPA if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The SNC would provide funding for fuel-reduction treatments on federal lands within the BLM Mother Load Field Office District. The proposed activities on federal lands were reviewed in their entirety and include resource protection measures and conservation measures pursuant to NEPA in the Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record for the Hazard Removal and Vegetation Management Project Programmatic Environmental Assessment, signed in 2019 by the BLM, Acting State Director. A Determination of NEPA Adequacy and Decision Record for this project was signed by the Field Manager of the Mother Lode Field Office on April 8, 2024.

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: Angela Avery

Title: Executive officer

Date: 6/10/2024

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.