

## Notice of Exemption

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**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Rm. 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch  
Native Plant Program  
P.O. Box 944209  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

**Project Title:** Investigating Threats of Eurasian Flower-head Weevil on Chorro Creek Bog Thistle (*Cirsium fontinale* var. *obispoense*) (Project)

**Project Location:** The Project will take place in San Luis Obispo County, CA at the 22 known California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Element Occurrences (EOs) of Chorro Creek bog thistle in San Luis Obispo County, CA.

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) permit to Dr. Ikju Park (Permit No. 2081(a)-24-003-RP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to investigate the threats of Eurasian flower-head weevil (*Rhinocyllus conicus*) on Chorro Creek bog thistle to inform insect behavior on rare *Cirsium* populations and assist research and recovery efforts. Project activities will satisfy objectives of the 2022 US Fish and Wildlife Service 5-year review of Chorro Creek bog thistle to: (1) conduct more detailed analyses of the threats to Chorro Creek bog thistle; and (2) implement management actions to benefit individual occurrences. The Permittee will collect floral volatiles from Chorro Creek bog thistle non-destructively using a portable volatile collection system. Collected volatiles will be used in a laboratory experiment investigating whether Eurasian flower-head weevil is attracted to Chorro Creek bog thistle volatiles and how behavior is influenced. The Permittee will use gas chromatography- mass spectrometry to identify the floral volatiles emitted from Chorro Creek bog thistle to provide information for developing an effective Eurasian flower-head weevil repellent in natural habitats. Project activities will also compare carbon dioxide respiration rate of Chorro Creek bog thistle and Eurasian flower-head weevil. The Permittee may dissect flower heads of Chorro Creek bog thistle to examine weevil infestation and to determine the number of seeds per capitulum of infested flower heads. One infested flower head with visible signs of weevil oviposition holes and plugs will be dissected from up to five infested Chorro Creek Bog thistles individuals at the 22 occurrences annually. No more than five percent of the total number of flower heads present at each location will be dissected. All dissected plant material will remain on site. Chorro Creek bog thistle occurrences visited will be monitored to document population status, condition, threats, number of individuals, phenology (e.g., flowering, fruiting, vegetative), co-occurring plants, and hydrologic conditions.

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

**Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** Dr. Ikju Park, Assistant Professor, University of California Riverside

**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Sections 15306, Class 6

**Reasons why project is exempt:** The Project consists of basic data collection and research that will inform recovery and management of Chorro Creek bog thistle. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Chorro Creek bog thistle are adequately protected.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Joanne Heraty

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 594-4574

**Signature:** 

**Date:** 6/18/2024

Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

Signed by Lead Agency

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