

Notice of Exemption

To:
Office of Planning and Research
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From:
Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710



Project Title: Tuolumne River Mainstem Channel Restoration Upstream of Old La Grange Bridge Project (Project) (Streambed Alteration Agreement No. EPIMS-STA-33268-R4)

Project Location: The Project is located within and adjacent to the Tuolumne River, in the unincorporated community of La Grange, County of Stanislaus, California; centered at coordinates 37.665740, -120.460550; Sections 17, 18, and 20, Township 3 South, Range 14 East; U.S. Geological Survey Map La Grange; Assessor's Parcel Numbers 008-042-005-000, 008-042-004-000, 008-042-009-000, 008-025-001-000, 008-025-007-000, 008-025-002-000, 008-024-081-000, 008-024-080-000, 008-024-034-000, and 008-024-033-000.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has executed Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) Number EPIMS-STA-33268-R4 pursuant to Fish and Game section 1602 to the Turlock Irrigation District. The Project is designed to primarily benefit chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and steelhead/rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) via the restoration of and enhancement of approximately 7.37 acres of spawning habitat within the lower Tuolumne River. The Project will result in a net increase in mainstem channel complexity, through the construction of alternating riffles, gravel bars, and pools. These features will restore geomorphic processes, increase sinuosity, and reconnect floodplain surfaces to contemporary flows. In-channel constructed gravel features will increase the quantity and quality of salmonid spawning habitat and will promote benthic macroinvertebrate production.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

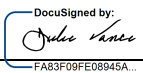
Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: Turlock Irrigation District

Exempt Status:

- Statutory Exemption: Public Resources Code section 21080.56 (Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects, "SERP")
- Categorical Exemption.

Reasons why project is exempt: CDFW approved the SAA relying on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP) (Cal. Pub. Res. Code, § 21080.56). Evidence in support of that determination is set forth in Stanislaus County Parks and Recreation's August 24, 2022, CEQA SERP Lead Agency Determinations for the Project and the CDFW's CEQA SERP Concurrence Number 21080.56-2022-010-R4. The Project falls within the SERP because the Project meets all of the following conditions: (1) the Project is exclusively to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend; or is exclusively to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife; (2) the Project may have public benefits incidental to the Project's fundamental purpose; (3) the Project will result in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment; and (4) Project construction activities are solely related to habitat restoration.

CDFW Contact Person: Megan Rooney, Environmental Scientist, (559) 203-2792

Signature:  _____ Date: 6/20/2024
Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager

Date received for filing at OPR: _____