

## 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

**Project Title:** (RFFCP2022) WIP Capacity Subgrant – Whitebark Institute (SNC 1714-RFFCP)

**Project Location – Specific:** General communication, outreach, and planning activities in the Counties of Inyo and Mono.

**Project Location - City:** None – feasibility planning.

**Project Location - County:** Inyo and Mono Counties

### **Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would provide funding to Whitebark Institute for the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program project within Inyo and Mono Counties (The Project). Whitebark Institute will engage in the following general tasks and activities: The Project will foster the growth and development of a regional leadership organization to support local fire safe councils and firewise communities and establish a coordinating entity for wildfire mitigation efforts; develop monitoring and evaluation plan and protocols by engaging in the SNC Monitoring Workshop Series and other collaborative activities; conduct project evaluation and prioritization in conjunction with the development and submission of a project portfolio for SNC's Regional Priority Plan; and conduct activities facilitating broad and diverse engagement of communities and stakeholders within Whitebark Institute's geographic area (Inyo and Mono Counties) in a manner which fulfills the requirements of SNC's Grant Guidelines regarding Outreach and Engagement.

These activities do not involve any ground or resource disturbance. Further no specific future implementation project or projects have yet been identified and this Project does not bind any party to a definite course of action prior to CEQA compliance for any future implementation project.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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

Whitebark Institute  
Laura Beardsley, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 182, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546  
(209) 628-4681

### **Exempt Status:**

**Statutory Exemption:** Common Sense Exemption – CEQA Guidelines, Section 15061, subd. (b)(3) and Feasibility and Planning Studies under Pub. Resources Code, Section 21102 and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262.

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

These activities are exempt under the commonsense exemption under Section 15061, subd. (b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines which states that CEQA applies only to projects which have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA. This grant funding will support capacity building activities, coordination of meetings and community engagement including but not limited to, fostering the growth and development of a regional leadership organization to support local fire safe councils and firewise communities and establish a coordinating entity for wildfire mitigation efforts; developing monitoring and evaluation plan and protocols by engaging in SNC's Monitoring Workshop Series and other collaborative activities; conducting project evaluation and prioritization in conjunction with the development and submission of a project portfolio for SNC's Regional Priority Plan; and conducting activities facilitating broad and diverse engagement of communities and stakeholders within the Whitebark Institute's geographic area (Inyo and Mono Counties) in a manner which fulfills the requirements of the SNC's Grant Guidelines regarding Outreach and Engagement.

These are early-stage planning activities; no specific projects have yet been identified, nor have they been approved, adopted, or funded. There will be no ground or resource disturbance. Therefore, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment. Additionally, the project would be statutorily exempt under CEQA Guidelines, section 15262 exempting feasibility and planning studies as the activity involves planning studies for possible future actions which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board has not approved, adopted, or funded. Further, there is no legally binding effect on later activities.

**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:** 8/1/2024

**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.