

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: Big Chico Creek Forest Resilience Project Amendment (SNC1341.2)

Project Location – Specific: Butte County, west of Forest Ranch, east of Cohasset, and north of Chico. Within and adjacent to the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve.

Project Location - City:
Unincorporated lands north of Chico.

Project Location - County: Butte

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) would amend grant agreement #1341 with the Butte County Fire Safe Council (BCFSC) to allow the grant funds to be used for the treatment of hazard trees caused by the Park Fire. In July 2024 the Park Fire burned through the project area. The BCFSC and partners determined that an immediate post-fire need was to remove hazard trees and implement erosion control features to protect salmon habitat from excessive post-fire runoff and sedimentation. SNC grant funds would be used for treatment of the hazard trees including treatments originally contained within the project scope, which may include hand thinning, directional felling, bucking, piling, pile burning, mastication, chipping, and grazing to reduce future fire intensity and prevent significant erosion impacts in the Big Chico Creek Watershed. SNC funds will not be used for any instream work.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

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

Butte County Fire Safe Council
Taylor Nilsson, Executive Director
PO Box 699 Paradise CA 95967
530-877-0984

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Public Resources Code section 21080, subd. (b)(3) and codified as a statutory exemption under CEQA Guidelines, section 15269, subd. (a).

Reasons why project is exempt:

In July 2024 the Park Fire burned through areas of Butte, Tehama, Shasta, and Plumas counties. On July 26, 2024, Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency in the Park Fire area, pursuant to Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8550) of Division 1 of Title 2 of the Government Code. CEQA exempts projects to repair, restore, demolish, or

replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster-stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, commencing with Section 8550 of the Government Code. (CEQA Guidelines, section 15269, subd. (a); See also Pub. Resources Code, section 21080, subd. (b)(3).). The emergency exemption may be utilized if the Governor has also proclaimed a state of emergency pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act. An immediate post-fire need identified in the project area was to remove hazard trees and implement erosion control features to protect salmon habitat from excessive post-fire runoff and sedimentation. The purpose of the Big Chico Creek Project Amendment is to use the remaining funds within their grant agreement with SNC for treatment of the hazard trees caused by the Park Fire including hand thinning, directional felling, bucking, piling, pile burning, mastication, chipping, and grazing to reduce future fire intensity and prevent significant erosion impacts in the Big Chico Creek Watershed. The Big Chico Creek Forest Resilience Project Amendment is for the purpose of mitigating fire and/or catastrophic risk mitigation.

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:  _____
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Executive Officer

Title: _____

Date: 9/3/2024 _____

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.