
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Filed to: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk of: San Mateo

Project Title: Little Butano Creek Flow Enhancement Project

Project Location: The project site is located in Butano State Park approximately 4.5 miles south of the town of Pescadero, CA.
Geographic coordinates of the project: 37.20116 N, -122.3422 W. APN: 089-090-030.

City and County: Unincorporated, San Mateo County

Description of Nature and Purpose of Project:

The San Mateo Resources Conservation District (RCD), in partnership with California State Parks (State Parks) is proposing to drill 1-2 exploratory wells and install up to 2 new permanent domestic wells at Butano State Park (Park). The RCD has funding for this project through the Wildlife Conservation Board Proposition 1 grant.

The purpose of the well is to offset existing surface-water withdrawals from the State Park diversion on Little Butano Creek by adding an additional water source (groundwater) to allow for increased water security, especially in years of drought. Additionally, this would augment instream flow conditions for coho salmon and steelhead.

Name of Person, Board, Commission or Department Proposing to Carry Out Project:

San Mateo Resource Conservation District
80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Lead Agency
Responsible Agency

Contact Person: Jarrad Fisher Telephone: 650-712-7765 ext. 114

EXEMPT STATUS:

Categorical Exemptions:
Class 3 (CEQA State Guidelines 15303)
Class 4 (CEQA State Guidelines 15304)
Class 6 (CEQA State Guidelines 15306)

Remarks: See next page.

Date of Determination: 9/6/2024

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to State and Local requirements. Jarrad Fisher

Jarrad Fisher, Director of Water Resource Programs

REMARKS:

This project will improve water security for Butano State Park's domestic water system and improve streamflow in Little Butano Creek for coho salmon and steelhead. The following provides a brief description of the project, and an explanation for why the project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption from CEQA under Class 3, Class 4, and Class 6 (CEQA State Guidelines, Sections 15303, 15304, 15306).

Project Description

This project will install a permanent well in order to supplement Butano State Park's water supply from Little Butano Creek with groundwater that is disconnected from the creek. The RCD and Balance Hydrologics (project engineer), in partnership with Earthflow Drilling, evaluated two potential well sites. An exploratory borehole is proposed near the existing water treatment facility to assess conditions at this site. If conditions are favorable, then the permanent well will be completed at this site. Otherwise, a secondary exploratory well will be drilled at the Purisima formation along the San Gregorio fault near Cloverdale Road, followed by a permanent well. This second location was previously drilled for an exploratory well under CEQA SCH #2018058629. Depending on production at the new drill site, it is possible that a permanent well will be constructed at both sites.

Balance Hydrologics will coordinate with Earthflow to complete exploratory drilling at the water treatment facility with air-rotary method. The proposed depth of drilling is 250 feet. Construction activities will consist of less than 0.1 acres including the potential access route, silt fence containment, staging areas, and drill pad footprints. If drilling at the second site is deemed necessary, this drilling will be completed using fluid-drilling methods (due to the alluvial formation, this location is more likely to cave in, so the fluid is needed to hold the well open).

Prior to the start of drilling, a pad will be constructed that is approximately 25 ft. x 50 ft. to accommodate drilling equipment. The pad consists of a cleared area with wooden blocks to support the drill rig. Vehicles will include drill rig, backhoe, 40-foot support trailer, crew trucks and other equipment as needed. If mud is needed during drilling, then a 30-ft. shaker with mud tank will be used. The drilling contractor will provide all road signs during drilling to instruct park visitors away from the drilling site.

Minor vegetation removal may be required to clear the drilling area(s). For all project activities, care will be taken to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive habitat.

Class 3 (CEQA State Guidelines, Section 15303)

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure. The numbers of structures described in this section are the maximum allowable on any legal parcel.

Examples of this exemption that this project is most related to include, but not limited to:

(d) Water main, sewage, electrical, gas, and other utility extensions, including street improvements, of reasonable length to serve such construction.

The project will construct a new small facility in the form of up to two (2) domestic drinking water wells. The permanent area of impact for the well installation(s) will be a 25 x 50-foot pad encompassing the well bore location. One drilling location may include an access road that is approximately 50 ft. long x 10 ft. wide. An access road is not expected to be needed, but, if necessary, the road will consist of minor vegetation clearing for access.

Class 4 (CEQA State Guidelines, Section 15304)

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.

Examples of this exemption that this project is most related to include, but not limited to:

(a) Grading on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, except that grading shall not be exempt in a waterway, in any wetland, in an officially designated (by federal, state, or local government action) scenic area, or in officially mapped areas of severe geologic hazard such as an Alquist- Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone or within an official Seismic Hazard Zone, as delineated by the State Geologist

(d) Minor alterations in land, water, and vegetation on existing officially designated wildlife management areas or fish production facilities which result in improvement of habitat for fish and wildlife resources or greater fish production

This project is consistent with example (a) and (d) of Class 4. Grading for the project will take place on land with a slope of less than 10 percent, and will not take place in a waterway, wetland, officially designated scenic area, or in an officially mapped area of severe geologic hazard. The project consists of the construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures and minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation which does not include the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

Class 6 (CEQA State Guidelines, Section 15306)

Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. These may be strictly for information gathering purposes, or as part of a study leading to an action which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded.

This project includes one to two exploratory wells which are being drilled for basic data collection, research, experimental management and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The results from the exploratory well will determine the most suitable place(s) for a permanent well(s) at Butano State Park.