

## Notice of Exemption

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**To:**

Office of Planning and Research  
[CEQA Submit](#)

**From:**

Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Northern Region  
601 Locust Street  
Redding, CA 96001  
[R1InlandFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:R1InlandFisheries@wildlife.ca.gov)



**Project Title:** Spring-run Chinook Salmon Emergency Egg Incubation Action

**Project Location (Shasta County):** The project will be located within Clear Creek between its confluence with the Sacramento River and the Clear Creek Road Bridge. Specific incubation sites will be selected based on their ability to mimic natural spawning sites of adult spring-run Chinook Salmon.

**Project Description:** In 2023, the three remaining Independent, Core-1 Central Valley spring-run Chinook Salmon populations (from Mill Creek, Deer Creek, and Butte Creek) experienced cohort collapse. A suite of emergency actions was developed by state and federal fisheries management agencies, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), to mitigate this collapse, with one of the actions being the propagation of adult spring-run Chinook Salmon trapped at Keswick Dam at the Livingston-Stone National Fish Hatchery (LSNFH). Adult spring-run Chinook Salmon are routinely captured at Keswick Dam as by-catch in LSNFH's winter-run Chinook Salmon broodstock collection program. Eggs produced from these spring-run Chinook Salmon captured at Keswick Dam will be incubated at LSNFH until the eyed stage, at which time they will be moved off-station by CDFW to remote-site incubators installed on Clear Creek.

Approximately 30 days after adult spring-run Chinook Salmon are spawned at LSNFH, spring-run Chinook Salmon eggs will reach the "eyed stage" and will be ready for pick up and transport by CDFW to the incubation site on Clear Creek. The eggs will be incubated in "Hatch Partner" egg boxes at a yet to be determined, environmentally appropriate, location on lower Clear Creek. The project will utilize up to four Hatch Partner egg boxes. Each egg box is approximately 2-foot by 2-foot wide by 6-inch deep. The boxes are constructed of aluminum. The boxes utilize a covered incubation tray which holds up to 8,000 Chinook Salmon eggs. This inner tray is housed inside an outer perforated assembly that allows water to flow through the box to oxygenate the eggs. The boxes will be placed in a suitable stream location, such as a shallow pool/run tail outs, mimicking a location adult spring-run Chinook Salmon would choose for natural redd construction and which provides CDFW staff safe access to place and maintain the boxes. Sites will be selected to avoid direct impacts to redds of salmonid species that may have already spawned in Clear Creek. The boxes will be anchored to the stream bottom using removeable re-bar or other metal spike-like material. Once fry have developed and been released the boxes and anchors will be removed from the stream, leaving no visible impacts to the stream bottom.

CDFW is conducting this action under a federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) section 4(d) exclusion rule for rescue and salvage of ESA fish species and is considered necessary and advisable to provide for the conservation of spring-run.

**Public Agency Approving Project:** CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

**Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Exempt Status:**

- Statutory Exemption.
- Categorical Exemption. Type – Class 4, Class 6, Class 7, ; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section ([15304, 15306, 15307])

**Reasons why project is exempt:** CDFW staff have designed this project to fully avoid adverse impacts to the terrestrial and aquatic species and habitat within and adjacent to Clear Creek while maintaining the project's intent to provide significant benefits the spring-run Chinook Salmon. This project qualifies for the following exemptions:

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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 and agricultural purposes. This project may result in temporary minor disturbances to land and water within and adjacent to Clear Creek that will be temporary in nature.

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. As part of this project CDFW staff will collect basic water quality and habitat data, as well as monitoring of the efficacy of the Hatch Partner boxes by monitoring effort to fry survival of spring-run Chinook Salmon.

Class 7 consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies as authorized by state law or local ordinance to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. Examples include but are not limited to wildlife preservation activities of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife. This project was designed as a low impact emergency action to enhance and restore spring-run Chinook Salmon populations in order to ensure their continued survival following population collapse in 2023.

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*Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date:* October 7, 2024  
Jason Roberts, Inland Fisheries Program Manager  
Northern Region

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