

# Notice of Exemption

# Appendix E

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

**From:** (Public Agency): California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife  
3602 Inland Empire Boulevard, Suite C-220  
Ontario, CA 91764

County Clerk  
County of: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Address)

Project Title: Coachella Valley Vegetation Management Project

Project Applicant: California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

Project Location - Specific:

Township 5 S, Range 5 E, Section 14; Township 6 S, Range 5 E, Section 7 and 13

Project Location - City: Palm Desert Project Location - County: Riverside

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

CDFW will conduct vegetation management activities on CDFW lands in the Coachella Valley area for the purposes of wildfire fuel reduction and invasive plant control.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 14 CCR, Section 15304, 15307, and 15308
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: \_\_\_\_\_

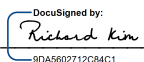
Reasons why project is exempt:

**See Attachment.**

Lead Agency  
Contact Person: Colton Johnson Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (760) 872-1171

**If filed by applicant:**

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:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 10/9/2024 Title: Senior Environmental Scientist

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.  
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

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



State of California – Natural Resources Agency  
 DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
 Ontario Office  
 3602 Inland Empire Boulevard, Suite C-220  
 Ontario, CA 91764

**GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor**  
**CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director**  
[wildlife.ca.gov](http://wildlife.ca.gov)



## **ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION Coachella Valley Vegetation Management Project**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) will conduct vegetation management activities at three sites in the Coachella Valley area at the Santa Rosa Wildlife Area, Carrizo Canyon Ecological Reserve, and Magnesia Springs Ecological Reserve, all within Riverside County (CDFW Lands). The project will include removal of invasive plant species utilizing hand tools and herbicide application. The project will remove invasive plants such as Salt Cedar (*tamarix spp.*) and Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum. setaceum*) to decrease the risk of ignition and decrease the intensity and speed of transmission of a potential fire in this sensitive habitat. The project will enhance essential habitat for the endangered Peninsular Bighorn sheep and other sensitive wildlife species. CDFW approved the Project relying on the Class 4, 7, and 8 Categorical Exemptions, respectively. (CEQA Guidelines, §§§ 15304, 15307, 150308.)<sup>1</sup> Each exemption as relevant to the Project is discussed below.

### Class 4 Categorical Exemption

The project is Class 4, §15304 (Minor Alterations to Land) exempt; the Project will result in minor alterations to land and vegetation. The Project falls within the class because it involves minor public alterations of vegetation on designated wildlife areas and ecological reserves and does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. The CEQA Guidelines provide the specific example of “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” at section 15304 (d) as being consistent with this class.

### Class 7 Categorical Exemption

The project is Class 7, §15307 (Actions by regulatory agencies for protection of natural resources) exempt; the Project includes actions taken by CDFW for the protection of natural resources on designated wildlife areas and ecological reserves. The Project falls within the class because it involves the “maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource”. Specifically, the removal of invasive species that increase fuel density and ignition sources for fire and displace native species. A fire at these locations would drastically impact the local ecosystem with irreparable changes to vegetation composition.

### Class 8 Categorical Exemption

The project is Class 8, §15308 (Actions by regulatory agencies for protection of the environment) exempt; the Project includes actions taken by CDFW for the protection of the environment on designated wildlife areas and ecological reserves to improve wildlife habitat and reduce the potential for future high severity wildfire impacts. The Project falls within the class because it involves the “maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of the environment”. Specifically, the Project will restore and enhance the current ecosystem and habitat for

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<sup>1</sup> The “CEQA Guidelines” are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000

Peninsular Bighorn Sheep and other species that rely upon these canyons for foraging habitats and their water sources.