To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
5550 Skylane Boulevard
Santa Rosa CA, 95403
Phone 707-576-2220
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Project Title: South Fork Elk River Instream Wood Project

Project Location - Specific: 40.646202° N, 124.028917° W; 40.692515° N, 124.143852° W

Project Location – City: Eureka **Project Location - County:** Humboldt

Description of Project: The Project will add up to 1,000 trees and 40 post-assisted wood structures to an eight-mile reach of the South Fork Elk River to promote increased instream habitat complexity. The Project will be phased over several years, beginning in 2024 and continuing until 2028 or 2029. All trees will be felled directly into the channel (i.e., accelerated recruitment method) from overstocked second and third growth stands. The trees will vary in species and height but will not exceed 24-inches in diameter at breast height. Specific site locations will be determined prior to each work season based on the site-specific need for instream wood and the availability of candidate trees. Most felled trees will be left in their original landing locations within the stream channel, but in some cases a grip-hoist or heavy equipment-powered winch will be used to move trees into a more beneficial position or location. One bridge exists within the treatment reach; therefore, trees added upstream of the bridge may be pinned together or anchored to riparian trees with hardware such as rebar and bolts. A small, six-foot wide track loader with a winch will utilize up to eight, 50-foot-long temporary access routes and will be restricted to gentle slopes where ground disturbance will be minimal. Any other heavy equipment used for winching will be restricted to existing roads. Small untreated posts (less than four inches in diameter) will be driven into the streambed using a portable gas-powered post pounder to construct up to 40 post-assisted wood structures. These structures will typically be three feet wide (upstream to downstream) and 20 feet across (bank to bank). The maximum height of any channel-spanning structures will be 12 inches above the streambed. Smaller pieces of wood and branches from upslope forest health treatments will be used to fill the interstitial spaces of the structures. Some smaller woody material may be lashed together with natural rope to mimic wood accumulations. Any disturbance created by temporary access routes or tree placement will be mulched with on-site forest materials such as duff and branches prior to the wet season. Heavy equipment will not enter the wetted channel under any circumstance. No dewatering or fish relocation will occur.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Bureau of Land Management – Arcata Field Office

Exempt Status: (check one)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1): (5268):
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a)):
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21 080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption; Section 15333; Small Habitat Restoration Projects

Reasons why project is exempt: The project will promote increased instream habitat complexity along an eight-mile reach of the South Fork Elk River through direct felling of streamside trees to accelerate large wood recruitment within the channel.

Lead Agency Contact: Jake Shannon **Area Code/Telephone/Extension:** 707-576-2673

Signature: JAKE SHANNON **Date:** November 25, 2024 **Title:** Sr. Environmental Scientist (Spec.)

- ☒ Signed by Lead Agency
- ☐ Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR:_____