

December 18, 2024

Contra Costa County Clerk
555 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 945537

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE: Briones Trail Ordinance Amendment

LEAD AGENCY/APPLICANT: East Bay Regional Park District
Attn: Brian Holt
2950 Peralta Oaks Court, Oakland, CA 94605
Telephone: 510-544-2623

PROJECT LOCATION: The Briones Trail Ordinance Amendment (Project) is located within Briones Regional Park, within unincorporated Contra Costa County. Specifically, the Project is focused on the Northeast corner of Briones Regional Park, accessed primarily by Old Briones Road staging area, Reliez Valley staging area, Alhambra Creek staging area and park office entrance.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Amend Attachment A of the East Bay Regional Park District's Ordinance 38 to include new trail designations on 5.75 miles of trails within Briones Regional Park. The East Bay Regional Park District (District) implemented the Briones Trails Pilot Project for twenty (20) months, from April 2023 through December 2024, to test new approaches to safely share trails and improve the trail experience for all users while protecting habitat, wildlife, and watersheds. A key component of the Briones Trails Pilot Project was the closure and restoration of approximately 5 miles of illegally built "bootleg" trails and defragmentation of approximately 250 acres of habitat. As a result of the Briones Trails Pilot Project, the District now proposes to permanently adopt 5.75 miles of bike allowed trails and 2 miles of hiker allowed trails within Briones Regional Park and continue to maintain the restored trails as habitat.

DETERMINATION: The District has reviewed the proposed action to adopt an ordinance to amend Attachment A of Ordinance 38 to include new trail designations on 5.75 miles of trails within Briones Regional Park and determined it to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requirements. The District finds that the project is exempt under the following *Article 19, Categorical Exemptions*, of the State CEQA Guidelines in the California Administrative Code:

Section 15301 – Existing Facilities. Class I Categorical Exemption for repair and minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities or topographical features. The Project includes trail operation, maintenance and repair of existing trails within the Pilot Project Zone. These trails are already in use and there would be no expanded use with the implementation of the Project. In addition to the maintenance and repair of the existing trails, the Project would also include the maintenance of existing landscapes and natural habitats. Implementing the Project and incorporating the identified trails into the official District trail system and conducting routine maintenance on those existing trails would be a negligible or no expansion of existing uses.

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Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction. Class 2 Categorical Exemption for replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities. As part of the Project, the identified trails will have substantially the same purpose, with no increase in capacity or use. Implementing the Project and incorporating the identified trails into the official District trail system and conducting routine maintenance on those existing trails would be a negligible or no expansion of existing uses.

Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land – The proposed project meets the requirements of a Class 4 Categorical Exemption – Minor Alterations to Land which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Section 15304 specifically allows the creation of bicycle lanes on existing rights of way. This project will include continued use of bicycles on existing trails. The Project also includes operation, maintenance and repair of existing trails which may involve minor alterations in the condition of land and vegetation within the Briones Regional Park.

Section 15307 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources — The proposed project meets the requirements of a Class 7 Categorical Exemption – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources. As part of this Project, the District would not be removing any existing environmental protections. The Project intends to prevent damage of natural resources from continued construction of unauthorized trails by the public. Implementing the Project and adopting the existing illegally built “bootleg” trails into the official trail system and restricting trail use by activity and day is an action to assure the maintenance and enhancement of trails within the Park District. By allowing use of these trails, the trails can also be maintained in a manner that will be according to best trail building standards with regards to erosion, safety, and maintenance.

Section 15308 – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment – The proposed project meets the requirements of a Class 8 Categorical Exemption – Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment. As part of this Project, the District would not be removing any existing environmental protections. Implementing the Project and adopting the existing trails into the official trail system is an action to assure the maintenance and enhancement of trails within the District. The project is intended to prevent damage of natural resources from continued construction of unauthorized trails by the public. By allowing use of these trails into the District’s trail network, the trails can also be maintained in a manner that will be according to best trail building standards with regards to erosion, safety, and maintenance.

Approved by  brian holt (Dec 18, 2024 17:19 PST) Date Dec 18, 2024

Brian Holt, Division Lead
Planning, Trails, Cultural Resources & GIS Department
East Bay Regional Park District
(510) 544-2623 / BHolt@ebparks.org






Briones Pilot Project NOE - 12_18_24.

Final Audit Report

2024-12-19

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