



State of California – The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**TO:** Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation  
1400 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**FROM:** Department of Parks and Recreation  
Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District  
12301 North Hwy 1  
Mendocino, CA 95460

**PROJECT TITLE:** Willow Creek Technical Adaptive Channel Restoration

**LOCATION:** Sonoma Coast State Park

**COUNTY:** Sonoma

**DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PROJECT:** The goal of this project is to improve portions of Willow Creek in Sonoma Coast State Park by encouraging the formation of a continuous dominant channel to improve passage of outmigrating juvenile fish. The project proposes the following work:

- At four (4) sites, use strategic placement of large woody debris structures (tipped or felled trees) and other low-tech, low disturbance, techniques to direct water flow energy to encourage existing channels to enlarge;
- Cut alders and willows by hand, and move existing downed logs and extracted root wads or rocks by hand for placement into structures; and
- At one (1) site, manually remove cattails to facilitate juvenile fish passage will also occur.

Exclusive use of hand labor, for project construction, is intended to minimize disturbance to the creek, vegetation and soil. The project design calls for an adaptive approach, with initial construction occurring in summer or fall of 2025 and potential re-entries to adjust or augment the initial work in 2026 and 2027. Work will occur outside of bird nesting and salmonid migration season. A wildlife biologist will survey for California red-legged frogs in advance of the project. State archaeologists will survey for cultural resources and prepare a 5024 review.

**PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING THE PROJECT:** California Department of Parks and Recreation

**NAME OF DIVISION OR DISTRICT CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT:** Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District

**EXEMPT STATUS:**

Categorical Exemption    *Class: 1, 4 & 7*    *Section: 15301, 15304 & 15307*

**REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT:** Project consists of operation, repair, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of current levels; minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees; and 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.

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DocuSigned by:

4/14/2025

William Maslach  
District Superintendent  
Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District

DATE