

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Sonoma County Water Agency
404 Aviation Blvd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

County Clerk
County of Sonoma
585 Fiscal Drive, Room 103
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

Project Title: Lake Sonoma Watershed Soil Moisture Monitoring

Project Location- Specific: Locations are within the Lake Sonoma Watershed, Sonoma County, CA.

Project Location – City: Unincorporated

Project Location – County: Sonoma

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: The United States Geological Survey (USGS) in cooperation with Sonoma County Water Agency (Sonoma Water) has initiated an effort to install soil moisture monitoring stations at Lake Sonoma Watershed to support establishing Forecast Informed Reservoir Operations (FIRO).

Soil moisture plays an important role in drought and flood forecasting, water supply management, and other natural resource activities. Soil moisture observations can forewarn of impending drought or flood conditions before other more standard indicators are triggered. Changes in soil moisture, characterized by infiltration and evapotranspiration, are impacting watersheds and the quantity and quality of water for downstream communities.

The proposed project would help further the development of FIRO by the installation of two soil moisture monitoring stations. Each monitoring station has five sensors that detect the amount of water in the soil profile to a depth of approximately three feet. The remote stations are solar powered and transmit the data via satellite, allowing the data to be monitored in real time. Incorporating soil moisture into statistical and hydrologic simulation models can improve streamflow and seasonal forecasts over using precipitation and snowpack measurements alone.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sonoma County Water Agency

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Sonoma County Water Agency

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: CEQA Guidelines 15306: Information Collection
- Statutory Exemptions. State Code number:

Reasons why project is exempt: The project consists of data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental, historical, or archaeological resource. The project is part of a study that may result in a future project, which has not yet been approved, funded, or adopted.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Connie Barton

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 707-547-1905


Signature

General Manager
Title

April 15, 2025
Date

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR: _____