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Notice of Exemption

To:
Office of Planning and Research
For U.S. Mail:
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

Street Address:
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

From:
Department of Fish and Wildlife
North Central Region
1701 Nimbus Rd.
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670

Project Title: Butcher Ranch Creek Beaver Conservation Translocations

Project Location (include county): The project will be implemented on public lands in the Downie River watershed in Sierra County.

Project Description: The project will re-establish a breeding population of North American beavers (*Castor canadensis*) in the Downie River watershed. Multiple family groups and/or individuals will be captured from healthy source populations, quarantined, and released into the valley watershed over a 3- to 5-year period. All beavers will be uniquely tagged and a portion of the beavers with be fitted with transmitters. The beavers will be monitored for population establishment and a variety of ecosystem parameters will be monitored over time to evaluate overall success of the project.

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project: **CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

Exempt Status:

☐ Statutory Exemption.

☒ Categorical Exemption. Type – Class 7, 8; California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15307, 15308

Reasons why project is exempt: This project is for the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of the natural resources and environment within and adjacent to Butcher Ranch Creek and the Downie River watershed, ultimately for the overarching objective of protecting the environment. Beavers serve critical ecological roles as both ecosystem engineers and a keystone species; they are a virtually untapped resource in California's fight against our greatest ecological threats: climate change, drought, wildfires, and habitat loss. The establishment of beavers within Butcher Ranch Creek is expected to ultimately result in the engineering of an extensive wetland complex that increases carbon sequestration, reduces downstream sediment transport and deposition, repairs channel incisions, reconnects the streams to their floodplain, increases riparian vegetation/habitat, and creates critical habitat for both wetland- and riparian-obligate species, as well as increases habitat complexity to provide suitable habitat necessary for multiple taxa, species, and life stages within. Further, the retention of water on the landscape is expected to increase groundwater recharge, improve summer baseflows, extend seasonal flows, and increase fuel moisture during wildfire season, effectively creating a green belt that can serve as wildfire buffers or breaks and provide refugia for wildlife.

CDFW Contact Person: Valerie Cook, Environmental Program Manager, 916-616-6366

Signature: DocuSigned by: Morgan Kilgour C3A86764C0AD4F6... *Date:* 12/15/2025

Morgan Kilgour, Regional Manager

Date received for filing at OPR: _____