Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
P.O. Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Rm. 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
Native Plant Program
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Project Title: Population Expansion of Bakersfield Cactus on Center for Natural Lands Management Preserves (Project)

Project Location: The Project will take place approximately 15 miles east of Bakersfield at the Sand Ridge and Caliente Preserves that are privately owned, protected, and managed for conservation by the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM) in Kern County. Sand Ridge Preserve is approximately 270 acres in size. The adjacent Caliente Preserve is approximately 70 acres in size.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a California Endangered Species Act (CESA) scientific, educational, or management permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (a) to CNLM (Permit No. 2081(a)-25-019 -RP) for a project to expand the Bakersfield cactus (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *treleasei*) populations on the Sand Ridge and Caliente Preserves through pad collection and outplanting. Pads will be collected from preserve donor sites in winter of 2026. Pad collection will be limited to either 200 donor plants or five percent of the existing population, whichever is smaller. Pads will then be outplanted from January to March 2026 into suitable unoccupied locations within the Sand Ridge and Caliente Preserves. Twenty outplanting sites are expected to be planted with 10 pads spaced at 10-foot intervals along a circular route. Each site will be visited monthly to monitor the cactus plants and to water each outplanting through the first summer. Outplanting sites will also be hand weeded as needed during site visits. The translocated plants will be monitored annually for three years following outplanting.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Dr. Deborah Rogers, Director of Conservation Science and Stewardship, CNLM

Exempt Status:

- ☐ Ministerial;
- ☐ Declared Emergency;
- ☐ Emergency Project;
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Sections 15306 and 15307, Classes 6 and 7

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The Project will facilitate the recovery of the California endangered Bakersfield cactus by attempting to expand the population on the preserves. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Bakersfield cactus are adequately protected.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Joanne Heraty Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 594-4574

Signature: DocuSigned by: Elliot Chasin for 3EAAE66ED0544A3... **Date:** 1/20/2026

Isabel Baer, Habitat Conservation Planning Branch Manager

☐ Signed by Lead Agency Date Received for filing at OPR: _____