
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Filed to: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk of: San Mateo

Project Title: Potrero Nuevo Farm Drought Resiliency and Streamflow Enhancement project

Project Location: Tunitas Creek Rd, (37.36588056, -122.38033056)
APN# 081070100

City and County: Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County

Description of Nature and Purpose of Project:

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District is proposing the Potrero Nuevo Farm Drought Resiliency and Streamflow Enhancement Project. The purpose of this project is to restore and protect critical aquatic habitat in Tunitas Creek. This will be accomplished by constructing a 7.65 acre-foot reservoir at Potrero Nuevo Farm that will enable the elimination of water diversions from the creek by the farm. The objective of the project is to support sustainable water use while enhancing the ecological integrity of Tunitas Creek and enabling fish-friendly farming in alignment with PNF's mission.

Name of Person, Board, Commission or Department Proposing to Carry Out Project:

San Mateo Resource Conservation District
80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Lead Agency ☒
Responsible Agency ☐

Contact Person: Caileen Viehweg Telephone: 650-712-7765 ext. 116

EXEMPT STATUS:

Categorical Exemption, Class 33 (15333)

Remarks: See next page.

Date of Determination: 12/10/2025

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to
State and Local requirements.



Caileen Viehweg, Conservation Project Manager

REMARKS:

As described below, the Potrero Nuevo Drought Resiliency and Streamflow Enhancement Project meets the CEQA criteria for exemption from environmental review under Class 33 section 15333. This section of the guidelines consists of projects not to exceed five acres in size to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife provided that: (a) There would be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare, or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to section 15065 (b) There are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed, and (c) The project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Project Description

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District, Trout Unlimited, and Association of Ramaytush are partnering to restore and protect critical aquatic habitat in Tunitas Creek by eliminating water diversions to Potrero Nuevo Farm (PNF). Water use at the farm impacts streamflow year-round but is most significant during the late spring and summer season, when salmonids and other aquatic wildlife are most vulnerable. Constructing a 7.65 acre-foot reservoir and modernizing water distribution infrastructure will enable PNF to eliminate diversions from the creek and forbear year-round. The project will significantly improve streamflow conditions, enhancing habitat quality and connectivity for native fish species and other wildlife, including threatened steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), endangered San Francisco garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia*), and species of special concern California giant salamander (*Dicamptodon ensatus*). The reservoir will capture local runoff and integrate with existing groundwater systems, supporting sustainable water use while enhancing the ecological integrity of Tunitas Creek and enabling fish-friendly farming in alignment with PNF's mission.

Class 33 (CEQA State Guidelines, Section 15333)

Class 33 consists of projects not to exceed five acres in size to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of habitat for fish, plants, or wildlife provided that:

- (a) There would be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare, or threatened species or their habitat pursuant to section 15065*
- (b) There are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed, and*
- (c) The project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.*

This project is under five acres in size and ensures the protection of habitat for fish and other wildlife species. There will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare, or threatened species or their habitat; the project will improve their habitat by contributing to a significant increase in streamflow. Low dry-season streamflow is a key threat to the survival and recovery of aquatic species. This project develops off-channel storage to allow PNF to eliminate diversions from Tunitas Creek, which will directly restore hydrologic connectivity. Species that will benefit from this project include, but are not limited to:

- Steelhead: Increased baseflows will maintain pool connectivity, reduce water temperatures, and support juvenile migration and development.
- California red-legged frog: Enhanced hydrologic conditions and riparian habitat will support breeding and dispersal of this federally threatened species.

- San Francisco garter snake: Recovery of California red-legged frog habitat directly benefits this endangered predator, which relies on the frogs as a primary prey species.
- California giant salamander: Sustained streamflow and moist riparian conditions are essential for this Species of Special Concern.
- Coho salmon: While not currently confirmed in the watershed, suitable habitat exists, and flow restoration is designed to support natural recolonization and would support potential future reintroduction efforts.

There are no hazardous materials at or around the project site that may be disturbed or removed due to the project. The project will not result in impacts that are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current project, and the effect of probable future projects. This project will restore and protect critical aquatic habitat in Tunitas Creek.