

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

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

From: (Public Agency): Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
820 Bay Avenue Suite 136
Capitola, Ca. 95010

County Clerk
County of: Monterey

(Address)

Project Title: Brothers Ranch Hydrologic Restoration Project

Project Applicant: Elkhorn Slough Foundation

Project Location - Specific:

Latitude/Longitude: 36°51'19.7"N 121°43'29.3"W; Brothers Ranch located at Monterey County Parcel Number 181271001000. You can reach the project site by driving East on Hall Road past the town of Las Lomas. Turn south at address sign 410, cross can

Project Location - City: Las Lomas Project Location - County: Monterey

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

This project will restore hydrologic processes to diversify riparian habitat and achieve aquifer recharge. It will do so through the installation of two (2) infiltration basins in current farmland to collect and infiltrate stormwater runoff and it will restore an adjoining highly disturbed riparian corridor to remove sediment piles resulting from agricultural management practices and regrade a broad floodplain to be planted with a more diverse collection of wet meadow plant species that replicate a nearby wet meadow thought to

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County

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: 15333 - small habitat restoration projects
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

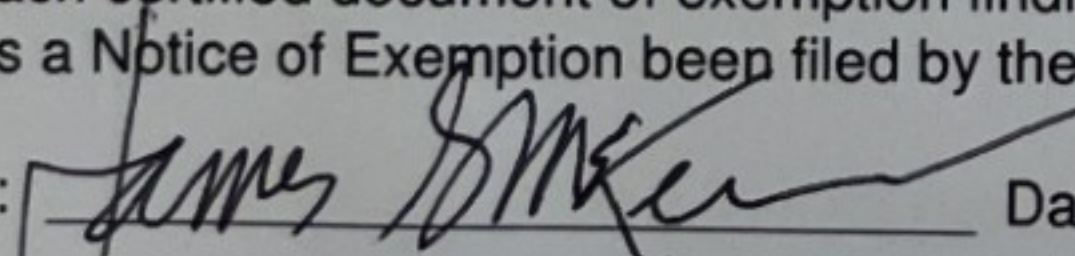
Reasons why project is exempt:

The total project area is 4.99 acres and the project purpose is to restore hydrologic processes that have long been disturbed by agricultural practices. Specifically, the project will restore a wet meadow habitat type (sedge/rush dominant) to an existing riparian corridor. This will introduce greater plant species diversity and habitat mosaics to the wildlife of the area. The project will also restore stormwater infiltration through the implementation of two (2) infiltration basins to be installed in what is currently farmland. Improved infiltration will benefit the underlying aquifer, instream baseflows, seeps, springs, etc.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Dan Hermstad Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 831-205-3739

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature:  Date: _____ Title: _____

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

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: Monterey

Project Title: Brothers Ranch Hydrologic Restoration Project

Project Location: 360 Hall Rd. (36.853639, -121.724307)
APN# 181271001000

City and County: Las Lomas, Monterey

Description of Nature and Purpose of Project:

The Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County is proposing the Brothers Ranch Hydrologic Restoration Project. The purpose of this project is to restore the hydrologic function of the watershed through the implementation of infiltration basins in land currently utilized as farmland and the restoration of an ecologically appropriate floodplain and wet meadow habitat. The goal of the project is to enhance hydrologic processes and water dynamics by installing infiltration basins for aquifer recharge, slowing and spreading stormwater runoff through ephemeral creek floodplain enhancements and increasing diversity of wet associated habitat types.

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

Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
2425 Porter Street
Soquel, Ca. 95073

Lead Agency
Responsible Agency

Contact Person: Dan Hermstad Telephone: 831-205-3739

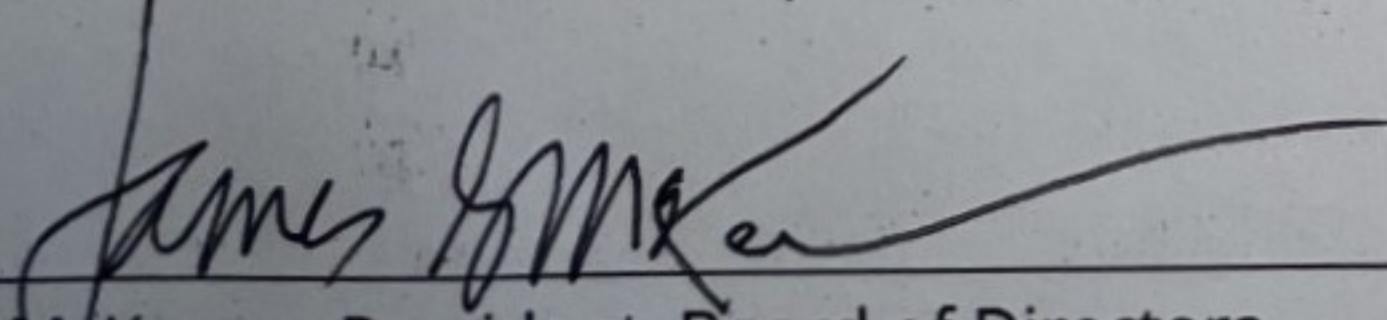
EXEMPT STATUS:

Categorical Exemption, Class 33 (15333)

Remarks: See next page.

Date of Determination:

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


James McKenna, President, Board of Directors

REMARKS:

As described below, the Brothers Ranch Hydrologic Restoration 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 Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, Elkhorn Slough Foundation and UCSC Hydrogeology are partnering to restore hydrologic processes at the Brothers Ranch. The project area consists of 4 acres of farmland and 1 acre of an ephemeral creek corridor. The creek corridor has been greatly impacted by farming over many decades. Impacts include the channeling of water flow into ditches and excavated channels and the creation of berms and levees to hasten the flow of water off the landscape. Additionally there is much plastic sheeting, abandoned culverts, plastic bags, pipe remnants and other agricultural waste distributed throughout the corridor. Our project will remove the ditches and berms created by past ag users to re-create a broad, low floodplain similar to what was believed to have been there in the past and re-vegetate that area with a sedge/rush dominant wet meadow mix that is thought to be very rare in the area now. This treatment will provide needed habitat complexity to a site currently dominated by willows with very little/low additional plant species diversity. Additionally, in the farmland, the project will build two (2) infiltration basins that will receive excedent stormwater runoff resulting from current farming operations and infiltrate that water into the critically overdrafted aquifer below. In restoring hydrologic processes of improved water infiltration, restored floodplain dynamics and reduced and slowed runoff, the project will result in a myriad of benefits to on and off site water resources including attenuation of flooding and decreases in sediment load to downstream resources and on-site, specifically, improved habitat diversity, agricultural refuse remediation and a strong demonstration of how farming and environmental goals can be achieved side by side.

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 restoration, enhancement and protection of habitat for plants and wildlife. The ephemeral creek in which the habitat enhancement work will be performed is not a fish bearing aquatic resource. There will be no significant adverse impact on endangered, rare, or threatened species or their habitat.

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 remediate and restore the site from legacy practices accumulated from decades of agricultural use.