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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To:
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
CEQA Submit

From:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, CA 93710
Contact: Megan Rooney
Email: megan.rooney@wildlife.ca.gov
Phone: (559) 203-2792

Lead Agency
Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
2425 Porter St, Suite 19
Soquel, CA 95073
Contact: Daniel Hermstad, Program Specialist
Email: dhermstad@rcdsantacruz.org
Phone: (831) 205-3739

SCH No: 2026020776

Project Title: Brothers Ranch Hydrologic Restoration Project (Restoration Management Permit No. RMP-2026-0041-R4)

Project Location: The 4.99-acre Project is located within and adjacent to an unnamed stream that feeds Carneros Creek, a tributary to the Elkhorn Slough, in Monterey County; centered at approximately 36.85428896, -121.72428298; Sections 26 and 35, Township 12 South, Range 2 East; U.S. Geological Survey Map Prunedale; Assessor's Parcel Number 181-271-001-000.

Project Description: On 10/14/26, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issued a Restoration Management Permit (RMP) pursuant to section 1670 of the Fish and Game Code to the Elkhorn Slough Foundation. This Project includes Initial Restoration Activities, Ongoing Restoration Activities, and Management Activities that will result in: an expansion of the riparian corridor; an increase in plant species composition and diversity; habitat which more closely represents historic conditions and mimics local reference sites; improves water quality; and improved hydrologic functionality. CDFW has determined that the Project is a Qualifying Restoration Project pursuant to section 1671(d)(1) of the Fish and Game Code, and the Project is expected to result in a substantial, cumulative benefit to native fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitat. This notice is to advise that CDFW issued the above-described RMP on the date signed below.

Public Agency Approving Project: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Person or Public Agency Carrying Out Project:
Dash Dunkell
Elkhorn Slough Foundation
P.O. Box 267
Moss Landing, California 95039
(831) 728-5939
dash@elkhornsough.org

Exempt Status: On February 20, 2026, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, as the Lead Agency, determined that the Project is categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 15333. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.1(a), the Lead

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Agency is responsible for determining whether the Project is exempt from CEQA and that determination shall be final and conclusive on all persons, including Responsible Agencies. As a result, CDFW, acting as a Responsible Agency, is bound by the Lead Agency's determination that the Project is exempt from CEQA.

CDFW Contact Person: Megan Rooney, Environmental Scientist, (559) 203-2792 or Megan.Rooney@wildlife.ca.gov

Signature: DocuSigned by: Sarah Paulson E0964E60203D40A... *Date:* 10/15/2026

For Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager