

NOTICE OF CEQA EXEMPTION

To: Lassen County Clerk
220 South Lassen Street
Susanville, CA 96130

From: Honey Lake Valley RCD
1516 Main Street
Susanville, CA 96130
530-260-0067

Date: April 23, 2026

Project Title:

Goodrich Creek Meadow Restoration Project

Project Location:

The Goodrich Creek Meadow Restoration Project is located northeast of the town of Westwood, CA in Section 35, Township & Range T29N R09E, Section 2, Township & Range T28N R09E, WESTWOOD EAST USGS Topo Quad.

Project Description:

The primary goal of the project is to address source problems that led to channel incision and meadow degradation in the meadow and to recover hydrologic and ecological processes that created and maintained meadow function prior to human alterations. The design will achieve this goal through the following mechanisms:

- Increasing floodplain connectivity in oversized and incised meadow channels.
- Decreasing stream power in the meadow system by reactivating historic remnant channels in key locations.
- Increasing channel and floodplain complexity by promoting the growth of riparian and emergent vegetation.

The restored hydrology and improved floodplain function will promote more vigorous growth of mesic meadow plant species, enhance summer flow conditions, and improve water quality by eliminating eroding banks and filtering flood flows on the meadow floodplain surface. The project includes a variety of treatment techniques to raise the water table and spread flow across the floodplain, including riffle augmentation, cross vane structures for channels receiving riffle augmentation, beaver dam analogs and/or post-assisted log structures in the upstream most reach, channel fill treatments in the Goodrich North channel, and ditch fill. Fill material for riffle augmentation will be “pit run” and consist of an unsorted mixture of silt, sand, gravel, and rocks. Fill material for rock riffles will be sourced from the nearby Round Mountain Pit, while sodded riffles will utilize material harvested from the nearby floodplain. Material to fill the channel would consist of imported fill. Equipment would be used to transport fill material to the channel, place it, and shape the final surface to match the floodplain slope. Sod will be salvaged and placed over the final surface, where present. Riffle augmentation and channel fill for Goodrich Creek would require excavation and placement, using heavy equipment. Ditch fill will be floodplain material. An estimated 14,060 cubic yards of fill volume would be used for this project. After the construction of riffle augmentation, cross vane, and ditch fill treatments, riparian trees and shrubs such as willow, aspen, and

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cottonwood would be planted along and adjacent to treated areas. Implementation will require managing flows throughout the project area to avoid water quality impairment and create conditions for instream work, including use of heavy equipment. The majority of the flow will be diverted during construction by using the existing diversion infrastructure and ditches above the project area. Additional steps could include building temporary coffer dams at the north and south channel diffidence at the top of the project area to adjust water levels to direct flow into the Goodrich South or Goodrich North channel as necessary. The north channel in the project area will be entirely dewatered prior to implementing the complete channel fill treatments. To minimize any fish stranding or mortality, the team will plan to complete a fish rescue effort at the onset of water diversion activities in the north channel within the project area and as far downstream as is deemed necessary by fish experts on the team. The Project is expected to provide the following benefits:

- **Geomorphic and Hydrologic Function:** The design approach would minimize erosion and improve habitat conditions. The expected outcomes include improved lateral connectivity between the stream channel and floodplain, contributing to groundwater recharge, late season stream flow, attenuation and delay of peak flows, and floodplain aggradation. Reducing the existing channel capacities to a much smaller capacity (ca. 20-50 cfs) will ensure flood flows will access the floodplain more frequently.
- **Aquatic Function:** Restoration actions will contribute to good water quality, characterized by low turbidity from reduced erosion and cool water temperatures. The treatments will prevent future degradation and increase aquatic habitat heterogeneity.
- **Floodplain and Riparian Vegetation:** The project will increase total riverine habitat by reactivating the historic network of flowpaths on the meadow surface. Restored hydrology and groundwater levels will support diverse riparian and meadow plant communities. Revegetation efforts will include planting native riparian trees and shrubs in the riparian corridor, expanding food sources for meadow birds.
- **Increased Habitat for Sensitive Meadow Species:** Goodrich Creek Home Ranch's location at the intersection of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges makes it a hotspot for biodiversity. The Mountain Meadows complex has an existing, large population of breeding Greater Sandhill Crane and, if restored, has high potential to support a large population of Willow Flycatcher and Yellow Warbler.

The approaches proposed may require adaptive management with future maintenance until the meadow system is recovering in a self-sustaining manner. Channel fill and other form-based structures typically do not require any more than one or two years of maintenance following implementation. Post-restoration work also includes continued monitoring per the Home Ranch Conservation Plan. Point Blue and Feather River Land Trust (FRLT) will monitor compliance with the terms of the Conservation Easement and evaluate project performance and compliance with the grazing management plan. We will conduct periodic effectiveness ecological monitoring post-implementation as funding

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allows. We have rich pre-project datasets on soil carbon, vegetation, stream channel condition, and birds.

Exempt Status (Guidelines Section and Class): Statutory Exemption:

CEQA STATUTORY EXEMPTION FOR RESTORATION PROJECTS (SERP), (Pub. Resources Code, § 21080.56, subd. (e).)

Reasons Why Project is Exempt:

The Honey Lake Valley RCD has determined the Project is exclusively a project to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend, and a project to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife. The project features are dedicated to the restoration of hydrologic function and improvement of the meadow. The restored hydrology and improved floodplain function will promote more vigorous growth of mesic meadow plant species, enhance summer flow conditions, and improve water quality by eliminating eroding banks and filtering flood flows on the meadow floodplain surface. The Honey Lake Valley RCD has determined that the Project does both of the following: (1) Results in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and (2) Includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment.

Restoration of floodplain hydrology in montane meadows has been shown to decrease greenhouse gas emissions and increase carbon sequestration at rates comparable to restoration activities in other inland and tidal wetlands. Montane wet meadows have high concentrations of soil carbon and may contain as much carbon belowground as the surrounding forest contains above- and belowground. Disconnection of floodplain hydrology alters plant-soil-water relationships and can result in high rates of soil carbon loss to the atmosphere. Hydrologic restoration increases the growth of productive hydric and mesic vegetation that provide fresh carbon inputs to the soil and reestablish conditions for net soil carbon sequestration. Geomorphic restoration techniques (including channel fill and biogenic structures) have been widely successful at increasing groundwater levels and water storage capacity in montane meadows. Restoration of floodplain hydrology has also been shown to decrease the magnitude of flood peaks during winter and spring snowmelt. There is also some evidence that increased groundwater storage as a result of geomorphic restoration may result in increased baseflows and cooler summer stream temperatures, increasing watershed resilience to climate change. Higher levels of soil moisture following meadow restoration may also influence wildfire behavior in the surrounding uplands and provide valuable refugia for wildlife during and after wildfires.

The Project will result in long-term net benefits to biodiversity by enhancing degraded wet meadow habitat. Increasing wetness, vegetation structural complexity and diversity, as well as more frequent flooding will promote higher quality wildlife habitat. The Project is expected to benefit birds as has been

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demonstrated for similar wet meadow restoration projects in the Sierra Nevada region, including several species of conservation concern (e.g., greater sandhill crane, willow flycatcher, yellow warbler) that breed in or near the Project area. The Project includes revegetation with willows and other riparian deciduous shrubs and trees, which should increase habitat suitability for beavers which are currently limited to the very upper section of the Project area. The Project also aims to decrease water temperature and improve conditions for native aquatic species by reconnecting floodplain hydrology and increasing the cover of riparian shrubs that shade the streams.

The Project has the potential to benefit at least four species of conservation concern that currently use the Project area or have strong potential to use the Project area, including sandhill crane, willow flycatcher, yellow warbler, and gray wolf. Sandhill cranes are a State-endangered species that are known to use the Project area. The habitat requirements of sandhill crane are consistent with a hydrologically functional wet meadow that the Project seeks to create. Willow flycatcher is a State-endangered species that does not currently use the Project area, but does occur just 3 miles away in Westwood, CA. Habitat requirements for willow flycatcher include dense stands of willows and, in the Sierra Nevada region, a hydrologically functional wet meadow. They are also more likely to occur in areas with higher beaver activity. Increased willow coverage, hydrologic functionality, and beaver activity are all goals of the Project, so the Project will hopefully create conditions that attract breeding willow flycatcher.

The Honey Lake Valley RCD has determined that the Project does not include any construction activities, except for construction activities solely related to habitat restoration. The purpose of the project is to restore the meadow floodplain function by re-establishing the channel-floodplain connection. The project is designed to eliminate channel incision and reactivate historic flow-paths on the meadow surface to enhance meadow conditions and ecosystem health. Any construction activities are directly related to these objectives. Treatments include:

- Riffle augmentation will treat incised channels by raising the base elevation of existing riffles.
- Post-Assisted Log Structures (PALs) or Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs) may be constructed in the meadow if the upper reach of Goodrich North proves too wet for equipment access.
- Channel fill treatments are proposed in the Goodrich North channel in the lower half of the project area (e.g. downstream of the chimney). The Goodrich North channel is suspected to have been anthropogenically altered (e.g., straightened) to drain much of the meadow. Channel fill treatments in Goodrich North will help reactivate remnant flowpaths, increase channel sinuosity, and reduce water surface heights and shear stress on meadow soils.
- Cross vanes structures are proposed for all channels receiving riffle augmentation treatments. These structures would be built at the bottom of the APE in each channel to provide grade control for upstream riffles and

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to transition the finished grade to the existing channel grade below the APE.


- Ditch fill will occur to reduce flow conveyance down artificial features, restore natural drainage pathways, and reactivate historic remnant channels. Short reaches of ditches may be left unfilled (partial fill) to create habitat complexity. Linear channels and ditches will be filled following the same techniques as sodded riffle treatments described above.
- Revegetation using local native materials

Public Agencies that will be involved with the project:

Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Lead Agency Contact Person:

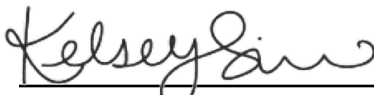
Kelsey Siemer, District Manager
Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
530-260-0067

Signature:  _____ Date: 04/23/2026
Jesse Claypool, Chairman
Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District

ATTEST:

I, Kelsey Siemer, Clerk of the Board of Directors, Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District, do hereby certify that the Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District approved this Notice of Exemption on the 23rd day of April, 2026 by the following vote:

Ayes: 4 Abstentions:
Noes: Absent: 1



Kelsey Siemer, Clerk of the Board of Directors
Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District