
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board

California Environmental Quality Act Notice of Exemption for Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region, Redding Office
364 Knollcrest Drive, Suite 205
Redding, CA 96002

Date: 17 June 2026

Project Title:

Upper Mill Creek Dam Temporary Fish Ladder Extension
Project (Project)

Project Location - Specific:

Latitude: 40.0549° and Longitude: -122.0321°

Project Location - County:

Tehama County

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Project will construct a temporary extension of an existing fish ladder that is currently undermined and unable to pass critical runs of special status salmonids. Three more fish ladder cells will be created using a temporary structure that will be installed by hand. The extension will consist of a steel tubing frame with chain-link fencing attached between the frame members, custom fabricated to fit the streambed and designed to be held in place using native rock as ballast. Once it's full of rock, a steel plate will be placed over the top of the frame to create a single solid object that can handle flood flow events. Wooden fish ladder panels will be placed on top of the steel plate to complete the work. The wooden fish ladder cells will be designed to break away from the steel plate during flooding events and replaced when flows reduce. The rock ballast used for this project will be taken from onsite stockpiles that were removed from the canal following the high flow events of 2024/2025.

Name of Public Agencies Approving Project:

Federal Agencies: The project requires authorization under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Section 404.

State Agency approval for coverage under State Water Resources Control Board's Order for Waste Discharge Requirements for Restoration Projects Statewide, Order No. WQ 2022-0048-DWQ: California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Central Valley Region, Redding Office. WDID No. 5A52CR00256.

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Adam McKannay
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001

Exempt Status:

The Central Valley Water Board, as lead agency, determined that the Project is exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061. Specifically, the project is categorically exempt from review under CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15333, Small Habitat Restoration Projects. 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.

Reasons why Project is Exempt:

This project is categorically exempt under CEQA section 15333 because the project is less than five acres in size and will provide a temporary extension of an existing fish ladder to maintain passage of critical runs of special status salmonids upstream of the Upper Mill Creek Dam.

Federal Lead Agency Contact Person:

Hillary Regnart
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Hillary.H.Regnart@usace.army.mil

State Lead Agency Contact Person:

Lynn Coster, Senior Environmental Scientist
Chief Storm Water and Water Quality Certification Unit
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board
Redding Branch Office
(530) 224-2437

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Water Boards

Lynn Coster
Senior Environmental Scientist
Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, Redding

cc via
email:

Hillary Regnart, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Adam McKannay, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Redding
Matthew Mitchell, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Redding