

Name of Proposed Project

CARCD/WCB Pollinator & Wildlife Habitat Implementation

Need for Proposed Project

Many species of California pollinators and other wildlife are in peril due in large part to habitat degradation/loss and climate change. Enhancing and restoring habitat is necessary to increase our wildlife's ability to survive the effects of habitat degradation/loss and climate change.

Proposed Project Description & Location

The Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District (GDRCD) will lead a project to implement pollinator and wildlife habitat creation, enhancement, and restoration activities on various private, working, and public lands in El Dorado County.

Proposed Activities

Proposed project activities include:

- Installing nesting/roosting boxes for birds and bats.
- Installing caps/covers on existing open pipes to prevent bird deaths.
- Installing coverings/devices on windows of existing buildings to prevent bird collisions.
- Installing wildlife habitat piles.
- Installing wood (log) basking structures for pond turtles.
- Installing culvert covers, fencing, and other structural deterrents at streams, ponds, and other waterbodies to reduce human-wildlife conflict with beavers.
- Harvesting native plant materials (e.g., seed, pole cuttings, and/or root stock).
- Seeding, propagating, and planting native plants.
- Installing shade structures and/or cages around native plants and plantings.
- Installing above-ground irrigation (e.g., drip irrigation lines) for native plantings, as needed.
- Implementing erosion control treatments (e.g., installing log barriers, straw wattles, straw-bale check dams, seeding and mulching with weed-free straw).
- Removing sections of legacy windrows from previous logging operations (using a skid steer).
- Installing, replacing, and maintaining fencing and education signs, as needed.
- Maintaining existing trails.
- Removing trash/garbage from wildlife habitat and restoration sites.
- Installing and maintaining wildlife cameras for monitoring and educational purposes.
- Removing/controlling invasive plant species using manual methods (e.g., hand pulling, hand tools, hand-operated power tools).
- Controlling invasive plant species using limited selective use of herbicides, as needed, following protocols to minimize potential impacts to pollinators and other wildlife.
- Implementing targeted fuels reduction using manual (hand crews, hand-operated power tools), mechanical (chipping and/or masticating) and prescribed burning (pile burning and/or potentially assisting the Siskiyou Prescribed Burn Association or agency partners with broadcast burning) to reduce fire risk to wildlife and restoration sites.
- Conducting surveys and monitoring of wildlife and habitat restoration sites.

- Education and outreach

Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption

The Class 4 exemption (CCR Section §15304) covers minor alterations to land. GDRCD has determined that the objectives of enhancement and restoration of wildlife and pollinator habitat, and the implementation activities as designed for this project, will result in minor alterations to land and vegetation, and therefore fit within the CCR Section 15304 exemptions.

GDRCD has determined that the project's implementation will result in multiple benefits, including habitat improvement for wildlife and pollinators, fuel reduction, and reduction in noxious invasive species. There will be no significant adverse impacts on endangered, rare, or threatened species or their habitats. There will be no significant adverse impacts to soils, hydrology, or water quality. There are no hazardous materials at or around the project site. The project will avoid all archeological resource sites. The project will not result in cumulatively significant impacts. The project will have no significant adverse effect on the environment.

Conclusion

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the descriptions for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, GDRCD has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes. GDRCD has also determined that no exceptions exist which would preclude the use of this exemption, such as: (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant effects on the environment, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of any historical resource. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the El Dorado County Clerk-Recorder, and with the State Clearinghouse.