To:
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
CEQA Submit

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Project Title: Capinero Creek Restoration Project (Restoration Management Permit No. RMP-2026-0043-R4) (Project)

Project Location: The Project is located within the San Joaquin Valley adjacent to the Pixley National Wildlife Refuge, in Tulare County, California; centered at coordinates 35.93344, -119.40623; Sections 08 and 17, Township 23 South, Range 24 East; U.S. Geological Survey Map Alpaugh; Assessor's Parcel Numbers 313-080-015-000, 313-080-010-000, 313-080-009-000, 313-080-008-000, and 313-110-008-000.

Project Description: On 10/5/2026, 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 Tule Basin Land and Water Conservation Trust. The Project includes the implementation of varying restoration techniques to determine strategies most successful in restoring alkali desert scrub vegetative communities. 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 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: Tule Basin Land and Water Conservation Trust, Nick Reed-Krase, 4450 S Laspina Ave., Tulare, CA 93274; Nick@tuletrust.org, (559) 358-4414

Exempt Status: The Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56. Under Public Resources Code section 21080.1, subdivision (a), the lead agency is responsible for determining whether a project is exempt from CEQA, and that determination is final and conclusive on all persons, including responsible agencies. Notwithstanding Section 21080.1, subdivision (a), a lead agency's determination that a project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56 is only valid if the exemption determination is made after the Director of CDFW has concurred with the lead agency's preliminary determination that the project meets certain qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive.

On June 17, 2024, the Pixley Irrigation District made a preliminary determination that the Project meets certain qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive. On August 2, 2024, the Director of CDFW concurred with the Pixley Irrigation District's preliminary determination. On August 9, 2024, the Pixley Irrigation District as CEQA lead agency made a final determination that the Project meets certain qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive, and the Pixley Irrigation District determined that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56. CDFW, now acting as a CEQA responsible agency for the issuance of the RMP on 10/5/2026, is bound by the Pixley Irrigation District determination on August 9, 2024, that the Project is exempt from CEQA pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56.

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

Signature: DocuSigned by: Julie Vance FA03F09FE08945A... *Date:* 10/5/2026

Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager

Date received for filing at LCI: