



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: File

From: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
5050 El Camino Real
Los Altos, CA 94022

Project Title: Physical Specimen Collection and Curation

Project Location: Districtwide

Counties: Santa Clara, San Mateo, and Santa Cruz

Description of Project: The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (District) proposes to establish a Physical Specimen Collection and Curations component of the District's Inventory and Monitoring Program (Program). The Specimen Collection and Curation component supports the overarching goal of the Program to systematically document natural resources on District lands and provide reliable scientific information that supports resource protection, management, planning, and adaptive management.

Specimens would be collected by District staff or by individuals authorized through a Direct Permit (authorized collectors), and would be collected only for inventory, monitoring, research, or educational activities. Specimens would be collected consistent with the District's Standard Operating Procedures for Physical Specimen Collection and Curation in a manner that minimizes impacts to species and habitats; and curated as traceable, verifiable reference materials that support repeatable identification and long-term monitoring, resource inventory, and long-term data integrity. Authorized collectors would not collect when doing so would reasonably be expected to cause undue harm to a local population, individual organism, or the surrounding environment. Collection activities would also avoid unnecessary disturbance to soils, water, vegetation, wildlife, and habitat features, including sensitive substrates and microhabitats. All specimen collection conducted under the Program would comply with applicable Federal, State, and local requirements, including any permits or permissions required for collection, possession, transport, and curation.

Specimen categories proposed for collection include:

- Plants: Authorized collectors would collect voucher specimens of vascular and non-vascular plants, limited to one primary voucher per taxon, occurrence, and collection event.
- Fungal: Authorized collectors would collect the full fruiting body or other diagnostic fungal material present at the time of collection, limited to the minimum number of fruiting bodies and amount of associated substrate necessary for identification and curation.
- Invertebrate: Authorized collectors would collect voucher specimens of insects and other terrestrial or aquatic invertebrate taxa, limited to a small representative number sufficient for identification, verification, and approved reference needs.
- Vertebrate and paleontological: Authorized collectors would generally rely on non-collection methods (e.g., observations, photographs, remote cameras, acoustic recordings) rather than physical specimen collection. Except where capture or collection of live vertebrates is explicitly permitted and authorized, physical specimens of modern vertebrates would be collected only for approved objectives and only from non-living, naturally shed, abandoned, or deceased material in a manner that avoids disturbance or harm to live animals.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Same

Exempt Status: In accordance with State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project is categorically exempt under the following section:

Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land: Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. Proposed activities would include the collection of voucher specimens from District open space preserves by authorized collectors following best management practices and Standard Operating Procedures and would not involve the removal of mature vegetation or trees.

Section 15306 – Information Collection: Class 6 consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. Proposed activities would include the collection, documentation, handling, and long-term curation of physical biological and paleontological specimens as part of the District's Inventory and Monitoring Program, in a manner that minimizes disturbance to species and habitats.

No exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2 are applicable to the proposed project.

Lead Agency Contact:

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Date: _____

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