Notice of Exemption

To:
Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
CEQA Submit

From:
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
(559) 243-4005

Project Title: Invasive Species Control for Nipomo Mesa Lupine Recovery (Project)

Project Location: The Project will take place in San Luis Obispo County within the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex at the only remaining natural Nipomo Mesa lupine (*Lupinus nipomensis)* population recognized as California Natural Diversity Database Element Occurrence 1. Treatment activities will take place within 22.6 acres of Nipomo Mesa lupine habitat.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a California Endangered Species Act scientific, educational, or management permit pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivision (a) to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area (Permit No. 2081(a)-26-011-RP). The permit will continue management activities that were previously authorized under California Endangered Species Act Permit No. 2081(a)-21-008-RP to support Nipomo Mesa lupine conservation, including invasive perennial veldt grass control, protection of plants from herbivory, and experimental aerial application of clethodim-based graminicide.

Activities will include surveys and mapping of Nipomo Mesa lupine, ground herbicide application outside no-spray buffers, manual weed removal, and installation of protective cages around seedlings. A minimum 15-foot no-spray buffer will be maintained around identified plants and recent mapped locations, except within designated aerial research plots.

Experimental aerial treatments will be conducted in the Walter's Valley and Railroad North subpopulations, which were selected because of their heavy veldt grass cover and separation from other lupine populations. Treatments may be conducted up to twice per growing season for one to five years, using a helicopter or herbicide-equipped drone. Monitoring will evaluate plant condition, vigor, herbivory, phenology, and reproduction before and after treatment. The experiment builds on previous research studies indicating that aerial clethodim can effectively control perennial veldt grass without significant adverse effects on native vegetation or Nipomo Mesa lupine plants.

California Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Ben Wagner, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist), California Department of Parks and Recreation, Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area

Exempt Status:

- ☐ Ministerial;
- ☐ Declared Emergency;
- ☐ Emergency Project;
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Section 15307, Class 7

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project consists of invasive weed management activities to ensure the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of an existing population of Nipomo Mesa lupine. The permit issued by CDFW for the Project includes measures to ensure impacts to existing populations of Nipomo Mesa lupine are avoided.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Debaki Sarkar Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (559) 580-3201

Signature: DocuSigned by: Julie Vance FA83F09FE08945A... **Date:** 10/21/2026

Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager