

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, 1400 Tenth Street, Rm 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch
Native Plant Program
P.O. Box 944209
Sacramento, CA 94244-2090

Project Title: Santa Cruz Wallflower Habitat Enhancement and Seeding Project (Project), California Department of Fish and Wildlife Permit No. 2081(a)-19-013-RP

Project Location: The Project will take place in the South Ridge Conservation Area at Quail Hollow Quarry near the town of Ben Lomond in Santa Cruz County.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to Jodi McGraw, Ph.D. pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to enhance and restore a 0.13-acre area (treatment area) within the South Ridge Conservation Area for the state-endangered Santa Cruz wallflower (*Erysimum teretifolium*) and other native species. The enhancement project is a requirement of a 50-year Incidental Take Permit issued to the Granite Rock Company for mining activities at the Quail Hollow Quarry (Permit No. 2081-1998-32-3), which requires Granite Rock to enhance, protect, and manage areas at the Quail Hollow Quarry for the benefit of the Santa Cruz wallflower and other federally protected species. In 2018, CDFW issued a Permit to Permittee (Permit No. 2081(a)-18-008-RP) to collect and store seeds from Santa Cruz wallflower plants at Quail Hollow Quarry until an enhancement plan was developed for this area. A total of 52,000 seeds were collected in this effort. Approximately 13,000 of these seeds were transferred to Amy Patten at the California Native Plant Society for placement into long-term conservation storage as part of the California Plant Rescue Project. The remaining 39,000 seeds will be used for this Project. Seed will be broadcast-seeded into the 0.13-acre treatment area in fall 2019, prior to the onset of rains. Prior to seed dispersal, a series of treatments will be conducted to remove exotic plant thatch and seed, increase soil depth and looseness, and level the topography, which is currently concave. The bucket of a tractor will be used to scrape off the exotic plant seed in the top two inches of the soil. The scraped material will be disposed of in an area of the mine where it will not impact conservation areas. After the soil is scraped, the tractor will be outfitted with a back-drag box with teeth that will be used to pull up the sand to a depth of two to three feet. The tractor operator will also level the topography to prevent ponding. The soil will be raked with a landscape rake to create furrows that will improve seed contact with the soil and reduce wind displacement. Santa Cruz wallflower seed will be broadcast by hand through the treatment area. Following seeding, the treatment area will be raked and gently tamped to promote soil-to-seed contact. In addition, 10 1-meter by 1-meter control plots (5 seeded, 5 unseeded) will be created outside of the treatment area but within the historically mined area of the South Ridge Conservation Area. Ten reference plots will also be established in unmined intact sand parkland habitat occupied by Santa Cruz wallflower within the South Ridge Conservation Area. The treatment area will be monitored annually for five years beginning in 2020. The areal extent of the Santa Cruz wallflower will be mapped in the treatment area, and density and cover of Santa Cruz wallflower will be measured in 10 replicate 1-meter by 1-meter plots in the treatment area and compared to the control and reference plots. Soil depth will also be monitored in all plots to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatments at deepening the soil. If the treatment is not effective, the monitoring results will be used to evaluate remedial actions to address factors that might inhibit success. If the treatment is effective, the results will be used to inform future management within the conservation areas.

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

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Jodi McGraw, Jodi McGraw Consulting

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Sections 15306 and 15307, Classes 6 and 7


Reasons why project is exempt: The Project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities and actions to restore and enhance populations of the endangered

California Department of Fish and Wildlife Permit No. 2081(a)-19-013-RP

Santa Cruz wallflower. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Santa Cruz wallflower are not impacted.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Cherilyn Burton

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 651-6508

Signature: 

Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

Date: Sept 30, 2019

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____