

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: Vine Hill Manzanita *Phytophthora* Testing Project (Project)

Project Location: The Project will take place at the 1.6-acre Nature Conservancy's Vine Hill Preserve (Preserve) in western Sonoma County. Samples will be processed at the Phytosphere lab in Vacaville, Solano County.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit (Permit Number 2081(a)-20-004-RP) to Phytosphere Research pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to collect soil samples containing fine roots of the endangered Vine Hill manzanita (*Arctostaphylos densiflora*) and test the samples for the presence of *Phytophthora* species, which are harmful pathogens that have detrimental effects on many plant species, including manzanitas. Samples will be collected near Vine Hill manzanita and other plants that are dead or in decline. Up to 15 samples containing between 1 and 1.5 liters of soil will be taken from areas that are close enough to Vine Hill manzanita plants to include live roots. The samples will be transported to the Phytosphere lab for bait testing to detect *Phytophthora* species. If detected, *Phytophthora* isolates will be sent to the California Department of Food and Agriculture Plant Pest Diagnostic Center in Sacramento for identification.

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

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Dr. Ted Swiecki, Principal/Plant Pathologist, Phytosphere Research

Exempt Status:

- Ministerial;
- Declared Emergency;
- Emergency Project;
- Categorical Exemption. Type and section number: Section 15306, Class 6

Reasons why project is exempt: The Project consists of basic data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that the endangered Vine Hill manzanita is not impacted.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Cherilyn Burton

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 376-8676

Signature:



Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

Date:

March 23, 2020

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____