

Notice of Exemption**Appendix E**

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Merced
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340

From: (Public Agency):
East Merced Conservation District (EMRCD)
2926 G Street, Suite 102
Merced, CA 95340

Planning and Monitoring for the Strategic Conservation of Key Remaining Vernal Pool
Project Title: Habitat Blocks in California's Great Valley and Modoc Plateau Regions

Project Applicant: East Merced Resource Conservation District

Project Location - Specific: Great Valley and Modoc Plateau in California

Project Location - City: Many Project Location - County: Many, see description below.

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Our project will identify, characterize, and develop a conservation strategy framework for 2 to 4 large remaining vernal pool habitat blocks within the Great Valley and the Modoc Plateau in California. Habitat blocks will be selected that offer the best opportunities for achieving landscape-scale conservation and preserving each ecoregion's unique biodiversity elements. Habitat restoration opportunities within each block will also be identified and characterized. This project will help identify and prioritize key remaining vernal pool habitat landscapes within each ecoregion that contain special-status species endemic to that area. Beneficiaries of this project include resource trustee agencies tasked with habitat and wildlife conservation. It is intended that the blocks will become focal points for ongoing conservation and restoration efforts by various public and private entities involved in land conservation. For example, our project supports the current interest by resource agencies and conservation groups in voluntary, grassroots conservation approaches, as represented by CDFW's new Regional Conservation Investment Strategies (RCIS) program.

Project Locations by County include: Alameda, Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Colusa, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Lassen, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Nevada, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Solano, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo, and Yuba

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: East Merced Resource Conservation District (EMRCD)

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Jean Okuye, President of EMRCD

Exempt Status: (check one):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
 Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
 Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
 Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
 Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Sec. 15262

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project is a planning study to identify properties that have high conservation value due to presence of vernal pool habitat and special status species. Funding agencies (Environmental Protection Agency, Wildlife Conservation Board) have not pre-approved any actions as result of this planning study. In addition, the outcome of this plan will not have a legally binding effect on later activities - i.e., there will be no legally binding actions for the properties identified as having high conservation value.

Lead Agency Jean Okuye (209) 756-2421
Contact Person: _____ Area Code/Telephone/Extension: _____

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: Jean Okuye Date: April 8, 2020 Title: EMRCD Board President

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: APR 09 2020

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE