

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

Project Location: The Project will take place in southwest San Luis Obispo County within the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex at the only remaining natural Nipomo Mesa lupine (*Lupinus nipomensis*) population (California Natural Diversity Database [CNDDDB] Element Occurrence #1). Treatment activities will take place within 17.7 acres of Nipomo Mesa lupine habitat on the 488-acre property which is owned by Phillips 66 but under a long-term lease with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) as part of the Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area.

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to DPR (Permit No. 2081[a]-21-008-RP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to control invasive species, specifically perennial veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*), to promote recovery of the endangered Nipomo Mesa lupine. Project activities include conducting surveys of the Nipomo Mesa lupine population, applying grass-specific herbicides to non-native veldt grass infestations, hand-weeding using hand tools, and installing wire mesh caging around seedlings to protect them from herbivory. Nipomo Mesa lupine surveys will be conducted prior to all weed control activities on-site and Nipomo Mesa lupine locations will be demarcated with flagging. Wire mesh cages will be installed around each seedling. Herbicide will be applied annually when the veldt grass is germinating, typically between December and March. During herbicide treatment, an herbicide-free buffer zone of no less than 15 feet (but typically 25 feet) will surround each Nipomo Mesa lupine plant. Manual removal of perennial veldt grass and other exotic weeds within the buffer zones will take place each year after the Nipomo Mesa lupine plants have senesced, typically between June and November. Working under direction of a qualified monitor, a contractor will apply herbicide with backpack sprayers or truck mounted power sprayers except within the buffer zones. A Nipomo Mesa lupine survey will be performed at the end of each herbicide treatment season for the duration of the project.

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

Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Ronnie Glick, Senior Environmental Scientist, DPR

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 will facilitate the recovery of the California endangered Nipomo Mesa lupine by attempting to control competing invasive species in its habitat and protecting seedlings from herbivory. The project consists of basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities, as well as actions to assure the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of Nipomo Mesa lupine. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Nipomo Mesa lupine are not impacted.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Cheryllyn Burton

Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 206-0411

Signature:  3EAAE66ED0644A2...

Date: 3/19/2021

Signed for: Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager

☐ Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____