

1. CEQA Notice of Exemption

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

From: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County
820 Bay Avenue, Suite 136
Capitola, CA 95010

Clerk of the Board
701 Ocean Street, Rm 500
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Project Title: Aptos Creek Streamwood Enhancement Project

Project Locations – General: Forest of Nisene Marks State Park along Aptos Creek between lat/long: 37.005281/-121.905592 (downstream end) and 37.033030/-121.880330 (upstream end)

Project Locations – City: Aptos, CA **Project Locations - County:** Santa Cruz County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: The project will increase channel complexity and improve habitat conditions within targeted reaches of Aptos Creek by accelerating recruitment of large wood to the channel in ways that mimic natural recruitment processes. The project approach is to source wood locally by utilizing existing medium-growth Coast Redwood trees adjacent to the creek that are either unhealthy, stump sprouted trunks, and/or part of dense stands that could benefit from targeted thinning. Pre-identified trees will be felled in strategic directions directly into the stream channel using manual hand falling techniques (no heavy equipment), with some subsequent degree of field fitting using winches. Trees with a DBH of between 20"-36" were targeted to ensure adequate strength of wood, long-term survival and function of wood, and reduce the number of trees given desired level of wood loading. All trees to be removed were identified based on field guidance from State Parks environmental staff and were chosen while keeping in mind minimization of impacts on canopy cover and shading, protection of wildlife and wildlife trees, and future natural recruitment of large wood. The project will lead to improved instream habitat for salmonids along stream reaches that are largely devoid of large wood. Expected project benefits include sediment retention, development of riffles, creation and maintenance of pools, floodplain activation, and improved cover habitat.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCDSCC)

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: RCDSCC

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 (Sec. 15304 Class 4 (i))
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number.

Reasons why project is exempt:

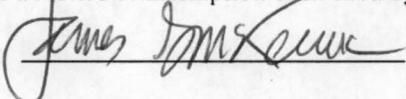
This project is categorically exempt pursuant to Sec. 15304 Minor Alterations to Land for the following reasons: This project is categorically exempt pursuant to Sec. 15304 - Minor Alterations to Land for the following reasons: the project does not involve any ground-disturbing activities as the work will be carried out using manual labor (no heavy equipment); only unhealthy trees, stump-sprouted trunks, and/or dense stands of trees that could benefit from selective

thinning will be removed; removed trees will be directly used to improve habitat for threatened and endangered salmonids; there will be no take of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species; and there will be no significant impacts to surface waters. For the reasons stated above, this project shall be exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

Lead Agency Contact Person: James McKenna, Board President RCDS **Telephone:** (831) 464-2950

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:  Date: 6/10/21 Title: BOARD PRESIDENT
RCDS OF SANTA CRUZ
COUNTY

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant Date received for filing at OPR: