Notice of Exemption

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

☐ Signed by Lead Agency

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

Project Title: Outplanting of Scotts Valley Polygonum (Polygonum hickmanii) (Project)

Project Location: The Outplanting of Scotts Valley Polygonum (Polygonum hickmanii) project (Project) will take place in Scotts Valley in Santa Cruz County. The initial pilot study will be implemented at Polo Ranch (37.06466, -121.99324) at historical California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) Element Occurrence (EO) 1. Subsequent reintroduction sites are in planning stages and may include locations at Scotts Valley High School (EO 2, 37.06974, -122.01084), Salvation Army (EO 2, 37.06974, -122.01084) and Glenwood Preserve (37.07448, -122.00213).

Project Description: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife is issuing a permit to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (Permit No. 2081(a)-22-010-RP) pursuant to Fish and Game Code section 2081(a) for a project to study conditions and techniques for successful in situ germination and population reestablishment of Scotts Valley polygonum in Santa Cruz County. The Project will directly address the 2020 USFWS recommended recovery action to outplant Scotts Valley polygonum to historical locations using bulked seed. The initial pilot study will take place at Polo Ranch. Four quadrats with different treatments will be placed at four historic locations, for a total of 16 quadrats. Approximately 8,000 seeds produced from greenhouse-reared plants under authority of CESA permit 2081(a)-18-004-RP will be used as source material. In the fall/winter of 2022/2023 approximately 500 seeds will be broadcast into each quadrat. Photos will be taken before and after planting. Planted areas will be covered with mesh to reduce herbivory and grazing exclosures will be installed. Maintenance of the quadrats will include hand weeding, thatch removal and maintenance of herbivory mesh. Monitoring will be conducted monthly beginning in February 2023 to assess germination of seedlings, flowering, fruiting, mortality, evidence of herbivory, or other conditions affecting outplanting success. Water treatments will be applied at each monitoring event unless natural precipitation is considered adequate. Results from the initial pilot study at Polo Ranch will inform future reintroduction efforts that are expected be continued by the Permittee, assistant investigators, and partners of the Scotts Valley Polygonum Recovery Implementation Team with the goal of establishing additional self-sustaining populations.

| California Public Agency Approving Project: California Dep | partment of Fish and Wildlife |
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| Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Todd Lemein, Bota | anist, USFWS |
| 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, as well as actions to support the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of the endangered Scotts Valley polygonum. The permit issued by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for the Project includes measures to ensure that existing populations of Scotts Valley polygonum are not impacted, and that introduced populations are adequately protected. | |
| Lead Agency Contact Person: Joanne Heraty | Area Code/Telephone/ Extension: (916) 594-4574 |
| Signature: Isabel Baer, Native Plant Program Manager | Date: |

Date Received for filing at OPR: ____