

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Eastern Sierra Campground Improvements (SNC #1586-RT)

Project Location – Specific: Three campground areas on Inyo National Forest Lands in Inyo and Mono counties: 1) Independence Creek Canyon campgrounds 13 miles west of the town of Independence, 2) Shady Rest campgrounds adjacent to the town of Mammoth Lakes, 3) Lee Vining Canyon campgrounds four miles west of the town of Lee Vining and the eastern entrance to Yosemite National Park.

Project Location - City: Inyo National Forest campgrounds near Independence, Mammoth Lakes, and Lee Vining.

Project Location - County: Inyo, Mono

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy would provide funding for the Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation (MLTPA) to partner with the Inyo National Forest (INF) to conduct planning, design, and environmental analyses, including engineering, surveying, schematic layouts, and environmental decisions, for proposed upgrades and improvements to nine existing campgrounds across three separate campground areas. The campgrounds are Morane, Cattleguard, and Lower Lee Vining campgrounds in Lee Vining Canyon; Old Shady Rest, New Shady Rest, and Pine Glen campgrounds in the Shady Rest area; and Onion Valley, Upper and Lower Grays Meadow campgrounds in Independence Canyon. Proposed upgrades and renovations will vary across the different campgrounds and may include improvements, such as relocating campsites from sensitive areas to mitigate recreation impacts and restore sensitive habitat; providing safer campfire rings to reduce the risk of escaped campfires; adding more campsites and amenities, including permanent toilets, picnic tables, bear boxes, and water systems; and improving connectivity between the campgrounds and nearby communities, including bike paths and trails.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Mammoth Lakes Trails and Public Access Foundation

Exempt Status:

Statutory Exemption: Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150; CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies

Categorical Exemption: CEQA Guidelines Section, 15306; Information Collection

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is Statutorily Exempt under Pub. Resources Code, Section 21150 and CEQA Guidelines, Section 15262 Feasibility and Planning Studies, as the project only involves planning studies for possible future actions, which the Sierra Nevada Conservancy Board has not approved, adopted, or funded; there is no legally binding effect on later activities. The project is also Categorical Exempt under Section 15306 Information Collection because it consists of basic data collection and resource evaluation activities, which do not result in a disturbance to environmental resources. The proposed activities are for information gathering purposes and are part of a study leading to an action, which a public agency has not yet approved, adopted, or funded. This project does not fall within any exceptions to the categorical exemption. MLPTA, in partnership with the INF, will collect data, conduct environmental analysis, and complete engineering design, for potential future campground renovation projects.

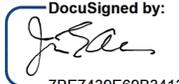
Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

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: 6/1/2023 Title: Chief Deputy Executive Officer

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.