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CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT STATUTORY EXEMPTION FOR RESTORATION PROJECTS
CONCURRENCE NO. 21080.56-2026-099-R3

Project:	Redwood Creek Habitat Enhancement Project at Mount Tamalpais State Park
Location:	Marin County
Lead Agency:	California Department of Parks and Recreation – Bay Area District
Lead Agency Contact:	Bree Hardcastle; Bree.Hardcastle@parks.ca.gov

Background

Project Location: The Redwood Creek Habitat Enhancement Project at Mount Tamalpais State Park (Project) is located within the Redwood Creek watershed in Marin County, approximately 1.35 miles northeast and upstream of Muir Beach, and approximately 3 miles west of the City of Mill Valley. The Project encompasses approximately 7,128 linear feet of Redwood Creek within Mount Tamalpais State Park, downstream of Muir Woods National Monument and upstream of Golden Gate National Recreation Area and includes approximately 5 acres of restoration spanning portions of Marin Water lands, the Green Gulch Zen Center, and other private properties; centered at 37.88106, -122.57385.

Project Description: The California Department of Parks and Recreation – Bay Area District (State Parks) proposes to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend, and to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife. The Project is designed to improve habitat for coho salmon - Central California Coast (CCC) evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*), listed as endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) and under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA); steelhead trout – CCC distinct population segment (DPS) (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), listed as threatened under ESA and a California State Species of Special Concern (SSC); California red-legged frog (Rana draytonii), listed as threatened under ESA and SSC; northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata),* proposed as threatened under ESA and SSC, as well as improve climate change resilience and promote natural watershed processes within the Redwood Creek watershed by restoring approximately 1.35 miles of Redwood Creek in Mount Tamalpais State Park.

The Redwood Creek watershed remains one of the least-developed watersheds in Marin County, and serves as an important natural resource for both native wildlife habitat and public recreation. Many past restoration efforts have occurred throughout the watershed since 2003,

including, but not limited to Big Lagoon restoration, restorations completed within the Banducci Reach, and Phases I and II of the Salmon Habitat Enhancement at Muir Woods. Following completion of these restoration and enhancement projects, the Redwood Creek reach within Mount Tamalpais State Park remains the last area of the watershed where habitat restoration and enhancement has not occurred. This Project seeks to "close the gap" in enhancement activities and connect enhancement and resource management activities up- and downstream to aid in the recovery of threatened coho salmon, steelhead, and California red-legged frog. The Project will enhance and restore habitat in this remaining stretch of Redwood Creek through the implementation of three primary restoration elements: 1) live wood augmentation, 2) floodplain and riparian enhancement, and 3) tributary enhancement.

Live Wood Augmentation – Live wood augmentation will occur throughout approximately 0.09 acres of riparian habitat along Redwood Creek to accelerate wood recruitment and improve habitat complexity and cover for native aquatic wildlife and fish species. Approximately 85 live riparian trees, including red alders (*Alnus rubra*) and willow species (*Salix* spp.), will be strategically selected and placed into the stream channel using hand tools, including grip hoists, block and tackle, and non-motorized equipment. Trees will be installed, keeping root systems intact to allow for continued growth and resprouting after installation, and will be loosely anchored to existing living riparian trees along the banks of Redwood Creek. Live wood placed into the channel is intended to move and be dynamic and will increase channel roughness, increase pool habitat, backwater newly restored floodplain habitat, capture additional wood, and increase the number of key pieces of large wood throughout the Project reach.

Floodplain and Riparian Enhancement – Approximately 2.7 acres of floodplain habitat will be created within Redwood Creek. Four areas identified with the potential for future bank retreat will be excavated and graded to create a gently sloped floodplain adjacent to installed live wood features, intended to increase the frequency and area of floodplain inundation. Excavated spoils will be placed in upland areas to avoid impacts on riparian vegetation communities, covered with mulch and slash generated from the Project, and will be revegetated with native plant species after earthwork is completed.

Tributary Enhancements – An unnamed tributary flowing from the south into the Project reach, colloquially known as C2 Tributary, is a deeply incised steep-walled gully that cuts through the alluvial fan where two headcuts have formed. A log and boulder-roughened chute including two buried rock weirs will be installed along approximately 120 linear feet of the C2 Tributary channel. Approximately six pieces of wood from on-site will be reused to create log structures which will be pinned to large boulders and buried into the restored bed of the channel to eliminate incision at the headcuts and improve aggradation of the channel over time.

Miwok Creek is an incised tributary to Redwood Creek flowing from the south into the upstream end of the Project reach. Four stacked large wood structures composed of approximately three logs stacked laterally across the channel will be placed throughout approximately 400 linear feet of the channel within Miwok Creek. Slash mattresses will be placed in between these structures and held in place with driven posts and twine using hand tools. The slash mattresses will be composed of small wood and slash generated from the

Project, and are intended to trap sediment, increase aggradation, and decrease the severity of the channel incision in the downstream reach of the Miwok Tributary.

One temporary crossing over Redwood Creek will be constructed to facilitate equipment access for implementation of floodplain, riparian, and tributary enhancement. The temporary crossing will be needed to implement the Project and will require removing aquatic species from the work area prior to installation. A portion of the existing Redwood Creek Trail will be used to access some of the enhancement sites within Redwood Creek and will be decommissioned after implementation is completed.

Post-enhancement activities will occur over approximately five years and include vegetation monitoring; stream flow monitoring; water level and temperature monitoring; channel topographic and habitat monitoring; live wood monitoring; and photo monitoring. Adaptive management of restoration features may be needed if features are not functioning as intended; adaptive management activities include additional installation of live wood and wood structures, minor modifications to installed restoration features, regrading, native plantings, and non-native plant removal.

Tribal Engagement: In April 2024, State Parks contacted the Native American Heritage Commission to conduct a search of the Sacred Lands File for the Project area. Based on this search, certified mail letters were sent to the following tribes: Big Mountain Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Lytton Rancheria, Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria (FIGR), Cortina Rancheria – Kletsel Dehe Band of Wintun Indians, Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians, Guidiville Indian Rancheria, Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians, Wuksache Indian Tribe – Eshom Valley Band, Pinoleville Pomo Nation, Muwekma Ohlone Tribe of the SF Bay Area, Middletown Rancheria, Mishewal-Wappo Tribe of Alexander Valley, Ya-Ka-Ama, and Kashia Band of Pomo Indians. On April 11, 2024, a response was received from the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians. Throughout 2024, a series of discussions occurred with FIGR and coordination is ongoing. Project coordination and engagement with other interested Tribes will continue.

Interested Party Coordination: State Parks held seven Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings to solicit input on the Project throughout the planning process, including development of goals and objectives and preliminary design concepts. The TAC participants included the Wildlife Conservation Board, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), United States Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, National Park Service, Marin Water, University of California, Berkeley, and University of Austin, Texas. Additional regulatory agency input is expected during the permitting and consultation process and will be incorporated into the final design phase of the Project. State Parks will continue to provide updates to key interested parties and local community groups, including Marin Conservation League, the Environmental Roundtable of Marin, and the Lagunitas Technical Advisory Committee.

Anticipated Project Implementation Timeframes: Start date: January 2027
Completion date: July 2047

Lead Agency Request for CDFW Concurrence: On February 26, 2026, the Director of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW Director) received a concurrence request from the Lead Agency pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivision (e) (Request). The Request seeks the CDFW Director's concurrence with the Lead Agency's determination on February 26, 2026 that the Project meets certain qualifying criteria set forth in subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive, of the same section of the Public Resources Code (Lead Agency Determination). The CDFW Director's concurrence is required for the Lead Agency to approve the Project relying on this section of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.).

Concurrence Determination

The CDFW Director concurs with the Lead Agency Determination that the Project meets the qualifying criteria set forth in Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivisions (a) to (d), inclusive (Concurrence).

Specifically, the CDFW Director concurs with the Lead Agency that the Project meets all of the following conditions: (A) the Project is exclusively to conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend; or is exclusively to restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife; (B) the Project may have public benefits incidental to the Project's fundamental purpose; (C) the Project will result in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery; and includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment; and (D) Project construction activities are solely related to habitat restoration. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivision (g), CDFW will post this Concurrence on its CEQA Notices and Documents internet page: https://wildlife.ca.gov/Notices/CEQA.

This Concurrence is based on best available science and supported, as described below, by substantial evidence in CDFW's administrative record of proceedings for the Project.

This Concurrence is also based on a finding that the Project is consistent with and that its implementation will further CDFW's mandate as California's trustee agency for fish and wildlife, including the responsibility to hold and manage these resources in trust for all the people of California.

Discussion

A. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivision (a), the CDFW Director concurs with the Lead Agency that the Project will exclusively conserve, restore, protect, or enhance, and assist in the recovery of California native fish and wildlife, and the habitat upon which they depend; or restore or provide habitat for California native fish and wildlife.

   The Project will restore and increase the quantity and quality of aquatic habitat through geomorphic and habitat enhancement techniques, including live wood augmentation,

floodplain and riparian enhancement, and tributary enhancement. To address the lack of instream habitat the Project will increase instream wood through accelerated recruitment. It is anticipated that live wood augmentation will restore functional habitat for coho salmon and steelhead by increasing the frequency and number of primary pools and in-channel spawning and rearing habitat throughout the Project reach. Additionally, live wood augmentation will raise the water levels in the Project reach between 1 and 1.5 feet during winter baseflows by increasing roughness, aggradation, and backwater ponding upstream of the wood features, resulting in improved habitat complexity for aquatic species. The Project will also increase limited floodplain habitat within the watershed by creating floodplain benches that more frequently connect to the active channel of Redwood Creek. This will increase the area of active floodplain, widen the riparian corridor, and expand the riparian vegetation canopy, enhancing habitat for aquatic and terrestrial species such as western pond turtle, threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), and multiple species of sculpin (*Cottus* ssp).

B. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivision (b), the CDFW Director concurs with the Lead Agency that the Project may have incidental public benefits, such as public access and recreation.

   The Project may result in incidental public safety and recreation benefits. Specifically, the Project will improve aquatic habitat to promote natural watershed processes which are designed to reduce localized channel incision within the Project area. By addressing channel incision, the Project may result in incidental flood resiliency benefits for an existing trail bridge located within the C2 tributary. Consequently, the public may benefit from improved flood safety within and downstream of the Project area, while also helping to protect/maintain a recreation benefit to a portion of the existing Redwood Creek trail located in Mount Tamalpais State Park.

C. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivision (c), the CDFW Director concurs with the Lead Agency that the Project will result in long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery, and includes procedures and ongoing management for the protection of the environment.

   Long-term Net Benefits to Climate Resiliency: Increasingly dry conditions, extreme weather events, and warmer average temperatures are key climate change threats to coho salmon and other aquatic species in the watershed. As coho salmon grow in freshwater, they prefer deep well shaded pools where water temperatures range from 10-15°C and are therefore adversely impacted by hotter and drier weather conditions that are expected to become increasingly more common as a result of climate change. Additionally, climate change is expected to result in more extreme high flow events which can further impact coho salmon during their lifecycle by increasing turbidity and instances of injury and stress if there is a lack of slow-water refuge habitat. The Project elements, including live wood augmentation and floodplain, riparian, and tributary enhancement will address these stressors by enhancing the quality and abundance of the full range of creek habitat types, such as cold deep pools needed during low-flow summer conditions, slow-water refuge habitat needed during high flows events, and spawning habitat needed for reproduction.

Moreover, the Project will address local effects of climate change by: increasing cold water refuge habitat needed for coho salmon during low-flow periods; increasing in-channel cover and slow-velocity refuge habitat needed during high flow events; improving and increasing riparian vegetation and shaded stream conditions over the long-term to minimize increases in water temperature and to facilitate increased carbon sequestration; advancing the channel evolution process of expanding the riparian corridor; increasing floodplain and off-channel habitat; and improving fire-resiliency across the watershed by improving the duration and frequency of inundation of riparian wetlands within Redwood Creek.

Long-term Net Benefits to Biodiversity: The Project will improve in-channel habitat and create floodplain habitat along approximately 7,128 linear feet of Redwood Creek, increasing the diversity of habitat types and connectivity between the restored habitats to benefit native fish species, including coho salmon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey (*Entisphenus tridentatus*). These anadromous native species provide rich marine nutrients to inland riparian habitat, increase food web stability, and benefit the overall ecosystem of the Redwood Creek watershed by providing food for native birds such as belted kingfisher (*Megaceryle alcyon*), great egret (*Ardea alba*), great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*); and native mammals such as northern river otter (*Lontra canadensis),* black bear (*Usrsus americanus*), and common racoon (*Procyon lotor*). The Project will also enhance and increase riparian habitat for native terrestrial wildlife species including California red-legged frog, northwestern pond turtle, and dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*), which provide an important prey base for species like northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), Wilson's warbler (*Cardellina pusilla*), and downy woodpecker (*Dryobates pubescens*). Additionally, the restoration will include revegetation of native plant species that support riparian and upland vegetation communities, including red willow (*Salix laevigata*), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), California bottlebrush (*Elymus californicus*), big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), red elderberry (*Sambucus racemosa),* pink honeysuckle (*Lonicera hispidula*), and common rush (*Juncus effusus*).

Long-term Net Benefits to Sensitive Species Recovery: The Project will restore habitat conditions for native sensitive species that have experienced population decline due to loss of suitable habitat related to development and anthropogenic effects. The Project will result in long-term recovery for listed species such as California red-legged frog, northwestern pond turtle, steelhead, and coho salmon by restoring creek conditions; enhancing aquatic breeding and spawning habitat; and improving water quality by reducing sediment and turbidity within the watershed. The Project will also increase slow-water refuge habitat, improve connection to off-channel rearing habitat, and increase in-channel spawning habitat within critical habitat for coho salmon and steelhead trout. Improvements to aquatic and riparian habitat quality will also provide additional breeding, rearing, and foraging habitat for western pond turtle and California red-legged frog. The Project supports the recovery actions in NOAA's Coastal Multispecies Recovery Plan, which addresses actions for CCC steelhead. Additionally, California red-legged frog and northwestern pond turtle will benefit from live wood augmentation which provides additional basking habitat and raises surface water

levels in the Project reach to improve the quality of breeding habitat. The Project will result in improved conditions for native vegetation communities as well as native pollinator species such as monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*), particularly in riparian and upland areas that are revegetated with native plant species.

Procedures for the Protection of the Environment: The Project includes specific design criteria that have been developed to minimize environmental effects during Project implementation. These design criteria measures, additional best management practices, and resource protection measures required following regulatory approvals have been incorporated into the Project and include erosion control, avoidance of sensitive habitats, site revegetation, construction work windows, environmental monitoring and training, material storage, disposal and spill response, wildfire and non-native species prevention, and species-specific protection measures.

Ongoing Management for the Protection of the Environment: A Post-Implementation Monitoring Plan was developed for the Project to establish success criteria directly tied to Project objectives and to identify potential adaptive management actions if success criteria are not met. Monitoring success criteria will be used to support long-term success of the Project and will occur over five years following initial restoration activities. Post-implementation monitoring will evaluate the quantity of primary pools, inundation of created floodplains, large wood density, changes with potential to impact fish passage, channel topography and incision, vegetative cover, groundwater and surface water, and water temperature.

Ongoing management will be consistent with State Parks standard practices for park maintenance, including the management and protection of attributes of this Project, such as maintaining the natural function of stream processes and associated habitat features, including floodplains, riparian communities, natural large wood accumulations, terraces, gravel bars, riffles, and pools.

D. Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56, subdivision (d), the CDFW Director concurs with the Lead Agency that the Project does not include any construction activities, except those solely related to habitat restoration.

All Project construction activities are solely related to habitat restoration of the site. Anticipated implementation activities include establishing temporary access roads and staging areas; pulling over trees for live wood augmentation; placement of large wood and slash; targeted floodplain excavation; and installation of a roughened chute and rock weirs. The Project will include minimal material import and export to and from the site.

Scope and Reservation of Concurrence

This Concurrence is based on the proposed Project as described by the Lead Agency Determination and the Request. If there are any subsequent changes to the Project that affect or otherwise change the Lead Agency Determination, the Lead Agency, or any other public agency that proposes to carry out or approve the Project, shall submit a new lead agency determination and request for concurrence from CDFW pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.56. If any other public agency proposes to carry out or approve the Project subsequent to the effective date of this Concurrence, this Concurrence shall remain in effect and no separate concurrence from CDFW shall be required so long as the other public agency is carrying out or approving the Project as described by the Lead Agency Determination and the Request.

Other Legal Obligations

The Project shall remain subject to all other applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations, and this Concurrence shall not weaken or violate any applicable environmental or public health standards. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21080.56, subd. (f).)

CDFW Director's Certification

Signed by:
By: 19042A1B72454D8... _____ Date: 4/2/2026

Meghan Hertel, Director
California Department of Fish and Wildlife