



**Resource Management
Agency
COUNTY OF TULARE
AGENDA ITEM**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

KUYLER CROCKER
District One
PETE VANDER POEL
District Two
AMY SHUKLIAN
District Three
EDDIE VALERO
District Four
DENNIS TOWNSEND
District Five

AGENDA DATE: July 9, 2019

Public Hearing Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Scheduled Public Hearing w/Clerk	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Published Notice Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Advertised Published Notice	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Meet & Confer Required	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Electronic file(s) has been sent	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Budget Transfer (Aud 308) attached	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Personnel Resolution attached	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Agreements are attached and signature line for Chairman is marked with tab(s)/flag(s)	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
CONTACT PERSON: Celeste Perez PHONE: (559) 624-7010				

SUBJECT: Adopt the Categorical Exemption for the M348 South Fork Kaweah River Bridge Revegetation Project

- REQUEST(S):**
That the Board of Supervisors:
1. Adopt the Categorical Exemption prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the State CEQA Guidelines per Section 15333 Small Habitat Restoration Projects, for the M348 South Fork Kaweah River Bridge Revegetation Project; and
 2. Authorize the Environmental Assessment Officer, or designee, to sign and file the Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk.

SUMMARY:
In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County of Tulare, acting as the lead agency for the M348 South Fork Kaweah River Bridge Project, must adopt the Categorical Exemption (CE) prior to proceeding with the project.

The County, in cooperation with Caltrans, proposes to replace the existing functionally obsolete (narrow) and fracture critical bridge on M348 over the South Fork Kaweah River. Located approximately 12 miles southeast of the community of Three Rivers, the existing structure (constructed in 1952) will be replaced with a wider one-lane, clear-span, steel girder bridge with precast or cast-in-place concrete deck panels. Also located approximately 0.42 miles from Sequoia National Park, this bridge primarily serves recreational and forestry vehicles traveling to South Fork Campground at the terminus of South Fork Drive. Due to the lack of an available

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DATE: July 9, 2019

detour and to accommodate traffic during construction, the replacement structure will be constructed along a new alignment upstream of the existing bridge.

Due to the new alignment, construction of the project will require removal of several riparian trees located within or near the South Fork of the Kaweah River. In accordance with California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) permit requirements, all tree removal within CDFW jurisdiction must be mitigated by performing either on-site or off-site revegetation and restoration. Due to the limited availability of on-site space, the County has selected the Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) Homer Ranch Preserve for the off-site restoration efforts. Located approximately 17 miles northwest of the Project site, the preserve is within the Project's watershed and has been approved by CDFW.

SRT will be responsible for all site preparation, irrigation, planting and monitoring needed to establish the proposed restoration area. County staff will provide oversight of the restoration efforts and review of yearly monitoring reports to CDFW. It is estimated that off-site mitigation will cost up to \$225,000, including staff management and review efforts. Staff is currently working with Caltrans on securing the Revegetation Project funding. Once approved, staff will request that your Board approve a Program Supplement with Caltrans to allow reimbursement for Revegetation Project costs.

Bridge construction is anticipated to begin in the fall of 2020, and should take approximately 6 months to complete all work. In accordance with CDFW permit requirements, all mitigation planting shall to be completed within one year of tree removal (anticipated November of 2020). The off-site revegetation and restoration phase will require an establishment period of approximately 5 years, placing Project completion around November of 2025.

In accordance with CEQA, the County determined that a categorical exemption is applicable to the proposed action: State CEQA Guidelines (14 Cal. Code Regs.) Section 15333, Small Habitat Restoration Projects.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING:

No Net County Cost.

It is anticipated the Highway Bridge Program will fund this project at a 100% reimbursement ratio with the use of "toll credits" (no local match required).

County Road Funds will be used to fund this Project, but will be fully reimbursed by Federal Highway Bridge Program funds.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF TULARE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:

This project will enhance the safety and security of the public by improving the transportation infrastructure for both the general population in the region and the motorists using this facility.

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Bridge Revegetation Project

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ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:



Reed Schenke, P.E.
Director

cc: County Administrative Office

Attachment(s) Attachment A – Vicinity Map
Attachment B – Notice of Exemption

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF TULARE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

IN THE MATTER OF ADOPT THE) Resolution No. _____
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FOR THE)
M348 SOUTH FORK KAWEAH RIVER)
BRIDGE REVEGETATION PROJECT)

UPON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR _____, SECONDED BY
SUPERVISOR _____, THE FOLLOWING WAS ADOPTED BY THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AT AN OFFICIAL MEETING HELD JULY 9, 2019, BY THE
FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

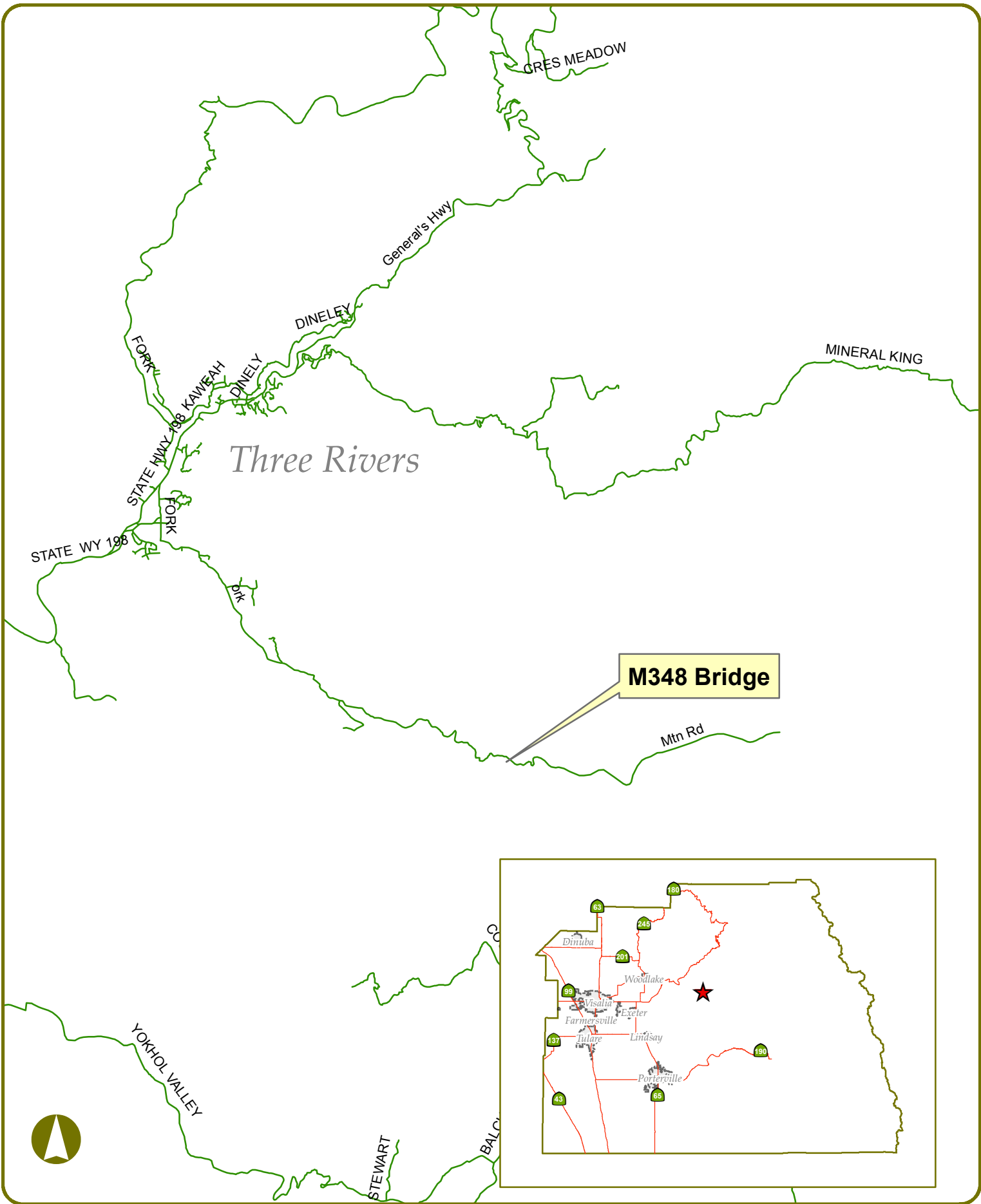
ATTEST: JASON T. BRITT
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER/
CLERK, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BY: _____
Deputy Clerk

* * * * *

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Attachment A - Vicinity Map



Attachment B - Notice of Exemption

Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

Tulare County Clerk
Room 105, Courthouse
221 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93291

Dated filed at Tulare County Clerk's Office

Lead Agency: Tulare County Resource Management Agency
5961 South Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, Ca 93277 Ph: (559) 624-7000
Attn: *hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us*

Applicant(s): Tulare County Public Works
5961 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277 Ph: (559) 624-7000

Project Title: M348 South Fork Kaweah River Bridge Replacement Tree Mitigation Project

Project Location - Specific: Homer Ranch Preserve in Tulare County, CA.

Project Location- Section, Township, Range: Township 17S, Range 27E in Section 11 of the Woodlake USGS 7 1/2 minute quadrangle

Project Location - City: Near unincorporated community of Lemon Cove **Project Location - County:** Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The County of Tulare intends to plant trees at Homer Ranch in Lemon Cove, CA through the Sequoia Riverlands Trust as mitigation for the removal of trees from CDFW habitat as a result of the M348 South Fork Kaweah River Bridge Replacement Project. The bridge replacement project will benefit Tulare County residents and visitors as it will result in a modern, structurally sound, and functionally adequate bridge.


Exempt Status: *(check one)*

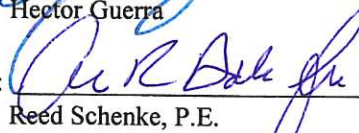
- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- General Rule: CEQA guidelines 15061 (b)(3)
- Categorical Exemption: **CEQA Guidelines Class 33 Section 15333 Small Habitat Restoration Projects**
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons why project is exempt: This action is consistent with Section 15333 Class 33, Small Habitat Restoration Projects. As noted earlier, the Project provides mitigation by replacing trees which will be removed as a result of the M348 South Fork Kaweah River Bridge Replacement Project. Therefore, the application of CEQA Section 15333 is applicable and appropriate for this project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Tulare, Resource Management Agency

Project Planner/Representative: Jason Vivian, Engineer IV **Area Code/Telephone:** 559-624-7135

Signature:  Date: 6/6/19 Title: Chief Environmental Planner
Hector Guerra

Signature:  Date: 6.6.19 Title: Environmental Assessment Officer
Reed Schenke, P.E. Director

Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR: N/A