



**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: October 22, 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 Bear Creek Road (M220) over Rancheria Creek 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 Bear Creek Road (M220) over Rancheria Creek Bridge Revegetation Project (near Springville); 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 Bear Creek Road (M220) over Rancheria Creek Bridge Project (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 Bear Creek Road (M220) over Rancheria Creek. Located approximately 3.5 miles east of Balch Park Road, northeast of the community of Springville, the existing structure (constructed in 1954) is currently being replaced with a new clear-span post-tensioned voided concrete flat slab bridge. To construct a wider bridge meeting current engineering standards,

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several riparian trees located within or near Rancheria Creek had to be removed.

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/restoration. Due to the limited availability of on-site space, the County has selected Blue Oak Ranch Preserve, owned and maintained by Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT), for all off-site restoration efforts. Located approximately 1.5 miles southwest 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 and irrigation, along with all planting and monitoring needed to establish the proposed restoration area. An agreement with SRT to perform all revegetation and restoration work for the Project was approved by your Board in the amount of \$100,648 on September 10, 2019 (Tulare County Agreement No. 29385). County staff will provide oversight of the restoration efforts and the review of yearly monitoring reports for CDFW. It is estimated that off-site mitigation will cost up to \$165,000, including staff management and review efforts.

Bridge construction began in the winter of 2018, and will be complete by this fall. In accordance with CDFW permit requirements, all mitigation planting shall to be completed within one year of tree removal. The off-site revegetation and restoration phase will require an establishment period of approximately 5 years, placing completion of the revegetation project around fall of 2024.

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.

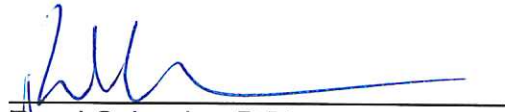
LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF TULARE STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN:

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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ADMINISTRATIVE SIGN-OFF:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Reed Schenke', is written over a horizontal line.

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)
BEAR CREEK ROAD (M220) OVER)
RANCHERIA CREEK BRIDGE)
REVEGETATION PROJECT)

UPON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR _____, SECONDED BY
SUPERVISOR _____, THE FOLLOWING WAS ADOPTED BY THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, AT AN OFFICIAL MEETING HELD OCTOBER 22, 2019,
BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSTAIN:
ABSENT:

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

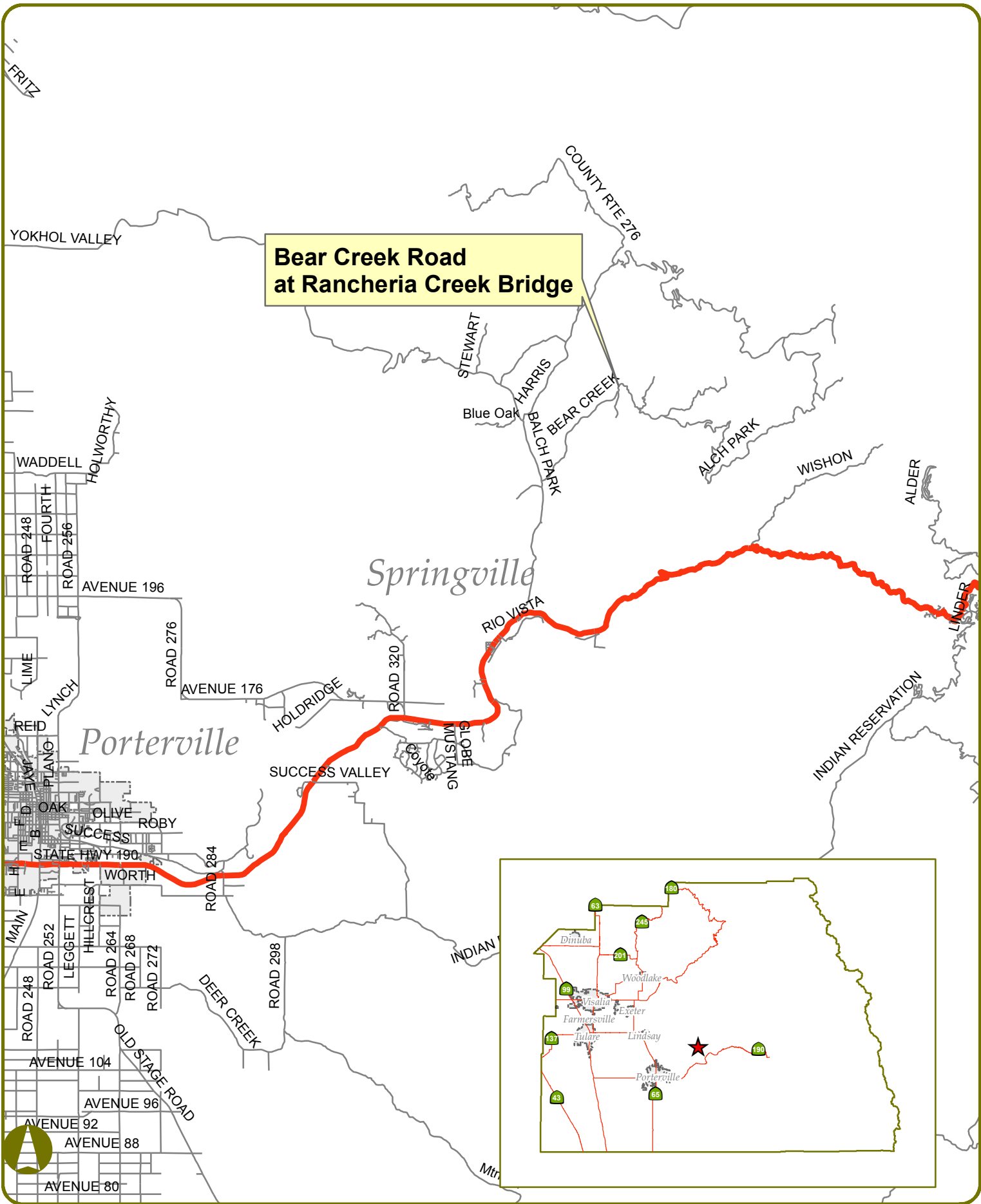
BY: _____
Deputy Clerk

* * * * *

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Attachment A

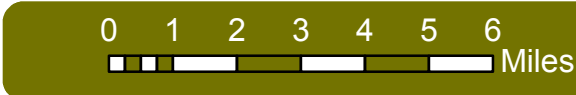
Vicinity Map



**Bear Creek Road
at Rancheria Creek Bridge**

Springville

Porterville



Attachment B

Notice of Exemption

Notice of Exemption

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To: Tulare County Clerk
Room 105, Courthouse
221 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, California 93291

Lead Agency: Tulare County Resource Management Agency
Planning Branch
5961 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277
Attn: hguerra@co.tulare.ca.us

<i>Date filed by Tulare County Clerk</i>

Applicant(s): Tulare County Resource Management Agency – Public Works Branch
5961 South Mooney Boulevard
Visalia, CA 93277

Activity / Project Title: Bear Creek Road (M220) over Rancheria Creek Bridge Replacement Tree Mitigation Project
Activity / Project Location - Specific: Blue Oaks Preserve in Tulare County, CA
Activity / Project Location- Section, Township, Range: SW ¼ of SE ¼ of Section 1 Township 20S, Range 30E
Activity / Project Location - City: Springville, CA
Activity / Project Location - County: Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Activity/Project: The County of Tulare intends to plant trees at Blue Oaks Preserve in Springville, CA through Sequoia Riverlands Trust, as mitigation for the removal of trees from CDFW habitat as a result of the Bear Creek Road (M220) over Rancheria Creek 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:

- Ministerial (Sections 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sections 21080(b)(3);15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sections 21080(b)(4);15269(b)(c));
- Common Sense Exemption: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)
- Categorical Exemption: **CEQA Guidelines Class 33 Section 15333 Small Habitat Restoration Projects**
- Statutory Exemptions:

Reasons why activity / project is exempt from CEQA: 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 Bear Creek Road (M220) over Rancheria Creek Bridge Replacement Project. Therefore, the application of CEQA Section 15333 is applicable and appropriate for this project.

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

Activity / Project Representative: Jason K. Vivian, Engineer IV Area Code/Telephone: (559) 624-7135

Signature: _____ Date: _____ Title: Chief Environmental Planner
Hector Guerra

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

Signed by Lead Agency

Date received for filing at OPR: N/A