



CUTTING THE GREEN TAPE

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Cutting the Green Tape (CGT) program is a statewide effort to increase the pace, scale, and quality of habitat restoration by creating and implementing new environmental permitting and grant funding tools.



Grant Funding



Permitting and CEQA



Project Coordination

<https://wildlife.ca.gov/Cutting-Green-Tape>



CUTTING THE GREEN TAPE

Restoration Permitting and CEQA Tools



Restoration Management Permit (RMP)

The RMP combines up to five CDFW authorizations into a unified permit.



Restoration Consistency Determination (CD)

Restoration CDs are fast, free, and provide take coverage for species that are both state and federally listed.



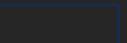
Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Act (HREA)*

HREA includes a CEQA exemption, LSA Agreement, and CESA authorization for small restoration projects.



Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP)

SERP can save substantial money and time for qualifying projects needing CEQA coverage.



If You're Doing a Project...You Gotta Get CEQA



- Traditional CEQA – project-specific
- Programmatic CEQA
- Categorical exemptions
- Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects (SERP)

What's Up With SERP? (Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects)

- A complete CEQA statutory exemption for qualifying projects.
- Passed in late 2021, renewed and extended through 2029.
- Process: CEQA lead agency and CDFW.
- Our goal is <60 days processing time.
- SERP has more process than other CEQA exemptions, but it is manageable.



How Does a Project Qualify for SERP?

1. Must exclusively be a project to benefit habitat and/or wildlife.
2. However, a project with incidental public benefits may also qualify.
3. Project provides long-term net benefits to climate resiliency, biodiversity, and sensitive species recovery.
4. Project includes environmental protection measures and ongoing management.
5. All “construction” is solely for restoration.

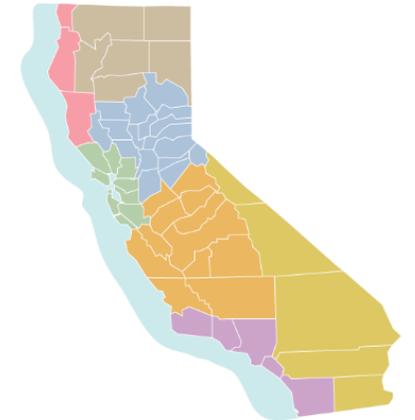


What Does the SERP Lead Agency Process Look Like?

1. [Contact](#) regional CDFW staff or restorationpermitting@wildlife.ca.gov to discuss the project with CDFW
2. Prepare written Lead Agency SERP Determinations and share them with CDFW
3. Receive CDFW Director's Concurrence
4. Lead Agency may approve the project
5. File mandatory Notice of Exemption via [CEQA Submit](#) within 48 hours

Regional Support Staff

- **1 - Northern Region - Coastal**
Michael van Hattem, Senior Environmental Scientist (Sup.)
Michael.VanHattem@wildlife.ca.gov, (707) 499-9457
Nicholas Van Vleet, Environmental Scientist
Nicholas.Vanvleet@wildlife.ca.gov, (707) 298-4175
- **1 - Northern Region - Inland**
Stacey Alexander, Environmental Scientist
stacey.alexander@wildlife.ca.gov, (530) 319-1371
- **2 - North Central Region**
Briana 'Bri' Seapy, Senior Environmental Scientist (Sup.)



Tips and Tricks for SERP Lead Agencies

1. Explore the resources on CDFW's [SERP website](#) and CGT [Story Map](#).
2. Examine real-life [examples](#) of successful SERP projects.
3. Please engage respectfully with Tribes, affected public agencies, and interested persons regarding the project.
4. Provide an informal draft to CDFW before making an official SERP request.

Example Projects

Capinero Creek Restoration Project, Tulare County

- [CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects \(SERP\) Lead Agency Determinations for the Capinero Creek Restoration Project \(PDF\)](#). Prepared by the Pixley Irrigation District. June 12, 2024.
- [CDFW Concurrence for the Capinero Creek Restoration Project \(PDF\)](#). August 2, 2024.

Santa Monica Beach Dunes Restoration Project – Phase 3, Los Angeles County

- [CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects \(SERP\) Lead Agency Determinations for the Santa Monica Beach Dunes Restoration Project – Phase 3 \(PDF\)](#). Prepared by the City of Santa Monica. June 20, 2024.
- [CDFW Concurrence for the Santa Monica Beach Dunes Restoration Project – Phase 3 \(PDF\)](#). August 2, 2024.

Lodge Road Wildfire Resilience and Large Tree Restoration Demonstration Project, Santa Cruz County

- [CEQA Statutory Exemption for Restoration Projects \(SERP\) Lead Agency Determinations for the Lodge Road Wildfire Resilience and Large Tree Restoration Demonstration Project \(PDF\)](#). Prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. May 24, 2024.
- [CDFW Concurrence for the Lodge Road Wildfire Resilience and Large Tree Restoration Demonstration Project \(PDF\)](#). July 24, 2024.

The background of the image is a reproduction of the painting 'The Scream' by Edvard Munch. It depicts a figure in the lower center with a pale, yellowish face and wide, staring eyes, set against a dark, swirling, and turbulent sea. The sky above is a mix of dark, swirling colors, suggesting a storm or intense emotional distress. The overall mood is one of anguish and mental torment.

**NOW, WE SHALL MOVE ON TO...
PERMITTING!!**

The Restoration Management Permit Act of 2024 (AB 1581) Section 1670 et. seq

- The RMP Act created a new chapter in Fish and Game Code, effective January 1, 2025
- Up to five types of CDFW authorizations in one RMP permit (Covered Species and Covered Waterbodies):
 - Take of CESA listed or candidate species
 - Take of Fully Protected Species
 - Take of “Rare” plants - Native Plant Protection Act
 - Take of species otherwise protected - e.g., section 2000
 - Substantial alterations to rivers, streams, or lakes
- Coordinated with other efficient restoration permits (NOAA & USFWS Programmatic Biological Opinions, Water Boards Statewide Restoration General Order)



RMP Eligibility Criteria (Section 1671) “Qualifying Restoration Project”

Qualifying Restoration Project

- ✓ A “**management**” and/or “**propagation**” project as defined
- ✓ The **primary project purpose** is restoration
- ✓ The project results in a “**substantial net benefit**” above baseline conditions



*a substantial net benefit assists, either directly or indirectly, in recovery



More on RMP Eligibility

- A Qualifying Restoration Project can originate in several ways:
 - A grant-funded restoration project carried out by an NGO or Tribe
 - A public agency's restoration project
 - A private party's restoration project
 - A restoration project serving as mitigation
 - A restoration project required to remediate a violation
- A restoration project with secondary or incidental benefits may qualify
- No disqualified project types
- RMPs for restoration programs are possible
- No upper size limits for qualifying restoration projects – GO BIG!



Rollout/Pilot RMP Process

- Early RMP consultation is initiated in CDFW Regions with CGT HQ assistance
- Goal: RMP compatibility with other permits
- Application items are found in section 1673(b)
- Email applications; currently **no fee**
- RMP conditions - reasonable avoidance and minimization measures, generally no mitigation
- RMPs are approved in CDFW Regions
- RMP processing time goal: no more than 120 days; we hope to shorten this over time
- CEQA compliance is needed



A Quick Guide to Restoration Permitting with Cutting the Green Tape¹



Part 1 – CEQA for Restoration Projects

Step 1: Does my restoration project need to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)?

“Discretionary” projects carried out, supervised, funded, or permitted by any nonfederal public agency will generally need CEQA compliance.

- Note that although public agencies are responsible for CEQA compliance, they often need the assistance of the project proponent.

More Resources: Read Sustainable Conservation’s [CEQA Primer!](#)

Step 2: Determining a CEQA Lead Agency for my restoration project.

The CEQA Lead Agency is the nonfederal public agency directly carrying out the project, or having the greatest responsibility for supervising, funding, or approving the project.

A Responsible Agency is a nonfederal public agency, other than the Lead Agency, which also has responsibility for carrying out, supervising, funding, or approving a project following Lead Agency approval. A Responsible Agency generally uses the Lead Agency’s CEQA platform when making its approval. Involved public agencies may need to discuss their CEQA roles for your project prior to determining which agency serves as Lead Agency.

More Resources: Read Sustainable Conservation’s [CEQA Primer!](#)

Step 3: CEQA Lead Agency Chooses a preferred CEQA Platform.

There are several efficient CEQA options for restoration projects depending on project type and size. Governor Newsom signed Senate Bill (SB) 155, on September 23, 2021, adding Section 21080.56 to California Public Resources Code. This section provides a [California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\)](#) statutory exemption for restoration projects ([SERP](#))

¹ This guide is intended only for CDFW permitting of restoration projects and does not include guidance for FRGP or non-restoration projects. This is for general information only and is not intended as legal advice. We recommend visiting [Accelerating Restoration](#) to learn more about restoration permitting outside of CDFW.



Cutting the Green Tape

[Statutory Exemption for
Restoration Projects \(SERP\)](#) >

[Restoration Management
Permit \(RMP\)](#) >

[Restoration Consistency
Determination \(CD\)](#)

[Cutting the Green Tape Project
StoryMap](#)

[Contact Us](#)

Restoration Management Permit - Frequently Asked Questions

- > [What is the "New" RMP and when will it be available?](#)
- > [What is a qualifying restoration project?](#)
- > [What kinds of activities can or cannot be covered by the RMP?](#)
- > [Can mitigation or non-voluntary restoration projects also qualify?](#)
- > [Is there a maximum project size for the RMP?](#)
- > [Can an RMP be "programmatic"?](#)
- > [What is the fee for obtaining an RMP?](#)
- > [How do I apply for an RMP?](#)
- > [How will the RMP complement efficient restoration permitting tools developed by other agencies?](#)
- > [How long does it take to prepare an RMP?](#)

Thank you from the CGT HQ Team!

For General Program Inquiries:

restorationpermitting@wildlife.ca.gov

CGT Program Staff:

Brad Henderson, Program Manager

Brad.Henderson@wildlife.ca.gov

Jen Olson, Restoration Permitting
Coordinator

Jennifer.Olson@wildlife.ca.gov

Cory Saltsman, SERP Coordinator

Cory.Saltsman@wildlife.ca.gov

Camille Agnew, Program Analyst

Camille.Agnew@wildlife.ca.gov

