

## Kari Wester

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**From:** Kari Wester  
**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2022 11:10 AM  
**To:** Kari Wester  
**Subject:** FW: SRCD/Kari Wester Levee Maintenance Program Grading Exemption Request

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**From:** Kari Wester  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 9, 2022 12:37 PM  
**To:** reg.cullen@sonoma-county.org; Steve Snow <steve.snow@sonoma-county.org>  
**Cc:** Kari Wester <KWester@sonomarc.org>  
**Subject:** RE: SRCD/Kari Wester Levee Maintenance Program Grading Exemption Request

Hi Reg and Steve,

**Please see below revised request citing the appropriate grading exemption and acknowledging that the grading standards will be met.**

The Sonoma Resource Conservation District (RCD) would like to request an exemption for the grading and drainage permit required to complete bank stabilization and ongoing levee maintenance work in lower Sonoma and Petaluma Creek watersheds. No maintenance work has occurred due to lack of permits.

The project is funded by twenty-five (25) participating landowners to complete maintenance and stabilization of existing levees. We've had an average of 2-3 landowners complete these activities each year. Under the Army Corps of Engineers Regional General Permit (RGP 6) currently in the finalization for renewal, participating landowners may dredge up to 4 cubic-yards of material per foot of levee per year, not to exceed 2,500 linear feet per parcel per year.

The RCD is has obtained additional required permits renewals for this project including the DFW 1602 permit, the SFRWQCB WDR/401 permit, and lease agreement with the CA State Lands Commission. A Section 7 consultation has been completed with National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and a Biological Opinion with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A permit with BCDC is in the final stages. We've also developed a Levee Maintenance Manual through the permitting process with the Water Board this year and I am including a link to access that document here [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gbDadzHVTeAJ\\_m1XfnWGP7ypMKjIV1T/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gbDadzHVTeAJ_m1XfnWGP7ypMKjIV1T/view?usp=sharing)

Proposed activities would occur discontinuously along tidal levees within the Petaluma River, Sonoma Creek, and San Antonio Creek watersheds. Mechanical dredging would be conducted using long-reach excavators or drag lines working from the top of existing levees, and dredged material would be excavated on the outboard side of the levee at the extreme reach of the available equipment to avoid damage to the levee toe. Dredged material will be placed on the levee crown and mechanically compressed. Per requirements from the Army Corps, NMFS, and DFW, the majority of the work will be restricted from June through November, with some minor exceptions approved for year-round maintenance activities. Additionally, no excavation shall occur with 10 feet of the toe of the levee on the waterborne side of the levee; no discharge material may consist of unsuitable material (e.g. trash, debris, etc.) and material discharged must be free from toxic pollutants in toxic amounts. All participating landowners have and will continue to incorporate Best Management Practices to avoid and minimize discharges of sediment during any dredging work.

As with prior exemptions, imported fill material will not be subject to this exemption and landowners will need to pursue individual grading permits for such work.

The goal of this project is to make ongoing needed repairs to stabilize levees and not only protect valuable agricultural land but also to reduce erosion and excess sediment delivery to the Petaluma River and Sonoma Creek Watersheds.

The RCD is requesting an exemption through Sonoma County Ordinance 5666 Section 11.06.010.C.7 that states: Resource conservation, restoration or enhancement projects. Where a public agency takes full responsibility for the work, construction grading for soil, water, wildlife or other resource conservation, restoration, or enhancement projects. The proposed projects may impact soil, water and wildlife however required avoidance measures to protect these resources are outlined in the maintenance manual that will be followed. The director shall be notified in writing at least thirty (30) days prior to the commencement of work.

**Sonoma RCD is assuming full responsibility for the work. SRCD staff will conduct inspections of any proposed and completed maintenance work to confirm the standards of Sonoma County Code CH. 11 (grading) will be met.**

If you have any further questions or need further information, please feel free to contact me.

Kari Wester, Project Manager  
Sonoma Resource Conservation District  
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Santa Rosa, CA 95405  
707.569.1448 x101  
Visit us at [sonomarcd.org](http://sonomarcd.org)  
*Available Monday thru Friday 8:30AM -3PM*



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**To:** Kari Wester  
**Subject:** FW: SRCD/Kari Wester Levee Maintenance Program Grading Exemption Request

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**From:** Steve Snow <Steve.Snow@sonoma-county.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 21, 2022 12:01 PM  
**To:** Kari Wester <KWester@sonomarc.org>  
**Cc:** Reg Cullen <Reg.Cullen@sonoma-county.org>; Leann Clark <Leann.Clark@sonoma-county.org>  
**Subject:** RE: SRCD/Kari Wester Levee Maintenance Program Grading Exemption Request

Thanks Kari.

I've confirmed that none of the levees impacted are FEMA accredited, so the grading work is ok to proceed under the exemption.

Continue to coordinate with Leann for a roiling permit.

Please notify Reg & myself prior to start of work.

Regards,

**Steve Snow, P.E.**

Engineer/Flood Plain Manager

[www.PermitSonoma.org](http://www.PermitSonoma.org)

County of Sonoma

Engineering Division | Grading, Drainage, Sanitation & Encroachment

2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403

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