

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
County Clerk
County of: San Joaquin
44 N San Joaquin Street, #260
Stockton, CA 95202

From: (Public Agency): San Joaquin County Office of Education
2901 Arch Airport Road
Stockton, CA 95206-3971
(Address)

Project Title: Durham Ferry Outdoor Education Center Improvements Project
Project Applicant: San Joaquin County Office of Education

Project Location - Specific: Durham Ferry Outdoor Education Center, 29442 Airport Way, Manteca, CA 95337

Project Location - City: Manteca Project Location - County: San Joaquin

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: Installation of new playground and demolition of existing restroom facility in "Wagon Wheel" area of education center campus.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: San Joaquin County Office of Education
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: San Joaquin County Office of Education

- 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));
[X] Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15303 and 15314
[ ] Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt: Proposed project would not result in a significant environmental impact and is not disqualified by any of the exceptions to CEQA exemptions.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Anthony Flores Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (209) 830-3265

- If filed by applicant:
1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature: [Signature] Date: 3-19-26 Title: Division Director

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date Received for filing at OPR:
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Filed Doc #: 39-03192026-075
Thu Mar 19 10:38:31 PDT 2026
Page: 1 of 8 Fee: \$50.00
Steve J. Bestolarides
San Joaquin County Clerk

By Deputy: aambriz

Revised 2011



# Memorandum



**TO:** Anthony Flores  
P: (209) 830-3265  
E: aflores@sjcoe.net

San Joaquin County of Education  
Wentworth Education Center  
2707 Transworld Drive  
Stockton, California 95606

**FROM:** Terracon Consultants, Inc.

**DATE:** March 4, 2026

**RE:** Durham Ferry Outdoor Education Center Improvements Project  
CEQA Notice of Exemption and Categorical Exemption Memorandum  
Terracon Project No: **NA257115**

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## **Project Information:**

The proposed project is located entirely within the Durham Ferry Outdoor Education Center at 29442 Airport Way (Assessor Parcel Number [APN]: 241-180-16), in Manteca, San Joaquin County, California. The project area spans approximately 13 acres of a previously landscaped area within the school's boundaries (**Exhibit 1**). The project scope includes the installation of a new playground with interpretive signage and the demolition of an existing restroom facility in the "Wagon Wheel" area of the education center campus.

As the actions associated with the proposed project are not expected to result in a significant environmental impact, it is expected that this project is exempt under the Class III Categorical (New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures) and Class XIV Categorical Exemption (Minor Additions to Schools), as described in the California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Section 15300 et seq.

## **Legal Setting:**

### **Categorical Exemptions (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15300)**

Projects that are not expected to result in a significant environmental impact may be Categorically Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review. As described in Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15300, *Section 21084 of the Public Resources Code requires these guidelines to include a list of classes of projects which have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and which shall, therefore, be exempt from the provisions of CEQA. In response to that mandate, the Secretary for Resources has found that the following classes of projects listed in this article do not have a significant effect on the environment, and they are declared to be categorically exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents.*

Like many campus-improvement projects, the proposed project is not expected to result in any significant environmental impacts under CEQA. **Table 1** provides an abbreviated CEQA checklist, explaining why the implementation of the proposed project would not result in any significant environmental impacts.

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**Table 1. Abbreviated CEQA Environmental Checklist**

Impact Category	Description
<b>Aesthetics</b>	<p>The proposed project would not result in impacts related to scenic vistas or state-listed scenic highways as the nearest scenic location is the Route 5/ALA CL portion of Interstate-580, approximately 8 miles southwest of the school. Further, it would not require the installation of equipment that would be inconsistent with previous conditions; and would not result in an impact on Aesthetics.</p>
<b>Agriculture and Forestry Resources</b>	<p>The proposed project does not involve agricultural lands or Prime Farmland.</p>
<b>Air Quality</b>	<p>The proposed project would not result in the exposure of pollutants or odors to sensitive receptors. Although San Joaquin County is in nonattainment status for PM-2.5 (2006) and 8-Hour Ozone (2015) criteria pollutants, the proposed project would not result in a significant net increase of such pollutants, nor would the project conflict with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (Valley Air District)'s ability to comply with any applicable State Implementation Plan (SIP) as the emissions would be associated with the limited use of construction equipment. The equipment required for this project would be operated only as needed and for a limited amount of time.</p>
<b>Biological Resources</b>	<p>Terracon biologist Andrea Gonzalez conducted a site visit on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026. The project area does not provide suitable habitat for federally- or state-listed species, nor would the proposed project have a significant impact on the San Joaquin County Multi-Species Habitat Conservation and Open Space Plan (SJMSCP), or other sensitive biological resources. As part of SJCOE's typical due diligence process, a pre-construction nesting bird survey would be conducted if construction work is scheduled during the California nesting bird season (generally February 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>).</p>
<b>Cultural Resources</b>	<p>The project area does not contain known historic properties and is not suspected to contain archaeological artifacts as the general area is previously developed. If archaeological or cultural resources are discovered onsite, work would cease immediately until consultation and approval to continue work was provided by a qualified archaeologist.</p>
<b>Energy</b>	<p>The proposed project would not result in an impact related to the wasteful or inefficient use of energy since the project will not require the use of equipment with high energy requirements during its operations.</p>

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<b>Geology and Soils</b>	The proposed project would not result in geological impacts. The project construction would take place on previously developed land and would not result in new construction in unsafe soils.
<b>Greenhouse Gas Emissions</b>	Although greenhouse gases would be emitted during project construction, it would not result in a significant impact on the environment, nor would it conflict with a plan, policy, or regulation aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
<b>Hazards and Hazardous Materials</b>	The proposed project does not involve the use or release of potentially hazardous substances. If necessary, an Abatement of Hazardous Materials Plan (AHMP) will be created prior to project construction to handle potential unexpected encounters with hazardous materials.
<b>Hydrology and Water Quality</b>	Local water quality impacts would be avoided by the usage of routine stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs) during construction and material staging activities, if applicable.
<b>Land Use and Planning</b>	The proposed project will not divide an established community, nor will it result in a conflict with a land use plan or zoning ordinance as the project does not modify existing land use.
<b>Mineral Resources</b>	The proposed project does not require the extraction of Mineral Resources.
<b>Noise</b>	The proposed project would not result in the exposure of excessive noise levels. Construction would not take place during the school year. Further, measures such as limiting construction to daytime hours and complying with County noise ordinances would avoid temporary construction-related noise impacts. The project would not result in any permanent noise impacts.
<b>Population and Housing</b>	The proposed project does not involve housing or population growth.
<b>Public Services</b>	The proposed project would not negatively affect public services but instead would improve the school's ability to accommodate and provide recreational opportunities for students on campus.
<b>Recreation</b>	The proposed project would not lead to the deterioration of other existing recreational facilities on campus, nor would it involve the construction of new facilities that would result in an adverse physical environmental consequence. It would instead provide improved recreational opportunities for students on campus.

<b>Transportation</b>	The school is not located near a main thoroughfare; therefore, the proposed project would not have a significant effect on transportation. Construction will be small-scale and confined to campus and furthermore, will occur outside of the school year when student traffic patterns will not be affected by work.
<b>Tribal Cultural Resources</b>	The proposed project would not impact a listed or eligible resource as there are no known relationships to the site; however, if resources are discovered during any ground disturbing activities, work will cease immediately and both federally and state recognized tribes will be contacted.
<b>Utilities and Service Systems</b>	The proposed project does not involve the construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. It will have no significant impact on water supplies and is not anticipated to generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards.
<b>Wildfire</b>	The proposed project does not involve Wildfire Hazards since the project will not increase fire loading.
<b>Mandatory Findings of Significance</b>	The proposed project does not have the potential to substantially degrade or reduce the habitat of a species or impact known sensitive resources. The project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a cumulative impact.

**Exceptions (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15300.2)**

It should be noted that six (6) exceptions are described, which if applicable to a project, would disqualify the project from the usage of a Categorical Exemption. These exceptions are:

*(a) Location.* Classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project is to be located – a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

*(b) Cumulative Impact.* All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

*(c) Significant Effect.* A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

*(d) Scenic Highways.* A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to, trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar

resources, within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway. This does not apply to improvements which are required as mitigation by an adopted negative declaration or certified EIR.

(e) *Hazardous Waste Sites*. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

(f) *Historical Resources*. A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

**Categorical Exemption Class III – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15303)**

Class 3 projects are described in § 15303 as “*construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.*” The installation of a new playground within Durham Ferry’s existing property qualifies as the “*installation of small new equipment*”, and thus fits the description provided in Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15303.

**Categorical Exemption Class XIV – Minor Additions to Schools (Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15314)**

Class 14 projects are described in § 15314 as “*minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less.*” The installation of a new playground and demolition of an existing restroom facility will take place entirely within Durham Ferry’s existing property. The proposed project does not involve the addition of ten or more classrooms, nor would it increase the school’s student capacity by more than 25%. Therefore, it fits the description provided in Cal. Code Regs. tit. 14 § 15314.

**Summary:**

Implementation of the project would not be expected to result in significant impacts on the environment (please see **Table 1**). The activities that make up the proposed project (the installation of a new playground, demolition of an existing restroom facility) meet both the description of a Class 3 and Class 14-exempt project as well as the criteria listed in the Exceptions to CEQA Categorical Exemptions.

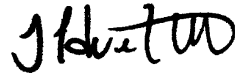
The project area is not located on a hazardous waste site or other environmental features of critical concern. The proposed project would not result in a significant impact, nor would it result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to a significant cumulative impact. The project area is not in the vicinity of a Scenic Highway, and the project would not be expected to impact historical resources. No historic properties are known to exist within the project area; if artifacts were to be found during construction, work would stop immediately, and a qualified archaeologist would be consulted with before work were to resume. As part of SJCCE’s typical due diligence process, if any construction work is scheduled during the California nesting bird season (generally February 1<sup>st</sup> through August 31<sup>st</sup>), a preconstruction nesting bird survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist to avoid impacts on nesting birds.

The long-term effects of the proposed project are likely to improve the school’s ability to accommodate and provide recreational opportunities for students on campus. Considering the data summarized in this memorandum, it is Terracon’s opinion that the Durham Ferry Outdoor Education Center Improvements Project is Categorical Exempt from CEQA documentation.

Sincerely,  
**Terracon Consultants, Inc.**



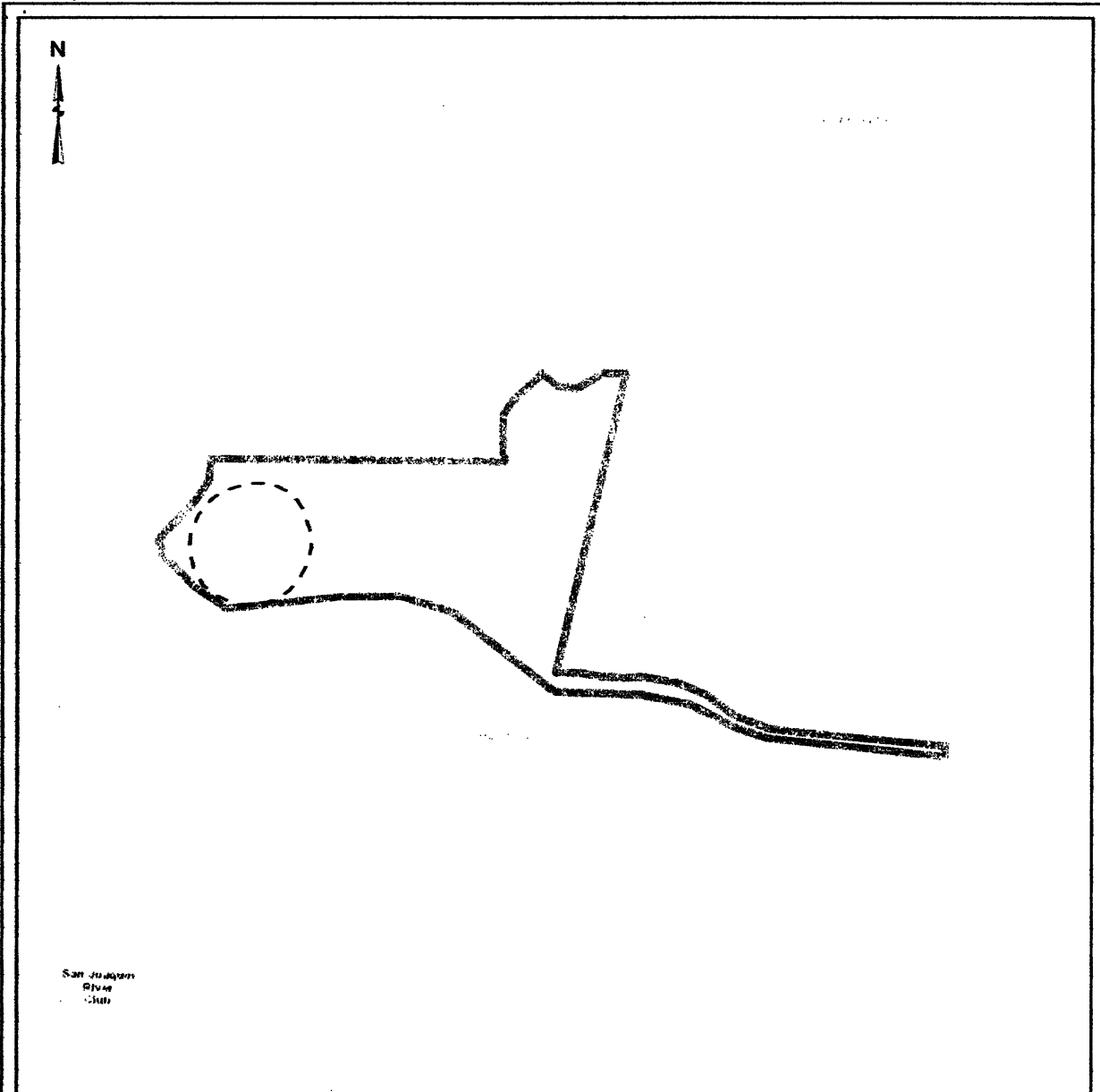
Andrea Gonzalez  
Staff Biologist





J. Hunter Watkins  
Authorized Project Reviewer

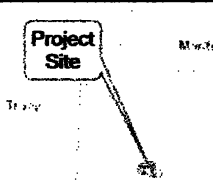
**Enclosures:**

- Exhibit 1 – Project Location
- Notice of Exemption (NOE) Form



**Legend**

-  Site Boundary
-  Project Area (Approx. 13 ac)



0    500    1,000    2,000  
Feet

1:12,000                      1:12,000

**DATA SOURCES:**  
ESRI WMS - World Aerial Imagery, OpenStreetMap

Project No.:  
**NA257115**

Date:  
Feb 2026

Drawn By:  
**AAG**

Reviewed By:  
**JHW**



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**SITE DIAGRAM**

CEQA Notice of Exemption

Durham Ferry Outdoor Education Center  
Wagon Wheel Improvements

Manteca, CA

**Exhibit**

**1**