

California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW)

Restoration Management Permit (RMP)

Eligibility and Application Tips

November 12, 2025

The following information and tips were compiled by [Sustainable Conservation](#) to help project proponents determine RMP eligibility and work through the permitting process.

Disclaimer: The tips in this document are only suggestions for your consideration. All requirements for using the RMP and project eligibility must be confirmed by CDFW staff. The information presented here is not legal advice and should not be acted upon as such.

See CDFW's [RMP web page](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

RMP Process

Step 1 – Assess whether your project may be an RMP “[qualifying restoration project](#)” by answering the questions under Section [1673 \(b\)\(9\)](#) of the Restoration Management Permit Act (Act) and using the [definitions](#) below. If your project is eligible for the [Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Act \(HREA\)](#), that may provide an even faster approval process than the RMP.

Note: There is no maximum [project size](#) for the RMP. Designing and implementing larger restoration projects is encouraged to help increase the pace and scale of restoration in California, recover species, preserve biodiversity, and increase climate resiliency.

Step 2 – If you think your project is an RMP qualifying restoration project, contact the [regional Cutting the Green Tape \(CGT\) staff person](#) in your area to discuss your project. If there is no regional CGT staff person, you can email restorationpermitting@wildlife.ca.gov.

Step 3 – After discussing your project with regional CGT staff, provide them with an application as specified below in Section [1673 \(b\)](#) (1) through (14) of the Act. Applicants are encouraged to provide a draft application for informal review before submitting a final application. A copy of this document may be used to facilitate providing application information to CGT staff as specified in Section [1673 \(b\)](#) (1) through (14) of the Act. Text in [blue](#) below was added by Sustainable Conservation to assist and inform applicants.

CHAPTER 6.7. Restoration Management Permit Act

1673. (a) The department may develop a permit application for restoration management permits. **Note:** CDFW has not yet developed a formal application for the RMP. Applicants must submit all the required application information outlined in 1673(b). When applying for a restoration management permit, an applicant may propose protective measures contained within existing local, state, or federal agency authorizations for the applicant's project or related documents to assist the department with developing restoration management permits that maximize consistency with other agency authorizations to the extent practicable.

(b) An application for a restoration management permit shall include all of the following:

(1) The appropriate application fee, if any, not to exceed the department's reasonable costs, as determined by the department. **Note:** The RMP is currently free.

(2) The full name, mailing address, email address, and telephone number of the applicant. If the applicant is a corporation, firm, partnership, association, institution, or public or private agency, the name and address of the applicant, in addition to the name and address of the person responsible for the project.

Full name:

Mailing Address:

Email address:

Telephone number:

(3) The project name and location, including latitude and longitude centroid in decimal degrees, and a project map.

Project name:

Project location:

Latitude and longitude centroid in decimal degrees:

Project map (may be attached):

(4) The estimated or desired project start and end dates.

Note: Applicants are encouraged to describe both the short-term and long-term activities of the project, which can include monitoring and adaptive management.

(5) A detailed description of the project activities and desired outcomes, including, but not limited to, restoration plans and drawings.

(6) A detailed description of the area where the project will be carried out, including the project size, habitat types, and biological setting.

(7) A description of the department authorization or authorizations described in Section 1672 that the applicant is seeking for the project.

(Put an X next to each authorization the applicant is seeking for the project)

___ 1672 (b) CESA threatened, endangered, or candidate species

___ 1672(c) Fully Protected Species

___ 1672(d) Plant species designated as “rare” under the Native Plant Protection Act

___ 1672(e) Other species (**other than those listed above**) including mammals, birds, fish, amphibians, or reptiles

___ 1672(f) Impacts to rivers, streams, or lakes that would otherwise be subject to a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement

(8) A detailed description of **baseline conditions** for all areas that may be affected by the project. **Note:** The answer to this question is also an opportunity for applicants to state whether the project is voluntary or required, which assists CDFW in understanding the substantial net benefit of the project. After reviewing the definition of “baseline condition” in Section 1671, an applicant could state something like: The Project is/is *not* required to satisfy...(insert any relevant text from Section 1671 definition of baseline condition).

(9) A detailed description of how the project satisfies the definition of **qualifying restoration project** set forth in **Section 1671**, including a detailed description of the expected benefit to native fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat, or any combination thereof, above baseline conditions.

Ask yourself the following questions to understand if your project satisfies the definition of a qualifying restoration project.

Is the project a “**management**” and/or a “**propagation**” project as defined in the Act? *If so, describe how.*

Is the **primary purpose** of the project restoring native fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat? *If so, describe how.* Applicants may also list any secondary or incidental purposes of the project if it helps with the narrative.

Would the project result in a **substantial net benefit** above baseline conditions to fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat, or any combination thereof, that shall assist either directly or indirectly in recovery? *If so, describe how.*

For all projects, consider any permanent or temporary impacts that occur during project implementation as you think about the net benefit of the project.

For projects that originate as mitigation, violations, or court orders, compare project goals with required mitigation and explain how the project would result in a substantial net benefit to fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat. Include documentation (e.g., permit, written confirmation from agency staff, etc.) of required mitigation.

(10) If the applicant is seeking one or more take authorizations pursuant to Section 1672 (see Question 7 above), the applicant shall provide all of the following:

(A) A list of species for which the applicant is seeking one or more take authorizations.

Provide a list of species that may be impacted by the project.

(B) A detailed description of the types of species take, including pursue, catch, capture, or kill, and the mechanisms by which species take would occur.

(C) An estimate of the number of individuals that would be taken, based on population numbers, or a proxy estimate based on the amount of suitable habitat, for each species for which the applicant is seeking one or more take authorizations.

(D) Species protection measures proposed by the applicant to minimize the impacts of the potential take, including any measures required or expected to be required in other approvals or permits.

Note: RMP applicants are encouraged to propose protective measures contained within existing local, state, or federal agency authorizations for the applicant’s project or related documents to assist the Department with developing RMPs that maximize consistency with other agency authorizations to the extent practicable.

Measures from a set of authorizations can be queried from Sustainable Conservation's [Protection Measures Selection Tool](#).

(11) If the applicant is seeking an authorization pursuant to Section 1672 for activities that would otherwise be subject to Section 1602 (see Question 7 related to 1672(f)), the applicant shall provide all of the following:

(A) A detailed description of anticipated temporary and permanent impacts to any affected river, stream, or lake.

(B) Proposed feasible measures to protect any river, stream, or lake and to minimize project impacts, including any measures required or expected to be required in other approvals or permits.

(12) A copy of any other federal, state, or local permit or agreement already issued for the project.

(13) Copies of any final documents prepared for the project pursuant to Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code, including, but not limited to, environmental impact reports, mitigated negative declarations, negative declarations, notices of determination, and notices of exemption.

(14) Any other information the department determines to be necessary.

Note: [Fish and Game Code section 1677](#) says the department shall not issue a Restoration Management Permit for the design, construction, operation, mitigation, or maintenance of isolated Delta conveyance facilities. It is recommended to provide a statement with the application certifying the project complies with section 1677.

Definitions

Prior to reaching out to CDFW with questions, review the information below. These are key definitions you should understand to help you assess your project's eligibility and prepare your application. The definitions below are not in the order that they appear in Section 1671. They have been put in this order to make it easier to understand how these definitions relate to each other.

From **Section 1671** of the Fish and Game Code:

“Qualifying restoration project” means a **management** or **propagation** project that has the **primary purpose** of restoring native fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat and that would result in a **substantial net benefit** to any one or more of the following, as determined by the department: native fish, native wildlife, native plants, the habitat of native fish, native wildlife, or native plants. A qualifying restoration project may also have secondary or incidental benefits, including, but not limited to, flood risk reduction, recreation, or groundwater recharge.

Note: A project or even a single activity can be both “management” and “propagation”.

“Management” means an activity, such as restoration of native fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat and propagation, that will benefit, aid the conservation of, and assist in the recovery of a native fish, wildlife, or plant species.

“Propagation” means activities that help sustain or increase native fish, wildlife, or plant populations for scientific, conservation, management, or educational purposes.

“Substantial net benefit” means a substantial, cumulative benefit to native fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat, or any combination thereof, above **baseline conditions** that the department reasonably expects to result from a qualifying restoration project. In determining whether the department reasonably expects a qualifying restoration project to result in a substantial net benefit, the department shall consider the duration of the qualifying restoration project, all impacts on native fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat, or any combination thereof, from the qualifying restoration project, and any other information the department determines to be relevant. A substantial net benefit **shall assist either directly or indirectly in the recovery** of native fish, wildlife, plants, or their habitat, or any combination thereof.

“Baseline conditions” means existing native fish, wildlife, or plant population sizes, and the extent and quality of native fish, wildlife, or plant habitat in the area that would be affected by a qualifying restoration project. Fish, wildlife, plant, or habitat restoration activities required to satisfy avoidance, minimization, or mitigation requirements, or any combination of those requirements, for regulatory permits or approvals, regulatory enforcement actions or settlements, court orders, or other enforceable legal obligations shall be considered part of the baseline conditions, and those activities shall not count toward a substantial net benefit.