

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Riverside County Clerk
4080 Lemon Street
Riverside, CA 92501

From: Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority
11615 Sterling Avenue
Riverside, CA 92503

Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

Project Title: Santa Ana Mountains Watershed Protection Project

Location: The project is located in portions of T4S, R6W; T4S, R7W; T5S, R6W; T.6N, R.5W; and T.7S, R.6W within Orange and Riverside counties.

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of the Project: This project involves modifying fuels along the existing North Main Divide Fuel Break in order to provide enhanced wildland fire suppression opportunities adjacent to the communities of Corona, El Cerrito, Temescal and Silverado Canyon. The project would maintain approximately 10 miles of fuel break running north from the vicinity of Bald Mountain to Sierra Peak, including ridgelines above Bedford, Eagle, Manning, Main Street and Hagador canyons. It also involves modifying fuels within the Wildland-Urban Interface for the communities of Rancho Carrillo, Rancho Capistrano, Decker Canyon, and El Cariso.

The key purpose of this project is to create an inter-connecting system of wildland fire control features which can be used as strategic and tactical points from which to suppress wildland fires. This action is needed because fuel loading increases over time along the fuel breaks reducing their effectiveness during wildland fire suppression operations, thus increasing the potential of a large-scale wildland fire in the vicinity of the project area. The project also will build on the current South Main Divide and Greater El Cariso Fuels Management project and the North Main Divide Fuel Break Project to create a continuous band of managed fuels.

Name of Lead Agency Approving Project: Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority (SAWPA)
Name of Agency Carrying out the Project: U.S. Department of Agriculture – Forest Service

Reasons Why Project is Exempt: This project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under the Public Resources Code Section 4799.05 and California Senate Bill 901 signed by the Governor on September 21, 2018. The project is a fuel reduction project undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the federal National Environmental Policy Act.

Lead Agency Contact Person: David P. Ruhl, P.E., Engineering Manager
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Signature:  **Date:** July 1, 2020 **Title:** Engineering Manager
Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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