

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

PROJECT TITLE	Bear Valley Common Areas Fuels Reduction Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Sec. 12 & 13, T7N, R17E; Sec. 7 & 18, T7N, R16E MDBM	COUNTY	Alpine
LEAD AGENCY	CAL FIRE		
CONTACT	Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit		
ADDRESS	Address: 785 Mtn. Ranch Road		
	City: San Andreas	PHONE	209-754-3831
	State: CA		
	Zip Code: 95249		

This project directly impacts over 350 homes in the Greater Bear Valley area. Bear Valley is at great risk for catastrophic wildfire as are many communities in and around this fuel break. The project will encompass 500 acres of lodge pole pine, ponderosa pine, white & red fir and brush species. The Bear Valley community lies at approximately 7000 feet above sea level and is located approximately 27 miles northeast of Arnold, CA. Fuels reduction will take place on slopes between 0-40%. Hazardous fuels, including ladder fuels, low branches up to 8 feet above the ground, brush and small diameter green trees (<12" DBH) and dead trees will be cut and hand carried to a chipper. Chips will be broadcast back onto the soil surface to a depth 3" or less. Green trees that are 12 inches DBH or less will be removed to achieve a minimum of 20 feet spacing between individual trees or a distance of 1.5 times the height of adjacent tree. The project is anticipated to last 75 days. All trees that are dead, dying, or diseased will be removed regardless of size unless designated for retention. No heavy equipment will be used, except on existing road surfaces. With the majority of the privately held parcels treated, the Common areas are the most vulnerable to spreading fire. If these common areas can be modified to become fuel breaks the potential for multi-structure fires or rapidly spreading wildfires will be reduced. A site visit and reconnaissance level survey of the project areas was completed on Oct. 25, 2019.

EXEMPTION STATUS

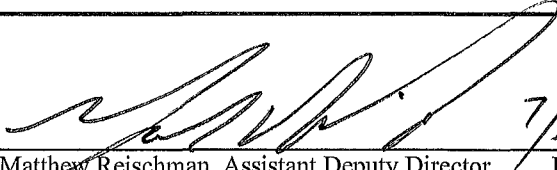
- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under the Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) Categorical Exemption to CEQA. Class 4 is described as a "minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes." This project as proposed, consists of chipping, thinning, and hand crew work and does not remove healthy, mature, or scenic trees. These activities are best described as minor in scope.

Review by Tim Morin, RPF #2505, confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The RPF has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the RPF is kept on file at CAL FIRE's Calaveras County office.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING


Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date 7/28/20
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection