



State of California
The Resources Agency
Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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|-------------------------|--|---------------|----------------|
| PROJECT TITLE | CHSP Remote Wildfire Camera and RAWS Installation | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | San Bernardino Meridian, Portion of Section 17 T3S R8W | COUNTY | Orange |
| LEAD AGENCY | Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) | | |
| CONTACT | Dave Erickson, Wildland Resource Planner | PHONE | (714) 573-6178 |
| ADDRESS | 1 Fire Authority Road, Irvine, CA 92602 | | |

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The goal of this project is for the installation and maintenance of 1) a 40 ft. Rohn tower to support the installation of a remote wildfire camera and meteorological sensors to help monitor wildfires and provide situational awareness in Orange County and 2) a RAWS (remote automated weather station) to better assess area weather to support OCFA operations and planning. The project site is in Orange County at Chino Hills State Park, located on the boundary of Riverside County and Orange County at ~1760 feet above mean sea level at San Juan Hill. The site is located in SRA ~3 miles north of State Hwy 91, ~5 miles west of State Route 71, ~1 mile east of the City of Yorba Linda, and ~3 miles south of the City of Chino Hills. The project area is composed of ruderal grasslands, dominated by annual grasses and black mustard, adjacent to patches of coastal sage scrub habitats. The installation will take no more than 5 days to complete, and no new roads will be constructed to access the project, as existing utility roads and an existing trail will be used to access the site.

Ground disturbance for the Rohn tower will consist of using a rubber track or wheeled machine with an auger bit to drill a 6 ft. deep by 36 inch wide hole that will be filled with concrete to support the tower. A trench of no more than 36 ft. long will be dug no more than 12 inches deep to bury a 1 inch conduit that will carry the electronic cables from the camera and sensors to the power source. The power will be provided by a solar array which will consist of a poured concrete slab 135 inches long by 86 inches wide and 6 inches thick. Adjacent to the base of the Rohn tower, two holes will be dug 162 inches deep by 2 feet wide for an accelerometer and seismometer. These holes will be cased and capped with sand poured inside the casing for better coupling. The spoils from the holes will be spread onsite over existing unvegetated areas and the trough will be backfilled with existing soil.

A permanent RAWS in this location will support the Fire Danger Operating Plan with quantifying data to set the management decisions concerning dispatch levels and staffing levels, while using the data outputs during fuel reduction efforts to make sound management decisions. The installation of the RAWS will have negligible levels of ground disturbance, as the installation requires only three eighteen-inch nails to set the three legs of the station in place. Existing roads will be utilized to transport materials to site, and for any maintenance activities once installed. The whole site (~.2 acres in size) will be fenced in using metal poles and chain link fencing. The metal poles will be buried no more than 3 feet deep and filled with concrete. The holes will be dug on a flat surface and will not displace a substantial amount of soils. Displaced soils will be spread onsite, which is a significant distance from any watercourses and will not result in any erosion or sedimentation of local waterways. The site will be mowed to prepare it for install and annually for maintenance. The cut grasses and vegetation will be raked and spread onsite.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 3§15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; 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 meets the requirements of a Class 3 Categorical Exemption "15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" - "Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures. The project is small in size, will increase monitoring of wildfires, and will not result in significant effects on biological and archeological resources nor the environment. Field reviews conducted by CAL FIRE staff have confirmed that no impacts will occur, which would justify the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project.

The Department 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. CAL FIRE has determined this project would not impact the environment. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the OCFA is kept on file with the Pre-Fire Management Section at OCFA's Regional Fire Operations Training Center, 1 Fire Authority Rd., Irvine, CA 92602

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Matthew Reischman

9/7/2020

Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection