



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Pine Ridge-Summit Level Fuelbreak (Reoccurring)		
PROJECT LOCATION	T05N R13E Secs 1 & 2 and T05N R14E Secs 3, 4, 5, 6, 10 & 11	COUNTY	Calaveras
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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ADDRESS		PHONE	(209) 754-2706

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project involves the clearance of vegetation (fuel) on a prevailing ridge determined strategic for wildland fire control. Starting at 2,720 feet, the Fuelbreak follows an unnamed ridge that joins with Pine Ridge and climbs up to East Summit Level Road at 4,000 feet. The east end of the fuelbreak is 0.1 miles south on Summit Level Road and stops at the parcel boundary with USFS property. The purpose of this project is to set the width of the contingency line at 150 feet width for the entire six miles via mechanical mastication and hand crew work with some hand pile construction and hand pile burning. The Fuelbreak will average 150 feet in width and in total, cover 144 acres. The prescription for these areas is near-complete removal of ladder fuels (brush and trees less than 10" diameter breast height or dbh) along with suppressed and intermediate conifers and hardwood trees larger than 10" dbh. Thinning of the codominant and dominant trees will occur with a target basal area of 50 square feet per acre and other than some groupings of residual trees, crowns that do not intermingle. Dead and decadent stands of manzanita and other ladder fuels will be removed. The majority of black oaks will be retained regardless of canopy position. Other tree species such as madrone and dogwood will be left to create diversity and provide wildlife benefits. Remaining stems will be pruned up to 15 feet of ground level. This work will be achieved by hand crews with chain saws, pruning saws, mechanical chippers and mechanical masticators. This NOE will cover ongoing fuels reduction for approximately 10 years. In 2030, CAL FIRE will re-assess the environmental setting and amend the CEQA file for this project, as appropriate.

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 description for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption to CEQA. CAL FIRE staff conducted an environmental review to confirm that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. Review by State Archaeologist Denise Ruzicka provided approval on July 15, 2020. In addition, consultation/correspondence was sent via email to representatives of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Regional Water Quality Control Board. RWQCB had no concerns, and the clarifying questions from DFW are included in the supporting documentation. 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. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at TCU Unit Headquarters in San Andreas.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Matthew Reischman

9/11/2020

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

Date