

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: County Clerk
County of Lake
Lakeport, CA 95453

Office of Planning & Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-3044

FROM: Lake County Community Development Dept.
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

PROJECT TITLE: Lake County Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project – CE 20-46

PROJECT LOCATION: Cobb, Loch Lomond, Clearlake, Lakeport, Middletown, Kelseyville, Lucerne and Nice, CA.

COUNTY: Lake

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: This project is being funded by a CAL FIRE, Fire Prevention Grant utilizing funding from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. The project proposes to remove hazardous vegetation in CAL FIRE's highest priority areas in Lake County, where Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) fuel loads have created dangerous conditions and increased risk of catastrophic wildfire. Some of the identified fuel loads are a result of previous catastrophic wildfires; the Valley Fire (Sept. 2015) and the Mendocino Complex Fire (July 2018). The project includes fuel reduction along existing fuel breaks, roads and communication facilities and will increase fire safety around 10 communities, protecting an estimated 13,700 habitable structures. Areas to be treated were strategically chosen because of their closeness to habitable structures, they pose a public safety hazard, prevent safe ingress and egress to/from communities or prevent quick and safe fire suppression.

Fuel reduction activities will be carried out using a variety of methods including mastication, hand crews, chipping, grazing, dozers, hand piling and machine piling. Overall ground disturbance will be kept to a minimum and stumps will not be removed or disturbed. No more than 1 cubic meter of soil will be disturbed per acre, in conformance with CAL FIRE's guidelines. Any trees removed will be removed using the Tree Mortality Task Force Guidelines, 2016. No new roads or trails will be constructed. There will be no disturbance of known rare, threatened or endangered species or significant cultural resources.

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Lake County Community Development

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Clear Lake Environmental Research Center (CLERC); a Lake County based 501c3 nonprofit organization. CLERC has been working with a network of partners to collaborate on improving fire resilience in Lake County through community-wide planning and projects.

EXEMPT STATUS:

Emergency Exemption - 14CCR 15269 (a) - Projects to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, commencing with Section 8550 of the Government Code.

Emergency Exemption - 14CCR 15269 (b) - Emergency repairs to publicly or privately owned service facilities necessary to maintain service essential to the public health, safety or welfare. Emergency repairs include those that require a reasonable amount of planning to address an anticipated emergency.

Emergency Exemption - 14CCR 15269 (c) - Specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency.

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: This fuel reduction project focuses on management of the excessive fuel loads around the Wildland Urban Interface in Lake County. It is directly related to several catastrophic wildfires that the County has endured, two of which were declared emergencies. The Valley Fire was declared an emergency on September 13, 2015 and The Mendocino Complex was declared an emergency on July 28, 2018. The project meets the criteria for emergency exemptions because it will maintain and repair property damaged by wildfire, protect public facilities essential to public health and safety, and will prevent or mitigate future and imminent wildfire emergencies. The Lake County Community Development Department has determined that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment and is, therefore, exempt from the provisions of CEQA.

CONTACT PERSON: Tracy Cline

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Signature: Tracy Cline
Title: Assistant Resource Planner II

Date: January 15, 2021