



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

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Corral Meadow Burn, Sonoma Mountain Ranch Preservation Foundation		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Mitsui Ranch, 3124 Sonoma Mountain Road, Petaluma, CA, 94954	<b>COUNTY</b>	Sonoma
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Tom Knecht		
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### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area is 32 acres of grassland/oak savanna on the Mitsui Ranch (Sonoma Mountain Ranch Preservation Foundation) in Sonoma County, located 5 miles east of Petaluma at the end of Sonoma Mountain Road. The grasslands are made up primarily of alien annual grasses, and the forested areas are a mix of oak (*Quercus* spp.) and California bay-laurel (*Umbellularia californica*). With little exception, slopes range from 2 to 10% and the underlying soils are Goulding Cobbly Clay Loam or Raynor Clay, Seeped. The nearest public road is approximately 100 meters west, where Sonoma Mountain Road terminates. One small pond and several seeps lie within the forested areas. The pond and seeps will have green areas that will buffer effects on water resources and keep an unburned perimeter around water bodies. Our target for this burn is medusahead grass (*Elymus caput-medusae*), which will be in the soft dough stage of curing when ignition happens. Prior to the prescribed burn, Mitsui Ranch staff will mow a fifteen-foot line around the unit perimeter. On burn day, CAL FIRE personnel will "black-line" the mown fire line using a foam-water mixture, extending it a few more feet and allowing a safe zone from which to backfire, or from which to fire with drip torches during the prescribed fire. They'll drive the fire line with a single Type 3 engine and crew to do the blacklining. During the fire, two fire fighters with drip torches will ignite the fuel in swaths, firing against the wind, and making larger swaths as the distance from the ignition point grows. After the firing is over and the standing fuels are consumed, engines will drive the perimeter and feed hoses into the burned area to crews to mop up hot spots. Since Mitsui Ranch grazes cattle, crews gather smoldering cow chips in a pile, and then douse them with water to conserve water.

### EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and 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 Categorical Exemption to CEQA: Class 4 - (Minor Alterations to Land.) The prescribed fire will only remove the standing alien annual grasses and will be a minor surface disturbance to the landscape. Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude 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 or timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, 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 or traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE's LNU Headquarters in Saint Helena.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

*Matthew Reischman*

2/8/2021

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