



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Howard Forest Secondary Helipad Construction Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	NW ¼ of NW ¼ of Section 9, T17N R13W, Mt. Diablo Base & Meridian.	COUNTY	Mendocino
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Pablo Anguiano, Forestry Assistant II CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit		PHONE 707-326-6035
ADDRESS	17501 North Highway 101 Willis, CA 95490		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area is located just outside the existing Howard Forest Helitack facility on newly acquired land (29 acres). The project consists of the construction of a new 60 ft x 60 ft secondary helipad approximately 80 feet to the south of the existing pad to accommodate the larger new Sikorsky S-70i Firehawk. Approximately, 0-3600 cubic feet of soil will be graded. Additional temporary ground disturbance will occur on approximately 15 feet around the perimeter of the secondary helicopter pad from construction equipment. The new surface will be graded, compacted, and rocked prior to installing the new concrete helicopter pad. Work will consist of the redistribution of graded soils and approximately two feet of engineered soil fill, 7,200 cubic feet, to expand the newly leveled area. A small access road, between 50-75 feet in length and 12 feet wide will be constructed to aid in the transportation of fill and concrete. The expansion area is located adjacent to old Highway 101, a skid trail, and a ranch road, all of which had been previously shaped and graded for vehicle use. Construction of the new secondary helicopter pad and access road will involve the use of heavy equipment such as an excavator, bulldozer, skid steer, fork lift, 10 wheel-dump truck, 10-yard concrete mixer truck, smooth drum roller, and sheepfoot roller. Construction of the secondary helicopter pad is expected to take approximately 3-4 weeks.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 3/15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures
- 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

The project meets the requirements of a CEQA Article 19 Class 3 Categorical exemption “New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures” (Section 15303, Public Resources Code) as the proposed activities involve the construction of a new and small structure adjacent to an existing facility. Although this project will result in minimal loss of grassland, it will not alter or convert the surrounding vegetation type already present in the project area. A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) yielded no results suggesting the presence of rare, threatened or endangered plant or animal species on the project site that would be negatively affected by this project. Recommendations by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to analyze impacts and survey for native grasslands and ground nesting birds not listed on the CNDDDB were also implemented for this project. A CAL FIRE State Archaeologist has been consulted and has determined, based on archeological surveys and historical information for the project area, that the project will not negatively impact Native American or historical resources. As such, CAL FIRE 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, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. No exceptions apply (Section 15300.2) which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit, Resource Management, 17501 N. Highway 101, Willis, CA 95490, Attn. Environmental Coordinator.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

6/14/2021

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