

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: County Clerk
County of Mendocino
Ukiah, CA 95482

Office of Planning & Research
1400 Tenth Street Room 222
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA
95412-3044

FROM: County of Mendocino
Department of Agriculture/ Weights and Measures
890 N. Bush St. Ukiah, CA 95482

PROJECT TITLE: Noxious Weed Eradication and Control in Mendocino County, CA

PROJECT LOCATION. The project will take place on the following list of properties as well as any spot gorse removal required on parcels located between Gibney Lane to the north and Road 409 to the south and from the ocean to Morand Drive in East Caspar.

Steve Haglund	15200 Caspar Road, Caspar	# 118-050-28
Linda Managhan	15455 Caspar Road, Caspar	# 118-020-07
James Mitchell Estate	15450 Caspar Road, Caspar	# 118-020-28
Greg Nelson	15125 Seadrift Ave, Caspar	# 118-040-13
Karen Reynolds	45281 Caspar Point Rd, Caspar	# 118-010-29
William and Alana Kinser	15167 Seadrift Ave, Caspar	# 118-040-12

Tom Johnson	15405 Caspar Road, Caspar	# 118-020-18
Doug Ferguson	15275 Caspar Road, Caspar	# 118-020-10
Oscar Smith Ranch	15101 Caspar Road, Caspar	# 118-050-30
Ellen Buechner	15401 N. Highway One, Caspar	# 118-020-30
Quail Gate LLC	44926 Morand Drive, Caspar	# 118-030-01
Samuel, Allen	15301 N. Highway One, Caspar	# 118-020-13
Oscar Smith Ranch	15201 N. Highway One, Caspar	# 118-050-18

PROJECT GOAL: The goal of this project is to improve the health of ag land, forest land, and the watershed as a whole within Caspar CA, by eradicating California Department of Food and Agriculture A, B and C-rated noxious weeds, primarily Gorse. This project will: 1) reduce the threat and impact of wildfires; 2) improve water quality; 3) promote native biodiversity; 4) restore and preserve working agricultural landscapes, and 5) enhance open space. The target weed, Gorse, spreads aggressively, excludes native plants and animals, disrupts agricultural and ecological functions and limits recreational opportunities. Gorse is an extremely aggressive invader that has extensive root systems and the ability to produce massive amounts of seeds. The seeds of this plant can live for over 30 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING. The project area covers ranch and agricultural lands in Caspar CA. The setting includes lands which were formerly grazing lands, agricultural lands, mixed conifer

forest and coastal prairie ecosystems. All the selected sites are heavily impacted with Gorse composing from 50 to 100% coverage in proposed work areas. In some cases parcels have received their initial gorse eradication treatment which consisted of mechanical mastication.

PROJECT: This project is part of a pre-existing program to maintain, restore, enhance and protect the environment through the county and state regulatory process. The program works to prevent the displacement of native plant species and the degradation of habitat by the spread of non- native, invasive noxious weed species as defined by the California Food and Agricultural Code and the California Code of Regulations. All applications of control method are limited to the noxious weeds with minimal disruption to native plants immediately adjacent or living amidst the noxious weeds.

Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) is a non-native species of brush introduced to the Caspar area in the 1880s, which grows up to 15 feet high in dense stands. This monoculture reduces the value of cropland to zero, excludes wildlife, and depletes water tables. It is easily ignited and burns with the very high intensity. The Gorse has been contained to a less than two square mile area, but there are over two hundred acres of dense stands. This weed has been chosen because it poses extreme risk to the safety of people, fish, and wildlife.

METHODOLOGY. Gorse has a long history in the community of Caspar. Groups have been battling to keep Gorse from spreading since the 1880's. Property owners are eager to partner with State and local government agencies to remove this weed. The extent of gorse has been partially mapped on Cal-flora. It has been observed on the south side of Caspar Creek all the way to Gibney Lane and beyond, and from the Pacific Ocean on the West to at least one mile East of Highway One. Both Cal -Fire and State Parks are well aware of the extent of infestations.

The proposed project will consist of a variety of methods which will be tested for efficacy for future gorse remediation efforts. The following methods will be used and evaluated.

1. Mechanical Mastication: a mechanical masticator will be used to grind up gorse on areas that are at least 50 feet from any sensitive wetland areas.
2. Hand tools will be utilized for removal of gorse that is located within 50 feet of any wetlands. No herbicide may be used within 50 feet of any Wetland.
3. Mowing, disking and root removal with low ground pressure root bucket or root grapple which go 4" to 6" into the ground.
4. Mastication and /or grazing gorse areas with goats and /or sheep.
5. Use of hot steam machine to kill gorse seeds and plants.

Gorse removal activities will extend into the future years to address any new plants and may include all of the above.

CULTURAL RESOURCES. No sensitive cultural resources are known to be present at identified infestation sites that will be targeted in the project. If cultural resources are uncovered during the project: construction will immediately stop and tribal representatives will be contacted. Some eradication work will employ methods which are not ground disturbing and will not affect cultural resources: hand-pulling individual plants (which are small).

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. The project will improve the overall biological function of the areas designated for weed abatement. Nevertheless, the project proposes to put in place measures that will further ensure protection of natural species. Specifically, the following measures will be undertaken to minimize impacts to biological resources and to comply with the Coastal Act.

1. All mechanized removal activities with habitat (shrubs, grass lands, but not previously masticated gorse areas) will occur after the bird breeding season is completed to minimize impacts to migratory and local birds.
2. All weed removal work within 50 feet of a wetland will be completed by hand with hand tools and no herbicides will be used.
3. All work will be completed prior to the rainy season (before October 15) in order to minimize storm water impacts.

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT:

Mendocino County Department of Agriculture/ Weights and Measures

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT:

Mendocino County Department of Agriculture/ Weights and Measures

EXEMPT STATUS: Categorical Exemption Class 8, Action by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment CEQA guidelines 15308

REASON WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: The projects implement actions performed by regulatory agencies, to maintain, restore or enhance the environment where the regulatory process includes procedures to protect the environment. Failure to perform these projects will have the adverse effect of displacing native vegetation by invasive plants intrusion and thus degrading animal habitat by allowing the spread of noxious weeds and increasing risks from wildfires.

This is an integrated weed management program. It includes education, prevention, physical and mechanical removal, herbicides, cultural methods and general land management practices to eradicate and manage A, B, C rated weed pests.

CONTACT PERSON: Jim Donnelly, Agricultural Commissioner/ Sealer of Weights and Measures

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 707-234-6830

Signature:

Title: Agricultural Commissioner/ Sealer

