



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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|-------------------------|---|---------------|----------------|
| PROJECT TITLE | Saltcedar Burn Pile 2021 Update | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | Sections, 3, 10, 11, 14, 23, 24, 25, 26, Township 13S, Range, 35E; Sections 12, 13, 24, Township 12S, Range 34E; Sections 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 20, Township 12S, Range 35E; Mount Diablo Base Meridian (MDBM) | COUNTY | Inyo County |
| LEAD AGENCY | California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) | | |
| CONTACT | David Haas, Unit Forester | | |
| ADDRESS | 3800 N. Sierra Way San Bernardino, CA 92405 | PHONE | (909) 881-6955 |

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is located within State Responsibility Areas (SRA) on Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) property north and east of Independence, California. LADWP diverts water from the Owens River and its tributaries onto alluvial fans or settling basins; LADWP is required by state and local agencies to monitor and control invasive saltcedar (*Tamarix ramosissima*) growth in all locations where water is spread. Saltcedar control of cutting and pile formation has been completed by LADWP; this project scope is limited to CAL FIRE crews burning previously created saltcedar piles. Project implementation will help control invasive saltcedar, ecologically restore habitat, and reduce wildfire risk. In addition to saltcedar, vegetation communities with the project area are dominated by Torreys saltbush (*Atriplex torreyi*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), shadscale saltbush (*Atriplex confertifolia*), longspine horsebrush (*Tetradymia axillaris*, and Johnson's indigobush (*Psoralea arborescens* var. *minutifolius*). Several watercourses occur within the project area; however, pile burning will not constitute a substantial change or result in a significant impact to these resources. CAL FIRE has coordinated with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) to assess the potential risk to these resources and determined that no permits are necessary. Only previously created piles of saltcedar slash are intended for burning. Therefore, control lines will need to be created by hand around each pile or groups of piles to control burns. Project implementation is expected to occur outside of nesting bird season, September 15-March 15, to the extent possible. Work may be done during nesting bird season if nesting surveys are performed prior to commencement of operations. Piles were created with the intent of burning with pile diameter sizes ranging from six feet to ten feet in diameter. Piles will be ignited using various firing devices such as drip torches and fuses. Burning will occur when appropriate and on allowable burn days. Vehicles and equipment will remain on existing access roads; all access into non-disturbed, vegetated areas will be by foot. Maintenance entries will occur as necessary following the same prescription and measures outlined above. No off site improvements are necessary for project implementation.


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

The project meets the requirements of Class 4 Categorical Exemption (Minor alterations to land) Section 15304. Project implementation will result in alterations to the land that are best described as minor in scope, that will not significantly impact the aesthetic of the property, or biological and/or cultural resources, and that do not involve the removal of mature, scenic trees for any purpose. No exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a "Notice of Exemption" for this project. It has been concluded that no significant adverse environmental impacts would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forest resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, utilities and service systems, or wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the CALFIRE staff is kept on file at CAL FIRE's San Bernardino Unit Headquarters in San Bernardino, CA.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

 John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Date
 Resource Protection and Improvement
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

12/16/2021