



# Notice of Exemption

## Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Post Office Box 1450 · 30 Horseshoe Lane · Weaverville, CA 96093-1450

**PROJECT TITLE** Trinity County Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project – Phase 2, Burnt Ranch area

**PROJECT LOCATION** The project is located along Hwy 299, Underwood Mountain Road, minor side roads, and adjacent private property in Trinity County, California. T05N R06E, portions of Sections 14,15 (Humboldt Base and Meridian) **COUNTY** Trinity

**LEAD AGENCY** California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE)

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**ADDRESS** P.O Box 1450, Weaverville, CA 96093 **PHONE** 530-623-6004

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Trinity County Resource Conservation District (District) and Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC) plan to implement fuels reduction and chipping activities along Highway 299, Underwood Mountain Road, Pony Express Way, Burnt Ranch School Road, Powderhouse Road, Mill Camp Road, Seth Road, Ford Lane, and on adjacent State of California and private property. This is a residential area in the unincorporated community of Burnt Ranch and within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Treatments in this area are part of a county-wide strategy to reduce fuels in WUI areas, reducing risk to homes from catastrophic wildfire and creating safer conditions for fire suppression. The area is characterized by a mosaic of mixed conifer, oak woodland, chaparral, grassland, and riparian areas in a variety of conditions. The WRTC plans to implement manual thinning and chipping treatments on approximately 20 acrs of the 493 acres analyzed under an ERRF (on file at district office). The primary goal of this project is to return overstocked forests to a healthier and less hazardous state in this roadside and WUI area. Our objectives include: reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, stimulating the growth of woody shrubs, oaks, and conifers, increase water yields, encouraging the return of native grasses by reducing non-natives invasive plants, and reducing conifer encroachment into the oak woodland and grassland areas. This will be accomplished using hand thinning and chipping as the primary fuels reduction treatment. The prescription includes hand thinning of small diameter (less than 10" DBH) conifers and shrubs that are adjacent to habitable structures, critical infrastructure, and/or roadways and driveways. Emphasis will be placed on eliminating the continuity of surface and ladder fuels. Some sub canopy trees may be removed to break up vertical continuity to dominant trees as well as to raise the canopy base height, which will reduce future fire intensity. Cut materials will bucked and carried to the chipper then chipped and broadcasted on site. Any remaining material that cannot be chipped will be lop-and-scattered on site. This project helps actively manage the land with no negative impacts, creating a landscape that is more resilient and resistant to high intensity wildfires.

### 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 proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304. Pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4 consists of minor private alterations of vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. The project involves removal of small diameter understory trees and brush species to reduce the vertical and horizontal continuity of forest fuels. The trees being removed are in a suppressed state and are not considered healthy.

Review by Trinity County Resource Conservation District staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The project consists of minor treatments to land and vegetation in the form of hand thinning and chipping via hand crews. The activities do not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, or sedimentation to surface waters. This project will not convert forestland to non-forest uses, and all treated



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vegetation will have the ability to grow back. The District 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.

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**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

 3/1/2022  
Kelly Sheen, District Manager      Date  
Trinity County Resource Conservation District