



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, Hayfork area (3100701)

PROJECT LOCATION Hayfork, CA. Portions of; T31N R11W, sections 1-4, 10; T32N R11W, sections 27-28, 33, 35. (Humboldt Base and Meridian) **COUNTY** Trinity

LEAD AGENCY Trinity County Resource Conservation District (District)

CONTACT Chris Cole, Program Manager ccole@tcrd.net

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The District with the Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC), plans to implement fuels reduction activities in the form of hand thinning and roadside chipping on approximately 70 acres of the 1,757-acre footprint analyzed under an ERRF (on fire at the Trinity County RCD office) associated with this project on Barker Valley Road and Summit Creek Road. The projects in Hayfork, CA are an integral part of the WRTCs landscape strategy aimed at protecting Trinity County communities from future catastrophic wildfire events and returning the landscape to a healthy, less hazardous state. Fuel Reduction treatments will be strategically placed along roadsides and adjacent to habitable structures and critical infrastructure to protect the life and property of Hayfork residents as well as to provide safe evacuation routes and ease of firefighter access and suppression efforts. The project area includes portions of many different private landowners within the WUI, and our objective is to treat approximately 80 acres over a 2-4 year period. Topography is mostly gentle (15%-45%) throughout much of the project area, elevations range from approximately 2200' – 3400'. The primary objectives include; reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, stimulating the growth of woody shrubs, oaks, and conifers, assisting landowners with defensible space, create safe ingress/egress by buffering main roadways, increase water yields, and reduce conifer encroachment into the oak woodland and grassland areas, and to return overstocked forests to a healthier and less hazardous state in this roadside and WUI area

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 within 100 feet of a road will be 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.

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.

Field 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 understory broadcast burning 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,



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and all treated 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.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

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