



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Tollhouse Fire Center Capital Improvement Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	T11S, R23E, Sections 1, MDBM Auberry, California 7.5-minute quadrangle	COUNTY	Fresno
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection		
CONTACT	Nicolas Meyer	PHONE	(559) 493-4300
ADDRESS	210 S. Academy Avenue Sanger, California 93657-9306		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Tollhouse Fire Center project encompasses 23 acres of heavily disturbed oak woodland habitat on the grounds of the old Sierra Elementary School located off Lodge road near Tollhouse, CA in Fresno County. The property consists of numerous cut and fill terraces which were constructed to support the schools building foundations as well as playgrounds, basketball courts and parking lots. Oaks and pines make up a sparse over-story and a mix of manzanita, buckeye, buck brush, and a variety of non-native grasses dominate the understory and ground cover as dictated by slope and aspect. The property was acquired by CAL FIRE in May of 2022 to house CAL FIRE's 4 National Guard Type 1 firefighter hand crews as well as CAL FIRE administrative and resource management staff. Vegetation treatment activities are required to reduce the fire hazard on the property as the school has been abandoned for years and is densely overgrown. In addition to fuel reduction activities, the existing buildings and infrastructure will be cleaned and improved as this will once again be a functional facility. Light grading and graveling on roughly 26,000 ft^2 of heavily disturbed non-native soil is proposed which will provide additional parking for staff as well as a sound foundation for Conex storage containers. Roughly 50 ft of minor trenching in this same area will be conducted at a depth no greater than 24 inches to provide power to the Conex boxes. Lastly, roughly 834 ft of fencing will be installed near the entrance and parking lot of the fire center. Following project completion, CAL FIRE will use the property to educate the public on how to properly trim trees and thin the understory to reduce the fuel loading on their property. Fuel reduction methods will consist of hand thinning and piling, pile burning and chipping. Firebreaks by bulldozers and other heavy equipment will not be incorporated into the project design.

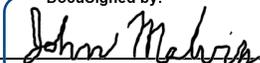
EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 1 15301, Existing Facilities
Class 4 15304, Minor Alteration 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

This project fits into Class 1 Categorical Exemption to CEQA (15301 Existing Facilities) Class 4 Categorical Exemption to CEQA (15304 minor alterations to land). Field review by a CAL FIRE Unit Environmental Scientist and Registered Professional Forester confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, 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, and wildfire following approval and implementation of this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit Headquarters at 210 South Academy Avenue, Sanger, CA 93657.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 10/18/2022