



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Pine Valley Community Fuel Break Maintenance		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Section 36, T15S, R4E, Section 31 T15S, R5E, Section 6, T16S, R5E, & Section 1, T16S, R4E, SBBM	COUNTY	San Diego
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Pete Scully CAL FIRE – Monte Vista Headquarters		
ADDRESS	Pre-Fire/Resource Management Office 2249 Jamacha Rd El Cajon, CA 92019	PHONE	(619) 933-6503

This project proposes the addition of mechanical maintenance as a treatment option of the existing Pine Valley Community Fuel Break (NOE posted 8/2/2017 SCH # 2017088120), a 200-foot-wide, north south aligned shaded fuel break on the eastern most edge of the Community of Pine Valley for a linear distance of 5,000 feet. Treatment will include reducing the mixed chaparral vegetation to maintain the targeted 80% reduction. This project will result in the maintenance of approximately 25 acres. Vegetation targeted for treatment will include chamise, red shank, California buckwheat, and big basin sage brush that commonly occur within the project area. Broadleaf species present within the project include manzanita, ceanothus and scrub oak, will be retained to present a mosaic effect but may be thinned where necessary to maintain the 80% reduction target. No live trees will be cut. Targeted vegetation will be masticated where feasible or will be hand cut at ground level. Both methods will retain root structures in place to reduce the potential for erosion. All cut vegetation will be masticated in place or chipped on site. Riparian areas and associated vegetation will be left untreated, and no cut vegetation will be piled for mastication or chipping within these areas. All work will be performed by masticator or hand crews using hand tools and chain saws.

The unincorporated community of Pine Valley is situated in a large valley surrounded by rugged mountainous terrain just north of Interstate 8 in southeastern San Diego County. Pine Valley is an isolated community of approximately 1,500. Pine Valley is bordered by the Cleveland National Forest on three sides and privately owned wildland on the remainder. The community suffered significant structure loss during the 1970 Laguna fire, the last major fire to impact this area and is considered at high risk for wildland fire.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 15304, Class 4 Minor Alteration to the 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 is consistent with Categorical Exemption: 15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to the land. After completing an environmental analysis, the Department has determined this project will have no significant impact on the environment. This determination is based on field assessments, a CNDDDB search, greenhouse gas emission calculations, and archaeological review completed by CAL FIRE Archaeological staff.

Field review by CAL FIRE staff 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 or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is retained on file at CAL FIRE MVU Headquarters in El Cajon.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

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John Mahan

11/22/2022

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Date

Assistant Deputy Director of Resource Protection & Improvement
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection