

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O Box 3044, Rm 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District
PO Box 95
Eureka, CA 95502-0095

Project File

County Clerk- County of Trinity
11 Court Street P.O. Box 1215
Weaverville, CA 96093

Project Title: Ruth Lake /Mad River Reforestation Project

Project Location - City: Ruth, CA

Project Location - County: Trinity

Project Location Specific: The project area is located 1 mile from Ruth, CA, 70 miles east of Fortuna, CA and 52 miles west of Hayfork, CA in Trinity County California at an elevation of 2,500'-3,800' feet. Location data is as follows: USGS 7.5-minute Quadrangle(s): Shannon Butte, Ruth Reservoir and Forest Glen, Sections 19, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 of T1S, R7E, HB&M Sections 2; 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 24 of T2S, R7E, HB&M.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The overall project objectives is to reforest burned timberlands and return forests and wildland habitat to a more natural, fire resilient condition and to ensure that the exposure of human assets and communities to wildfire risk has been reduced. The proposed Project will provide post- fire recovery by reforesting forest areas that burned in the August Complex wildfire. The project area has had salvage logging and biomass removal operations conducted. The reforestation and follow up treatments to reduce fuel loads will prepare forests for long-term stewardship through follow up treatments such as mechanical and hand treatments and prescribed fire.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District

Exempt Status:

Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);

Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));

Emergency Exemption - 14 CCR 15269 (a) - Projects to maintain, repair, restore, demolish, or replace property or facilities damaged or destroyed as a result of a disaster in a disaster stricken area in which a state of emergency has been proclaimed by the Governor pursuant to the California Emergency Services Act, commencing with Section 8550 of the Government Code.

Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));

Categorical Exemption California Code of Regulations, Title 14 section 15304 Class 4; Minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes; 15308 Class 8 consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. No habitat conversion will result from this project and a query of the CNDDDB did not reveal the presence of sensitive species that would be affected by project activities within the project area. Field review confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project.

Categorical Exemption California Code of Regulations, Title 14 Section 15301 Existing Facilities, including subsections (h) Maintenance of existing landscaping, native growth, and water supply reservoirs (excluding the use of pesticides, as defined in Section 12753, Division 7, Chapter 2, Food and Agricultural Code); The reforestation and slash removal site preparation can also be categorized as maintenance of existing native growth in these areas, which have succumbed to wildfire. There will be no expansion of use resulting from the activity.

Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Statutory Exemption Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1). The California Environmental Quality Act does not apply to prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects.

Reasons why project is exempt: The project involves, minor alteration of vegetation, including reforestation of areas burned in the 2020 August Complex wildfire, follow-up fuel management activities to reduce the volume of flammable post-wildfire biomass and follow up hand-crew brush control treatments. The project will have significant ecological benefits. No healthy, mature, scenic trees will be removed as part of this project. An environmental review was completed concluding that project implementation as designed could not have a significant effect on the environment. Most of the Project area to be reforested was evaluated under CEQA for timber harvest operations under filed Emergency Notices including logging, skidding and slash disposal in 2021, and no significant changes have occurred to the landscape since that analysis was completed. Areas not evaluated under prior Emergency Notices were evaluated by HBMWD consultants and staff. The activities do not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species or significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. There will be no impact to historic or cultural resources due to lack of ground disturbance and or avoidance and protection measures for cultural sites has been developed during the CAL FIRE Emergency Notice filing with guidance from the Archaeologist and are consistent with Best Management Practices of the industry. CEQA does not apply to fuel reduction projects undertaken on federal lands to reduce the risk of high severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the NEPA, if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The HBMWD will provide funding for reforestation and fuel reduction on 750 acres of federal land within the Six Rivers National Forest upstream from Ruth Lake. The proposed activities are being reviewed in their entirety under NEPA in the Mad River August Complex Restoration Project Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI). The final Decision Notice for the EA/FONSI project documents was approved on January 5, 2023.

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304. Pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4 consists of minor alterations of vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, or scenic trees on public or private land. This proposed project will reforest areas burned from wildfire, reduce the volume of flammable vegetation, thereby reducing wildfire risk, and will have significant ecological restoration benefits. Field review by HBMWD staff and consultants confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption. The HBMWD 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, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation on the environmental review for this project is kept on file at the HBMWD office in Eureka, CA.

Contact Person:

John Friedenbach-General Manager

Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

707) 443-5018

Date: January 18, 2023

Signature: J. Friedenbach, General Manager Title: General Manager

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
 - 2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? _____ Yes _____ No
- Signed by : _____ Lead Agency _____ Signed by Applicant



CEQA Analysis Area

Slope Derived from USGS 1/3 arc-second DEM


Ruth Lake, Forest Glen, & Shannon Butte USGS 7.5' Quadrangle


Sections 32, 33 of T1S, R7E, HB&M

Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 24, 25, 36 of T2S, R7E, HB&M

Sections 30, 31 of T2S, R8E, HB&M

Sections 6, 8, 17, 19 of T3S, R8E, HB&M

 CEQA Analysis Area

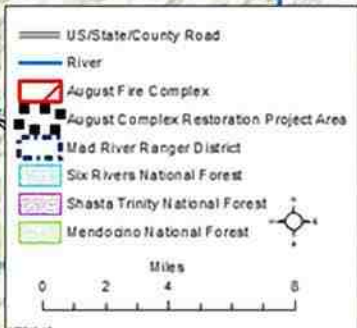
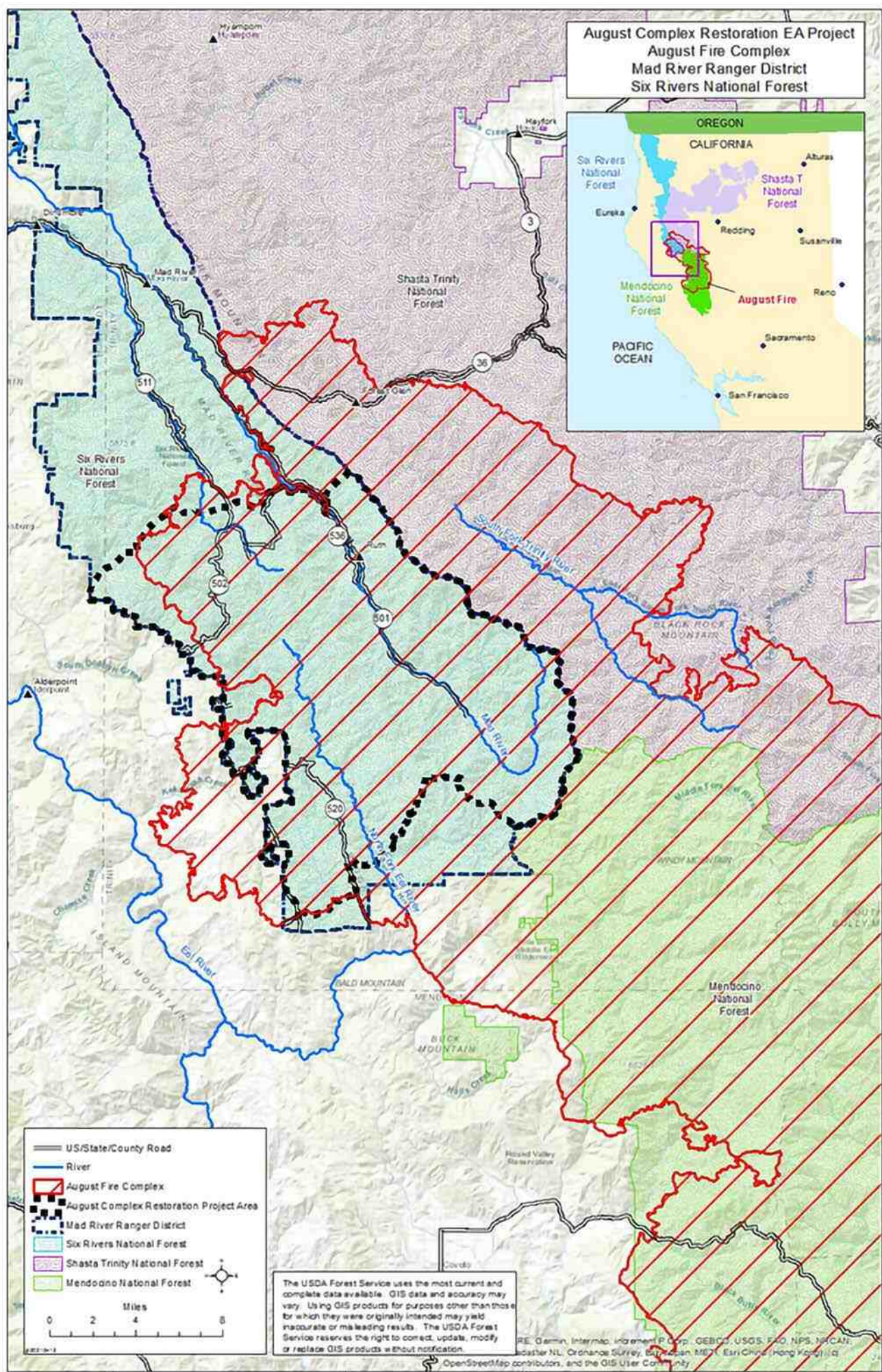
 HBMWD Property



1:78,000



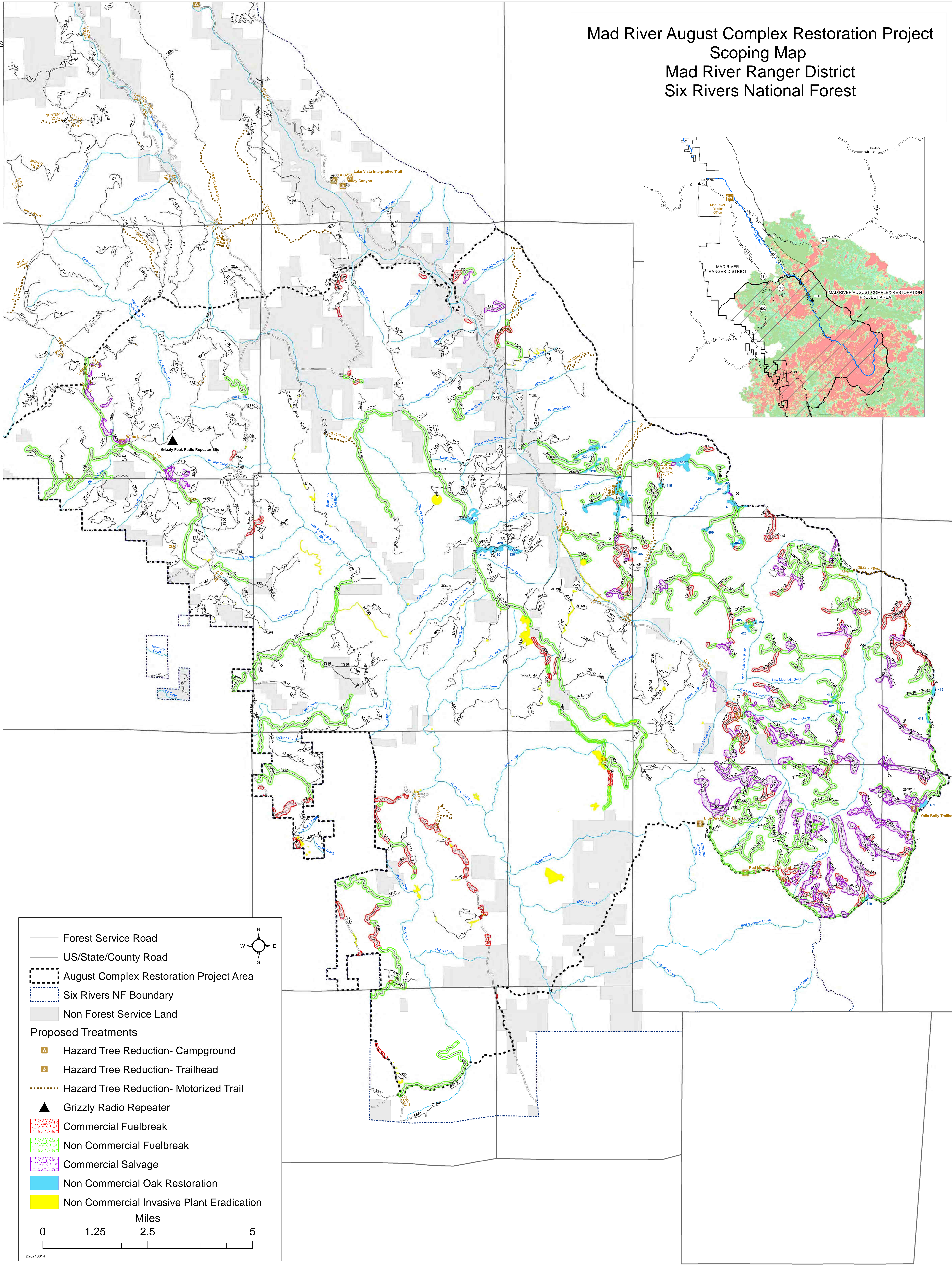
**August Complex Restoration EA Project
August Fire Complex
Mad River Ranger District
Six Rivers National Forest**



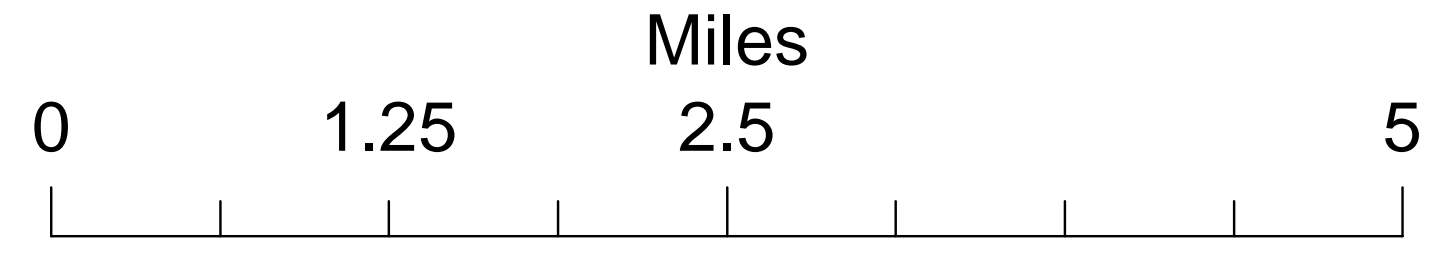
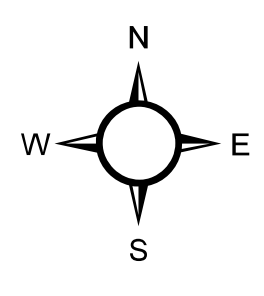
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Mad River August Complex Restoration Project Scoping Map Mad River Ranger District Six Rivers National Forest



- Forest Service Road
- US/State/County Road
- - - August Complex Restoration Project Area
- - - Six Rivers NF Boundary
- Non Forest Service Land
- Proposed Treatments**
- ▲ Hazard Tree Reduction- Campground
- ▲ Hazard Tree Reduction- Trailhead
- ⋯ Hazard Tree Reduction- Motorized Trail
- ▲ Grizzly Radio Repeater
- Commercial Fuelbreak
- Non Commercial Fuelbreak
- Commercial Salvage
- Non Commercial Oak Restoration
- Non Commercial Invasive Plant Eradication



R6E

R7E

R8E

R12W

T1S

T2S

T3S

T28N

T27N

T26N

T25N

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