



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE:	Summerville High Area Fuel Reduction		
PROJECT LOCATION	T1N, R16E portions of Sections 6 and 7, MDBM.	COUNTY	Tuolumne
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Gary Whitson; CAL FIRE Unit Forester	PHONE	(209) 754-3831
ADDRESS	785 Mountain Ranch Rd. San Andreas, CA 95249		

Project Description:

The proposed project will reduce hazardous fuel loading around the campus of Summerville High School in Tuolumne County. The project area is approximately 135 acres in size, and work will occur on approximately 105 acres. The project area is located near the community of Tuolumne. The project area ranges in elevation from approximately 2,600 feet to 2,850 feet. The objective of the project is to provide protection to Summerville High School students, staff and infrastructure by reducing the amount of flammable vegetation from an approximate 500-foot radius around the various school facilities. The school is located in an urban interface setting. Vegetation at the site would best be described as oak woodland. Overstory tree species consist primarily of interior live oak, California gray pine, California black oak, buckeye, valley oak, blue oak, ponderosa pine and incense cedar with an understory of manzanita, toyon, poison oak, buckeye and ceanothus. Surface and ladder fuels will be reduced or modified by mastication, chipping, or piling and burning. Mastication may be conducted by a variety of track laying type tractors. Hand work for chipping, as well as piling and burning will be conducted by hand crews using chainsaws and other hand tools. Trees less than 12-inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), surface fuels and ladder fuels will be removed to achieve a target residual tree spacing of 25 to 30-feet between stems. Residual trees will be pruned to a height of 8-feet above ground level. Dead trees of any size may be removed by chipping, piling and burning, or mastication. The reduction in vegetation will create an open and parklike shaded fuel break condition that will minimize fire behavior and create a stand structure that is resistant to stand replacing fires.

EXEMPTION STATUS

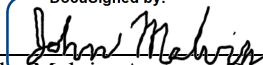
- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4, § 15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under portions of 15304- Minor Alterations to Land. The project will consist of removing surface and ladder fuels from the area around Summerville High School. The project is located in urban interface area. The project will create an open and park like condition around the high school. The project will not involve the removal of mature or scenic trees. Stand health will be improved by removing dead, dying, and suppressed trees and brush, and increasing growing space for mature, healthy dominant and co-dominant trees. Sensitive species will not be impacted by the proposed project. The project was designed to avoid adverse impacts to watercourses. Mastication and chipping will leave a layer of organic material that will provide for excellent erosion control. The project was designed to avoid adverse impacts to historical resources. The project was designed to protect students, staff and infrastructure at Summerville High School from wildfire and will make the community of Tuolumne more resilient regarding wildfires.

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that 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, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/ traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at the Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Headquarters in San Andreas.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Date 1/18/2023
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection