



State of California – The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Department of Parks and Recreation
Diablo Range District
15751 Tesla Road
Livermore, CA 94550

PROJECT TITLE: Ponderosa Prescribed Burn Complex

LOCATION: Henry W. Coe State Park

COUNTY: San Benito

DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PROJECT: The purpose of this project is to implement vegetation treatments and prescribed fire within plots (of varying acreage) along Manzanita Point, Pine Ridge, and Middle Ridge in Henry W. Coe State Park to maintain native plant biodiversity, reduce vegetation fuel in high-priority areas with nearby facilities, protect floral and faunal habitat, improve habitat for Ponderosa Pine forests, and provide training opportunities for staff.

Plots will be burned at different intervals, ranging from every year to every 10-15 years depending on data analysis of vegetation response. The project is consistent with the Park's Prescribed Fire Management Plan (1986), and the more recent Western Zone Complex prescribed fire project (updated in 2009). This project also intends to be consistent with traditional cultural practices by collaborating with local Native American tribes both in consultation during burn planning, and in practice during implementation. On roughly 9 plots of land (approximately 281 acres). The project will:

- Use weed wackers, chainsaws, and chippers to cut and process all vegetation under 6 inch diameter at breast height (DBH), unless otherwise specified, up to 50 meters on the interior side of the lines and scatter chips to a depth of no more that 2 inches;
- Where feasible, cut materials may be made into burn piles, or left in place throughout the plots in locations where they will not cause unwanted fire severity;
- Leave oaks and other hardwood tree species under 6 inch diameter uncut, unless they are growing in dense patches near fire lines;
- Minimally prune individual trees and shrubs to maintain a natural aesthetic appearance to the area. Trees and shrubs will either be left intact (no cuts), or will be taken out completely to ground level;
- As needed, clear up to a 10-meter radius around ponderosa pine tree trunks (including seedling and sapling individuals) and scrape away duff build-up from the base of larger ponderosa pines to prevent root and tree mortality;
- Protect large snags from fire by scrapping to bare mineral soil around their base; and
- Create approx. 1,225 meters of new fire lines as well as utilize existing trails and roads for fire lines. New lines will have vegetation cleared up to 10 meters in width and will have a scratch line of bare mineral soil up to 1 meter in width. Fire resource vehicles will not be permitted to drive these lines.

During implementation it is possible that conditions might change to be out of prescription. If this change occurs, it is possible that new fire line might be constructed within plots, or within roughly 50 meters of the plot. Due to the nature of implementing prescribed fire, it is impossible to predict where and how these lines might be placed.

A DPR-qualified biologist will survey for all flora and fauna of special interest. Work will cease in the area if evidence of habitation is found. The end condition of this project will result in improved upland habitat that is more resilient to catastrophic changes due to wildfire.

Several sensitive cultural resource sites are known within the project boundary. Staff Archaeologist will identify sites and buffer areas prior to treatment to protect these sites from impacts by excluding fire from the resource and/or not allowing ground disturbing activities in the area.

The project will require temporary closures of some trails during plot preparation and ignitions. Trail closures will be temporary, lasting no more than one day. Adjacent property owners will be notified a minimum of one week before any prescribed fire event. Public notifications will be made via social media and/or news outlets before any prescribed fire event.

PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING THE PROJECT: California Department of Parks and Recreation

NAME OF DIVISION OR DISTRICT CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT: Diablo Range District


EXEMPT STATUS:

Categorical Exemption *Class:* 1 & 4 *Section:* 15301 & 15304

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: Project consists of the operation, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond current levels and minor public or private alterations in the condition of land and vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is included as Prescribed burns to restore native vegetation, reduce fuel loads, and control invasive exotic or alien species” and “Resource management projects” in the Department of Parks and Recreation’s list of exempt activities in accordance with CCR § 15300.4.

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 Clinton Elsholz DATE
 District Superintendent (Acting)
 Diablo Range District