



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Knights Ferry Fuel Reduction Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	T1S, R12E, Section 29, Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian	COUNTY	Stanislaus
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Gary Whitson		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The specific project area is located along three selected roadways adjacent to downtown Knights Ferry and the Knights Ferry Elementary School: specifically, Sonora Road, Cemetery Road, and Dent Street. The project will consist of removing surface and ladder fuels from within a 50-foot easement along both sides of these roadways, creating an open and "park like" condition within the easements. The health and vigor of the residual plants and trees will be improved by removing suppressed trees and brush. The project is designed to protect Knights Ferry and particularly the elementary school from wildfire. Reducing hazardous fuels within the 50-foot roadside easements will improve ingress and egress for responding emergency fire equipment, as well as facilitate any required evacuations.

Hazardous fuels reduction work will be limited to workers using hand tools within the 50-foot easement. A portable chipper will remain on the paved road surface where brush and small trees (under 10-inches dbh) will be processed with chips being blown back onto the easement, where they will serve as erosion control. Green trees greater than 10-inches in diameter will have limbs pruned up to a height of 12 feet above the ground. No piling and/or burning will occur on this project. There are several larger valley live oaks that encroach over the elementary school parking lot. Five of these trees (approximately 18-20 inches dbh) will be removed to reduce wildfire hazard as well as the threat of stem breakage and resulting damage or injury to school personnel, visitors, or property. These larger trees will also be chipped on site. Tree stems greater than 14" dbh will be cut into firewood lengths and left for local residents. Overall, vegetation is dominated by valley oak, black oak, and willow trees. Understory vegetation is dominated by California wild blackberry. The total area designated for treatment under this project is 11.5 acres. The end result will make the community of Knights Ferry more resilient regarding wildfires.

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.

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 McElwain

2/11/2023

John McElwain, Assistant Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection