

# Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

**Note:** This report form is intended for use to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a notice of exemption document for a proposed project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable categorical exemptions, this report presents the project proponent's review for possible exceptions that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by the project proponent.

Author:	Annie Barbeau (Trinity County Resource Conservation District)
Title:	Revegetation Program Manager
Address:	30 Horseshoe Lane, Weaverville, CA 96093
Phone:	530-623-6004 x 8
Email:	<a href="mailto:abarbeau@tcrd.net">abarbeau@tcrd.net</a>

Project Name:	Trinity Resource Advisory Committee-Suzy Q Invasive Removal Project		
Program Type:	Noxious Weed Management		
County:	Trinity		
Acres:	< 1 acre		
Legal Location:	Township 6N, Range 6E Section 20		
Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s):	Salyer		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Vicinity Map Attached	<input type="checkbox"/> Project Location Map Attached	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos Attached

<b>Other Public Agency Review or Permit Required:</b>		
Would the project result in:	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:</b>		

<b>Project Description and Environmental Setting (describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):</b>
<p>Sophia Sady, DBA SproutLife, will lead noxious weed removal within the community of Suzy Q in Hawkins Bar, Trinity County. Sophia and community residents will be implementing the work. The project will entail the treatment of Scotch broom (<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>), yellow star-thistle (<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>), Himalayan blackberry (<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>), and tree-of-heaven (<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>). The CEQA Notice of Exemption associated with this document will cover the private ownership portion of the treatment area, which only includes Scotch broom near and alongside Suzy Q Rd. Equipment that will be utilized includes weed wrenches and weed whackers. All removed noxious weed biomass will be stored and contained on private property and off Forest Service land. Weeds will be eliminated through private party burning activities away from flammable materials. Burning will only occur on burn days approved by the North Coast Regional Quality Control Board. Burn permit fees are allocated in the proposed project budget and will be obtained prior to any burning activities. The Scotch broom population that will be treated makes up a total of 3.34 acres; however, the actual treated area will be restricted to where individual plants are to be removed, resulting in less soil disturbance than 3.34 acres (&lt; 1 acre). Project area boundaries are exhibited in Figures 1-2.</p> <p>Suzy Q is a small rural community located in Hawkins Bar, CA near the Trinity River in northwest Trinity County. The vegetative community is dominated by canyon live oak, green-leaf manzanita, and tanoak.</p>

## Environmental Impact Analysis

**Aesthetics**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply as the proposed treatment area will likely improve aesthetically by removing populations of the noxious weed Scotch broom, allowing for a more diverse vegetative community. No adverse effect to aesthetics is anticipated.

**Agriculture and Forest Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds, if necessary.
- Yes  No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?
- Yes  No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply to this project. There will be no trees felled, no conversion of farmland, nor any conversion of forestland to non-forest use. No effect is anticipated as a result of this project.

**Air Quality**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply to this project. Burning of Scotch broom waste will only occur on burn days approved by the North Coast Regional Quality Control Board. No long-term impacts on air quality are expected; therefore, no adverse effect is anticipated as a result of this project.

**Biological Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?
- Yes  No Was a current California Natural Diversity Database review completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Queries of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) were conducted in February 2023. Nine quads were included in the query: Salyer, Hoopa, Tish Tang, Willow Creek, Denny, Grouse Mountain, Hennessy Peak, and Ironside Mountain to determine the potential occurrence of federal and state listings of rare, endangered, threatened, proposed endangered, or proposed threatened species.

The nine-quad search centered on the project area generated an occurrence report of plant and animal species. One plant species was listed as “Rare” (see Table 1). Eight animal species were listed as “Proposed Threatened,” “Threatened,” or “Endangered” (see Table 2).

**Table 1.** Federal and state listed plant species.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Fed List	Cal List	Rare Plant Rank
<i>Bensoniella oregona</i>	bensoniella	None	Rare	1B.1

**Table 2.** Federal and state listed animal species:

Scientific Name	Common Name	Fed List	Cal List
<i>Gulo</i>	wolverine	Proposed Threatened	Threatened
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	bald eagle	Delisted	Endangered
<i>Martes caurina humboldtensis</i>	Humboldt marten	Threatened	Endangered
<i>Monadenia infumata setosa</i>	Trinity bristle snail	None	Threatened
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i> pop. 48	steelhead - northern California DPS summer-run	Threatened	Endangered
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i> pop. 49	steelhead - northern California DPS winter-run	Threatened	None
<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i> pop. 30	chinook salmon - upper Klamath and Trinity Rivers ESU	Candidate	Threatened
<i>Rana boylei</i>	foothill yellow-legged frog	None	Endangered

For each species above, habitat attributes were identified and analyzed to determine the likelihood of their actual presence within the project area. Consideration was also given to the proposed project activities and the likelihood of any significant adverse impacts to any listed or non-listed species as a result of those activities.

Plants:

**benioniella (*Benioniella oregona*)** – This species occurs above elevations of 3,018 ft., exceeding the elevation of the treatment area location. The highest elevation in the treatment area is approximately 680 ft.

Animals:

**wolverine (*Gulo gulo*)** – This species generally occurs in coniferous forests with very low human development, cold temperatures, and high elevations. The treatment area is located within a residential area, with a relatively low elevation, and warm temperatures in the summer. Occurrences of this species are unlikely. The proposed project activities will have no significant impact.

**bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)** – The project area is within the species range; however, activities will not have an effect on tree canopy or potential nesting sites. No nests were observed during the site visit. The proposed project activities will have no significant impact.

**Humboldt marten (*Martes caurina humboldtensis*)** – The preferred habitat for this species consists of large continuous patches of old-growth, conifer-dominated forests with dense shrub layers. If individuals of this species were to inhabit the area, the treatment would have no significant impact.

**Trinity bristle snail (*Monadenia infumata setosa*)** – Treatment in this area is not suitable habitat for this species, as it thrives in leaf litter primarily consisting of deciduous leaves. The proposed project activities will have no significant impact.

**steelhead - northern California DPS summer-run (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus* pop. 48)** - This aquatic species does not have suitable habitat within the project area. The proposed project activities will have no significant impact.

**steelhead - northern California DPS winter-run (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus* pop. 49)** - This aquatic species does not have suitable habitat within the project area. The proposed project activities will have no significant impact.

**chinook salmon - upper Klamath and Trinity Rivers ESU (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha* pop. 30)** - This aquatic species does not have suitable habitat within the project area. The proposed project activities will have no significant impact.

**foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*)** - This aquatic species does not have suitable habitat within the project area. The proposed project activities will have no significant impact.

No adverse impacts on biological resources are anticipated.

**Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Was a professional archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Will the project effect any historic, archaeological or tribal cultural resources?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts on cultural or tribal cultural resources are anticipated.

**Energy**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply to this project as the proposed treatments will not affect energy efficiency. No energy will be produced or altered, and the project will not result in unnecessary energy consumption. No effect on energy is anticipated.

**Geology and Soils**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The proposed project should not result in significant adverse impacts on slope stability or soil productivity. The project area is located primarily on flat ground, and soil disturbance will be limited to localized areas where individual Scotch broom plants are located. Heavy equipment will not be utilized for this project.

No significant impacts related to geology and soils are anticipated.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
- Yes  No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
- Yes  No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

Any soil disturbance that would occur during the implementation of the proposed project would not produce a significant amount of GHG emissions. Scotch broom is a flashy fuel that increases the risk and severity of wildfires; its removal reduces the probability of catastrophic wildfires and protects habitable structures within the area. The proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts associated with increased GHG emissions but would potentially prevent them in the future.

No significant impacts related to GHG emissions are anticipated.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No significant impacts related to hazards or hazardous materials are anticipated.

**Hydrology and Water Quality**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts to hydrology and water quality are anticipated.

**Land Use and Planning**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply as the project will not change or conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation. No effect is anticipated.

**Mineral Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply as there are no known mineral resources found within the treatment area. No effect is anticipated.

**Noise**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply; no impact related to noise is anticipated.

**Population and Housing**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply as project components are not related to population and housing. No effect is anticipated.

**Public Services**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply as project components will not impact or change any public services. No effect is anticipated.

**Recreation**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project is occurring on private land. No impacts to recreation are anticipated.

**Transportation and Traffic**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts to transportation and traffic are anticipated.

**Utilities and Service Systems**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

There is one PG&E utility line located within the project area near the Scotch broom population. No work will be carried out in this area if any utility work or maintenance is scheduled.

No impacts to utilities and service systems are anticipated.

**Wildfire**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Removing flashy fuels such as Scotch Broom reduces the risk and severity of wildfires. Weed biomass will be eliminated through private-party burning activities away from flammable materials. Burning will only occur on burn days approved by the North Coast Regional Quality Control Board. No adverse impacts related to wildfire are anticipated.

**Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:**

No changes to the project proposal are necessary.

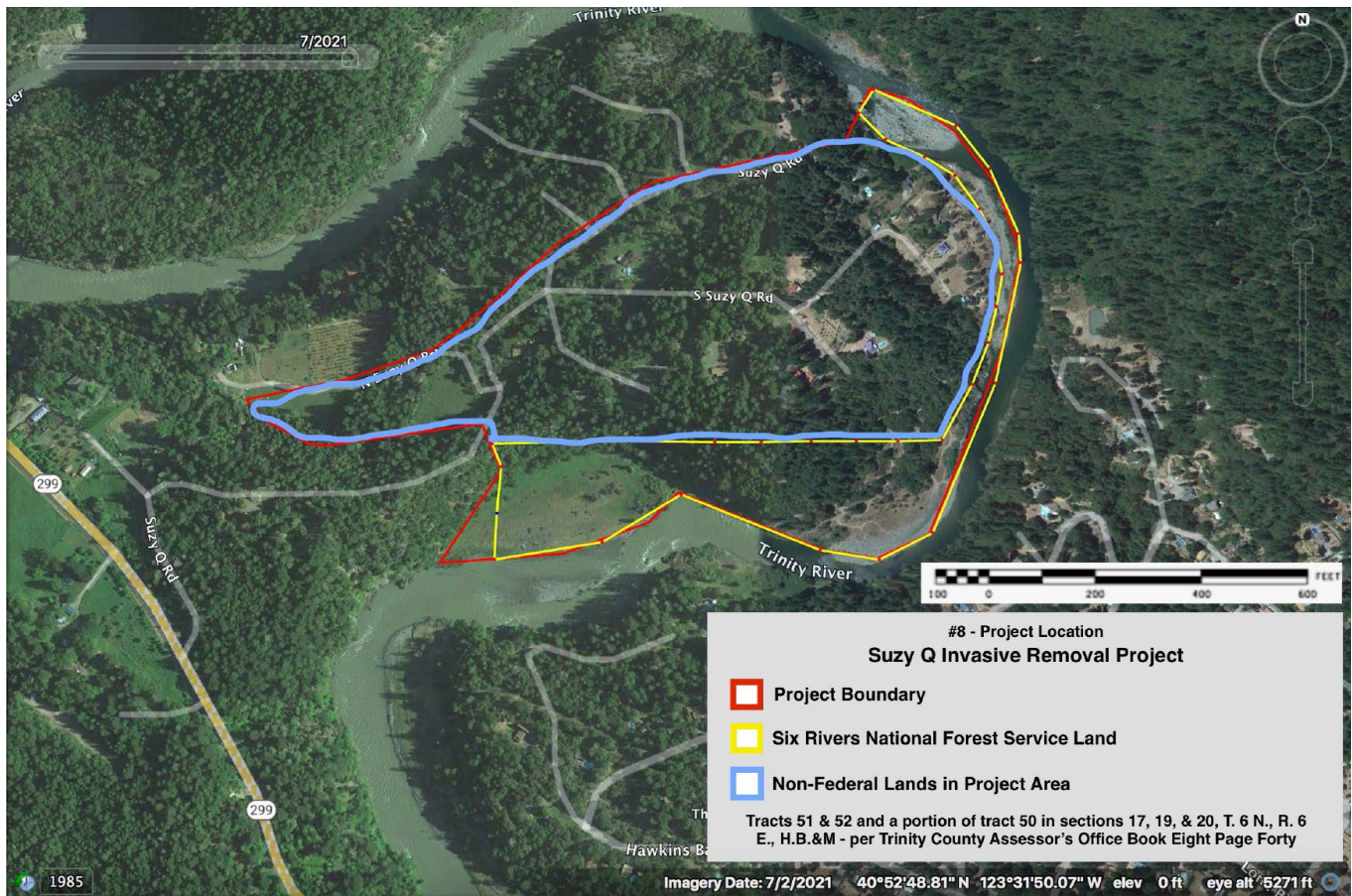
<b>Mandatory Findings of Significance:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):**  
 The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304. Pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4 consists of minor private alterations of vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.  
 A field review by Trinity Resource Conservation District staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The project consists of minor treatments to land and vegetation by removing Scotch broom to improve biodiversity and reduce the impacts of potential wildfires. The activities do not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, or sedimentation to surface waters. The District 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, utilities and service systems, or wildfire.

**Conclusion:**

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, the project proponent has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. The project proponent considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A notice of exemption will be filed.

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, the project proponent has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site that precludes the use of a categorical exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a negative declaration or a mitigated negative declaration.



**Figure 1.** Project boundaries with private land outlined in blue. Only private land is relevant for this environmental review.



**Figure 2.** The Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) population boundary is represented by the bright green polygon. Yellow star-thistle, represented by the bright yellow polygon, is not associated with this environmental review.