



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Alder Heights Fuel Break		
	T10S, R23E, Sections 11, 13, and 14, MDBM		
PROJECT LOCATION	T10S, R24E, Section 18, MDBM	COUNTY	Fresno
	Auberry, California 7.5-minute quadrangle		
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection		
CONTACT	Nicolas Meyer		
ADDRESS	210 S. Academy Avenue	PHONE	(559) 493-4300
	Sanger, California 93657-9306		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Alder Heights fuel break project is located near the community of Meadow Lakes, CA at 4600' elevation, and can be accessed from Auberry Road. This 120-acre fuel break is an existing project which was placed under the 2015 Governor's Proclamation of a State of Emergency. The emergency proclamation suspended the requirements of CEQA for purposes of carrying out, among other things, Directive 2 of the October 30, 2015 Proclamation of a State of Emergency however, this CEQA Suspension has since expired and CEQA compliance is now required to continue the maintenance of this existing fuel break. This project connects to the existing Meadow Lakes North Fuel Break at Radio Lane. This fuel break is 300-400' wide for approximately 3 miles, totaling 120 acres and connects existing CAL FIRE and USFS projects together for a complete network of fuel breaks adjacent to the communities of Shaver Lake and Pine Ridge. This project not only enhances forest health, but it also provides a fuel break that reduces the impacts of fire to the housing developments of Cressman, Apple Ridge, Meadow Ridge and Old Bretz Mill in the Shaver Lake Community. The scope of this fuels reduction project has historically been to remove the dead hazard trees, thin the understory, remove the brush creating a shaded fuel break, and future maintenance of the fuel break however, the Creek Fire which occurred in Fresno and Madera county in August of 2020 burned through roughly 50% of this project and additional efforts are now required to restore this fuel break. As a result of the Creek Fire, many of the dead or dying trees have been burnt and understory shrubs need to be removed from the project in order to ensure that this fuel break operates with the same integrity as it did prior to the Creek Fire. Heavy ground disturbing activities will not occur as this project has been completed and is only needing maintenance in perpetuity and potential reforestation efforts where applicable. All work will be done by mastication, chipping, chainsaws, and pruning with some hand work, pile/burn, and broadcast burn. Control lines for broadcast burning will consist of existing roads, existing dozer line, hand line, and or wet line. Dead and dying trees will be felled, trees less than eight inches at breast height maybe removed or thinned, and trees greater than 8 inches may be pruned at least six to eight feet above the ground reducing the fuel ladders.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 15304, Minor Alteration 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 into a Class 4 Categorical Exemption to CEQA (15304 minor alterations to land). Field review by a CAL FIRE Unit Environmental Scientist and Registered Professional Forester confirmed that no exceptions apply which 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, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems and wildfire following approval and implementation of this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings Unit Headquarters at 210 South Academy Avenue, Sanger, CA 93657.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

John M. Mahan

John M. Mahan, Assistant Deputy Director
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

3/21/2023

Date