

## Notice of Exemption

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**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 2  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Inland Deserts Region  
Bishop Field Office  
787 N. Main Street, Suite 220  
Bishop, CA 93514

**Project Title:** Buttermilk Country Wildlife Area Fuel Breaks

**Project Location:** The project will be located in the Buttermilk Country Wildlife Area (Wildlife Area) in northern Inyo County, State of California. The Project is located in Sections 29-32 of Township 7 South, Range 31 East, MDBM, and within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Tungsten Hills Quadrangle map.

**Project Description:** The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (“CDFW”) proposes to create fuel breaks along existing fence lines and along Buttermilk Road within the Buttermilk Country Wildlife Area.

This fuel break project will establish hand thinned fuel breaks along existing roads and fence lines, seeding of fire-resistant native vegetation such as native perennial grasses in large areas of bare soil, and follow up invasive plant control measures in fuel breaks during subsequent maintenance. Fuel breaks along 1.75 miles of existing fence lines will be 20 feet wide removing all shrubs. The fuel break along 0.4 miles of Buttermilk Road will be 500 feet wide and only remove shrubs to increase the interspacing with irregular edges to minimize aesthetic impacts. Labor will be completed by CAL FIRE or California Conservation Corps hand crews supervised by CDFW staff. Removed vegetation will be lopped and scattered or hauled off site.

Bird clearance surveys will be conducted within 5 days prior to initiating any project activities. Biological and vegetation surveys of the project area will also be conducted within 5 days of any work conducted to evaluate the current site conditions and to assess presence/absence of special status plant or animal species. If special status plants or mammal burrows are found they will be flagged and avoided.

Pre-project surveys and fuel reduction activities will commence in May 2023, or as access permits. Operations will continue, based on crew availability, until completed. These treatments may be repeated as needed to maintain the fuel breaks.

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Person or Agency Carrying out Project:** California Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Exempt Status:**

- Ministerial:
- Declared Emergency:
- Emergency Project:
- Categorical Exemption: 14 CCR, Section 15301 and 15304

**Reasons why Project is exempt:**

The project is *Class 1, §15301* (Existing Facilities) Exempt; the Project includes the maintenance and repair of existing fence lines by the removal of encroaching vegetation and the creation of a fuel break along an existing road. The project will not expand or extend the existing roadways or fence lines and is designed to slow the spread of future wildfires and provide for better emergency access.

The project is *Class 4, §15304* (Minor Alterations to Land) Exempt; the Project will result in minor alterations to CDFW owned land and vegetation on an officially designated Wildlife Area which will

mitigate potential injury or damage to important habitat, infrastructure, and property that could result from future wildfires.

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Aaron Johnson, [Aaron.Johnson@wildlife.ca.gov](mailto:Aaron.Johnson@wildlife.ca.gov), (760) 920-7473

**Signature:** DocuSigned by:  
*Chris Hayes*  
52BC6ECB38384BD... \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** 4/6/2023  
*Chris Hayes, Environmental Program Manager*

Signed by Lead Agency

Date Received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_