



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Musick Emergency Community Fuel Break		
	T10S, R23E, Sections 12, MDBM		
PROJECT LOCATION	T10S, R24E, Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 16, 17, and 18 MDBM Auberry and Shaver Lake, California 7.5-minute quadrangle	COUNTY	Fresno
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection		
CONTACT	Nicolas Meyer		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Musick Emergency Community fuel break project is located near the communities of Alder Springs and Pineridge, CA between 3600' and 4600' elevation, and can be accessed from Auberry Road. This 393-acre fuel break is an existing project which was placed under the 2019 Governor's Executive Order N-05-19. The Executive Order suspended the regulatory requirements of CEQA for purposes of completing fuel reduction projects however, this CEQA Suspension has since expired and CEQA compliance is now required to continue the maintenance of this existing fuel break. This community fuel break was heavily impacted by the Creek Fire which consumed over 300,000 acres of forest in September 2020 and it is imperative to clean this community fuel break up in response to the Creek Fire so it is able to function in the event of another catastrophic forest fire in the future. The scope of this fuel 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 100% 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. Work will be done by mastication, chipping, chainsaws, and pruning with some hand work, pile/burn, and broadcast burn. Some work by contractors may be completed to remove burnt dead trees. In addition, reforestation activities may occur over the life of the project by planting native tree seedlings. 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 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

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4/11/2023

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