



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE:	Sunshine Hill/Jamestown Road Shaded Fuel Break		
PROJECT LOCATION	T2N, R14E portions of Section 34, MDBM.	COUNTY	Tuolumne
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Gary Whitson; CAL FIRE Unit Forester		PHONE (209) 754-3831
ADDRESS	785 Mountain Ranch Rd. San Andreas, CA 95249		

Project Description: The proposed project will reduce hazardous fuel loading along Jamestown Road and Sunshine Hill Road near the community of Sonora in Tuolumne County. The project area is approximately 46 acres in size. The initial and current grant agreement for this project specifies 31 acres; however, this Notice of Exemption covers 46 acres in the event funds are still available after treating the initial 31 acres. The project area ranges in elevation from approximately 1,800 feet to 2,050 feet. The objective of the project is to reduce hazardous fuel loading and create a 500 ft wide shaded fuel break adjacent to Jamestown Road, the Sierra Meadows subdivision, the Lode Star Mobile Home Park, and residences along Sunshine Hill Road. The project area is in an urban interface setting. Vegetation at the site would best be described as oak woodland. Overstory tree species consist primarily of interior live oak, California gray pine, buckeye, valley oak, and blue oak with an understory of dense manzanita, toyon, poison oak, and ceanothus. Surface and ladder fuels will be reduced or modified by mastication, chipping, or by hand cutting, piling and burning. Mastication may be conducted by a variety of track laying type tractors. Hand work for chipping, as well as piling and burning will be conducted by hand crews using chainsaws and other hand tools. Trees less than 12-inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), surface fuels and ladder fuels will be removed to achieve a target residual tree spacing of 25 to 30-feet between stems. Residual trees will be pruned to a height of approximately 10-feet above ground level. Dead trees of any size may be removed and chipped, piled and burned, or masticated. The reduction in vegetation will create an open and parklike shaded fuel break condition that will minimize fire behavior and create a stand structure that is resistant to stand replacing fires.

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. The project will consist of removing surface and ladder fuels to create a shaded fuel break condition. The project is located in an urban interface area. The project will create an open and park like condition. The project will not involve the removal of mature or scenic trees. Stand health will be improved by removing dead, dying, and suppressed trees and brush, and increasing growing space for mature, healthy dominant and co-dominant trees. Sensitive species will not be impacted by the proposed project. The project was designed to avoid adverse impacts to watercourses. Mastication and chipping will leave a layer of organic material that will provide for excellent erosion control. The project was carefully designed to avoid adverse impacts to archaeological resources. The project was designed to reduce hazardous fuel loading adjacent to Jamestown Road, Sunshine Hill Road, the Lode Star Mobile Home Park, and the Sierra Meadows subdivision, and will make the community of Sonora more resilient regarding wildfires.

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

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

5/15/2023