

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 212
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
11521 Blocker Drive, Suite 205
Auburn, CA 95603

Project Title: Upper Yuba Headwaters Forest Restoration Project (SNC #1542)

Project Location – Specific:

The project is located in the upper Middle and South Yuba River watersheds near Jackson Meadows Reservoir, approximately 20 miles north of Truckee, within the Tahoe National Forest.

Project Location – City: Nearby communities include Truckee and Sierra City, which are 20.5 miles southeast and 8.5 miles northwest of the project area, respectively.

Project Location - County: Nevada and Sierra counties

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) will provide funding for this project to the Nevada Irrigation District to mechanically treat approximately 400 acres of hazardous-fire fuels adjacent to a critical water storage reservoir and associated infrastructure, which will complement other Nevada Irrigation District (NID) restoration and enhancement projects. This region has been prioritized for fire fuels reduction and hazard-tree removal and will expand on thousands of acres that have been managed by the U.S. Forest Service and Sierra Pacific Industries on nearby sections over the last 25 years. In total, this project anticipates treating approximately 140 acres via hand crew and tracked chipper, and approximately 260 acres via mastication. This project will utilize mechanical treatment to remove and chip or grind understory vegetation and ladder fuels that are 0-14" diameter-at-breast-height (DBH). The NID proposes to implement treatments at a rate of 100 acres per year. This project will create wildfire resilience in the region, remove hazard trees along roadways, and protect downstream water security and quality.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Nevada Irrigation District

Exempt Status:

Categorical Exemption: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4), minor alterations to land

Reasons why project is exempt:

The Upper Yuba Headwaters Forest Restoration Project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4). Class 4 is applicable to projects that consist of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation, which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor alterations to vegetation proposed by the project involve forest thinning with a hand crew, chipper, and mastication. Tree removal would only include trees that are crowded and negatively affect the health and fire resilience of the area. Removing these trees would improve the function of ecosystem services in the forest. The project was issued a Section 1038 exemption from CAL FIRE. As a requirement of this exemption, the project will comply with the Forest Practice Rules per Title 14, California Code of Regulations Chapters 4, 4.5, and 10, California Forest Practice Rules of 2023. None of the exceptions to the categorical exemption apply to the project.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Mary Akens

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-450-5177

If filed by applicant: N/A

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:
Yes No

Signature:  _____

Date: 6/1/2023

Title: Chief Deputy Executive Officer

Signed by Lead Agency: Yes

Signed by Applicant: No

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.