



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	CCPBA 2 nd Santa Lucia Conservancy Prescribed Burn		
PROJECT LOCATION	Township 17 South, Range 1 East, Section 4 & El Potrero de San Carlos Rancho, MDBM	COUNTY	Monterey
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT ADDRESS	Tim Montgomery Unit Forester – San Benito Monterey Unit 2221 Garden Rd., Monterey, CA. 93940	PHONE	(831) 601-6547

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is a grassland and mixed hardwood/conifer understory burn on private property that aims to restore the plant community that has deteriorated due to 1) competition from non-native grasses and forbs; 2) encroachment by brush and resulting dead material; 3) lack of frequent, low-intensity fires. The project is part of CAL FIRE Fire Prevention Grant #5GG19105, awarded to University of California Cooperative Extension and the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County to help the Central Coast Prescribed Burn Association accomplish several training burns. The burn area (33 acres total) is on property owned by Santa Lucia Conservancy. The project is located adjacent to Palo Corona Park approximately 11.5 drivable miles from Garland Regional Park, and 8 from Carmel Mission Basilica Museum. The project is 4.25 air miles from Highway 1. The vegetation is mixed hardwood and conifer consisting of oaks, buckeye, tanoaks, California bay, redwood and Douglas-fir, with a grass component, and sword and bracken fern, blackberry, and coyote brush understory. There is a riparian area adjacent to a portion of the project area with additional grasses and willows. Grasslands are composed of native and non-native species, mostly but not continually excluded from grazing. A seasonal road and trail borders half of the unit boundaries, and a rehabilitated dozer line created during the Soberanes Fire will border almost the remaining half along the ridgeline. The Burn Plan will be written by technical experts from Prometheus Fire Consulting LLC. Prometheus will also provide a competent and experienced Burn Boss. Pretreatment includes cutting brush and piling for burning during the broadcast burn. Seasonal and fire roads border the project perimeter, so there will be minimal line construction; however, hand crews may cut/scrape line to bare mineral soil to subdivide smaller burn units to achieve the biological and cultural objectives of the project and to allow for flexibility and variation in the seasonality of the burn. All potential Burn Units are adjacent to or bordered at least in part by a road. The burn will take place in approximately one day. An unnamed seasonal Class III tributary to San Jose Creek borders the project area for approximately 0.5 miles, adjacent to Rancho San Carlos Road. The moisture of extinction will ensure that the riparian area is not burned; fire practitioners will be instructed to allow fire to back naturally towards this area, and not to attempt ignition with torches in the riparian area. Footpaths will be diversified across the slope to ensure bare areas and ruts do not form which could erode soil into the watercourse, and care will be taken not to crush riparian vegetation along banks.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4 (15304)
 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 Categorical Exemptions to CEQA §15304: Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land). Class 4 includes minor public or private alterations in the conditions of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, and scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. Most of the project activities would occur within previously disturbed areas, and the activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, or sedimentation to surface waters. These activities would result in temporary alterations to vegetation and are best described as minor in scope with a net benefit of ecosystem resiliency, native plant stimulation and invasive plant reduction. No new ground disturbing activities will occur. Field review by the Registered Professional Forester confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. CAL FIRE 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 2221 Garden Road, Monterey, CA 93940.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

 John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 5/25/2023