



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE:	Mountain Boy Mine/Rocky Top Shaded Fuel Break		
PROJECT LOCATION	T2N, R15E portions of Sections 5 & 8, MDBM.	COUNTY	Tuolumne
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Gary Whitson, Unit Forester CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit	PHONE	(209) 754-3831
ADDRESS	785 Mountain Ranch Rd., San Andreas, CA 95249		

Project Description: The proposed project will reduce hazardous fuel loading and create a shaded fuel break along a ridge top near Mountain Boy Mine Road and Rocky Top Road near the community of Columbia in Tuolumne County. The project area is approximately 74 acres in size. The project area ranges in elevation from approximately 3,200 to 3,800 feet. The objective of the project is to reduce hazardous fuel loading and create a shaded fuel break along the strategic ridge top and connect the Yankee Hill Shaded Fuel Break to the Big Hill Shaded Fuel Break. The project area is in an urban interface setting. Vegetation at the site would best be described as Sierra Mixed Conifer and oak woodland. Overstory tree species consist primarily of ponderosa pine, incense cedar, California black oak, and canyon live oak, with an understory of dense manzanita, poison oak, and conifer regeneration. Due to historic tree mortality, portions of the project area have significant fuel loads of down pine logs. Surface and ladder fuels will be reduced or modified by mastication, chipping, or by hand cutting, piling and burning. Masticated and chipped material may be spread and left onsite. 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), and surface 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 8-to-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

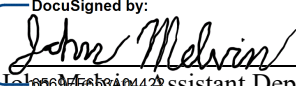
- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4, §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
 Statutory Exemption (state code section):
 Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
 Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
 Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

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 in a strategic location that will make the community 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

DocuSigned by:

 John McElwain, Assistant Deputy Director Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 6/20/2023