



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

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Golden Gate Fuels Reduction Project		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	NW ¼ of Section 9, T17N, R13W, Mt. Diablo Base & Meridian	<b>COUNTY</b>	Mendocino
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Julie Rhoads, VMP Forester CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit	<b>PHONE</b>	707-671-3357
<b>ADDRESS</b>	802 North Main Street Fort Bragg, CA 95437		

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area is located on 29-acres at Howard Forest Station and Training Center located at the top of Ridgewood Grade, off Highway 101, approximately three miles south of the town of Willits. The Station and Training Center is situated in and adjacent to a Douglas-fir/mixed hardwood forest interspersed with ponderosa pine, true oaks, grassy openings, and shrubs. The area contains multiple buildings for unit staff in a mostly wildland interface and serves as a training center for fire fighters. Annual vegetation management activities are necessary to maintain the grounds in a manner that reduces vegetative fuels around buildings to lower fire risk and remove trees or portions of trees that pose a fire and/or safety risk to structures, property, and human life. Fuels reduction activities also serve as training opportunities for unit fire fighters such as chainsaw operations, putting live fire on the ground, constructing fire line, and simulating mop-up operations. Fuel reduction activities involve the use of hand crews, chainsaws (tree falling, bucking, and brushing), pole saws, chippers, heavy equipment with masticator attachments, and pile and broadcast burning. Live trees (10 inches in diameter or less) may be removed when appropriate to improve spacing or forest health, and logs will be bucked and left on site. Larger trees will be pruned to provide for a vertical clearance of up to 14 feet. Dead and dying trees greater than 10 inches may be removed. This project includes long term fuel reduction and hazard tree removal as needed.

### EXEMPTION STATUS


- Categorical Exemption Type/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

The project meets the requirements of a CEQA Article 19 Class 4 Categorical exemption "Minor Alterations to Land" (Section 15304, Public Resources Code) as the proposed activities involves tree and brush removal, chipping, and burning to reduce wildfire threat. Although this project will modify some structural aspects of the vegetation, it will not convert the vegetation type or result in the removal of otherwise "healthy, mature, and scenic trees."

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply (Section 15300.2) 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, utilities and service systems, or wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit, 17501 N. Highway 101, Willits, CA 95490, Attn. VMP Coordinator.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:  
  
John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Date  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 7/18/2023