



# County of Los Angeles Fire Department

## Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

**Note:** This report form is intended for use by County of Los Angeles Fire Department (LACoFD) staff Foresters to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a Notice of Exemption (NOE) document for a proposed LACoFD project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable Categorical Exemptions, this report presents LACoFD's review for possible "Exceptions" that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the Vegetation Management Coordinator for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by the Department.

Author:	Reed Woodyard
Title:	Senior Operations Manager
Address:	125 Clarissa Ave, PO Box 2739, Avalon, CA 90704
Phone:	310-510-2595 x109
Email:	rwoodyard@catalinaconservancy.org

Project Name:	Catalina Island Conservancy
Project Number:	
Program Type:	Brush Clearance
CAL FIRE Unit:	LAC
County:	Los Angeles
Acres:	42.3
Legal Location:	Santa Catalina Island
Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s):	Santa Catalina West, Santa Catalina North, Santa Catalina South, Santa Catalina East
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Vicinity Map Attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Location Map Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Photos Attached	

<b>Other Public Agency Review/Permit Required:</b>		
Would the project result in:	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
alterations to a watercourse (DFG - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:</b>		

<p><b>Project Description and Environmental Setting (Describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):</b> Focus on modification of vegetation adjacent to nine of Catalina Island's primary/secondary/tertiary roads to provide for safer ingress and egress of evacuating residents and responding emergency personnel in the event of a wildfire. Vegetation consists of native and nonnative grasslands, small diameter (less than 6") shrubs and tree saplings. Brush clearance will occur up to 5 feet on each side along 34.9 miles of road through the use of a rotary brush mower attachment on a Caterpillar excavator. Ground crews will assist with disposal. Total treated acres will be 42.3.</p>
---

### Environmental Impact Analysis

**Aesthetics**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Up to 5 feet on each side of the road will have vegetation removed thus increasing visibility and accessibility.

**Agriculture and Forest Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds and compliance with FPRs.
- Yes  No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?
- Yes  No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land/timberland to non-forest use?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Brush clearance efforts will be carried-out from September - December (in order to avoid bird-nesting season). Vegetation removed will consist of, but not necessarily limited to, grasslands, small diameter brush, and tree saplings less than 6" in diameter. This could include invasive species of grass, fennel, and flax-leaved broom as well as native, non-threatened, species of oak, Toyon, Lemonade berry, etc. Green waste will be gathered and disposed of or processed through wood chipper for future purposes.

**Air Quality**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Impact to population will be zero due to remote location of work. Water truck may be deployed for dust abatement for operators.

**Biological Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?
- Yes  No Was a current CNDDDB review completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

These areas are identified through our survey database and biological study of the impacted area by our in-house biologists. A CNDDDB/RareFind search was completed on 12/28/23 and plants have been identified in the treatment zone. Any flora and known habitats of species under the CA Rare Plant rank will be avoided. Those known areas have been flagged to avoid with a 5' buffer. These plant species include, Ironwood, manzanita, mahogany, and bush poppy. Animal species and their respective habitats to avoid would include island fox, bald eagle, shrew, garter snake, etc. Post project completion survey will be conducted by biologists. See maps showing rare plants to avoid during project.

**Cultural Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Was a CAL FIRE Staff or Contract Archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes  No Will the project effect any historic buildings or archaeological site?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Impacted area is within the already maintained and developed road prism. No new development will occur. Operators and

observers will flag any cultural resources and discontinue work until an archaeologist can be consulted.

**Geology and Soils**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No grading or excavation will occur during project. Scope of work is restricted to above ground vegetation removal.

**Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
- Yes  No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
- Yes  No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

This project will help reduce GHG emissions over time/beyond grant period. Brush clearance efforts will reduce the likelihood of wildfire, and thus, wildfire emissions, facilitating firefighting efforts and safety. GHG emissions will be reduced through use of the attachment and fuel treatment activities (from 61.2 tons to 11.75 tons), eliminating chipper use.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

All safety precautions will be exercised by certified operators and access to project site will be restricted. No hazardous materials will be used or present.

**Hydrology and Water Quality**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes  No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No excavating or redirecting of watersheds will occur. Work will be conducted above ground and vegetation will be removed from site and disposed of so as not to impact water flow.

**Land Use and Planning**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Permit has been approved by LA County Dept of Regional Planning and project scope is within limitations of Open Space Conservation zoning.

**Mineral Resources**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No mineral resources will be mined, collected or disturbed during project.

**Noise**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

There will be a temporary increase in noise in the project area during the project, but due to the remote location and limited daytime working hours, the temporary increase in noise will be less than significant.

**Population and Housing**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Due to remote location of work site and limited scope, no impact will occur to population or housing.

**Public Services**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No public services will be needed during project.

**Recreation**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Hikers, bikers, and vehicle traffic will be rerouted or temporarily halted during project work. Impact to recreation will be minimal on most roads due to their remote and closed off locations.

**Transportation/Traffic**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Traffic will be reduced to one lane on main roads, however traffic volume will be minimal. Secondary and tertiary roads will be blocked temporarily at work location, however traffic will be negligible and easily re-routed.

**Utilities and Service Systems**

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No known use of utilities and service systems will be necessary other than the use of gas stations for refueling excavator and support vehicles.

**Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:**

**Mandatory Findings of Significance:**

	YES	NO
(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (“Cumulatively considerable” means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):**

Activities are limited to the cutting and trimming of vegetation by hand or with a specialized mower. Additionally, the proposed vegetation management activities will enhance public access by maintaining safe and traversable roadways, which are sometimes utilized by the public while on Santa Catalina Island. Furthermore, because these roadways have been maintained in a similar fashion in the past, there will be no new or substantially adverse impacts to environmentally sensitive habitat areas. Moreover, all rare or endangered plants and animals will be avoided. Class 4 15304 Minor Alterations to Land.

**Conclusion:**

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, County of Los Angeles Fire Department Foresters has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. The Department considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the County Clerk County of Los Angeles. A Notice of Exemption will be filed with the State Clearinghouse and posted online at CEQANET.

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, County of Los Angeles Fire Department Foresters has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site which precludes the use of a Categorical Exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a Negative Declaration or a Mitigated Negative Declaration.



A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line black border, occupying most of the page. It is intended for the user to provide details or notes related to the project being reviewed.

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line black border, occupying the upper half of the page. It is intended for the user to provide detailed information or a report.A second large, empty rectangular box with a double-line black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It is identical in size and style to the first box, providing space for additional content.