



# Natural California Department of Fish and Wildlife Region 1 Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

**Note:** This report form is intended for use by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a notice of exemption document for a proposed CDFW Wildfire Resiliency project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable categorical exemptions, this report presents CDFW'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 CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by CDFW.

Author:	Teresa Spade
Title:	Environmental Scientist
Address:	601 Locust Street, Redding, CA 96001
Phone:	530-806-1394
Email:	<a href="mailto:teresa.spade@wildlife.ca.gov">teresa.spade@wildlife.ca.gov</a>

Project Name:	Elsa Rupp Natural Area Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project
Project Number:	NA
Program Type:	Wildfire Resilient State Lands
CAL FIRE Unit:	Siskiyou
County:	Siskiyou
Acres:	~9.5 acres
Legal Location:	Portions of Section 17, T40N, R04W, MDB&M
Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s):	City of Mount Shasta
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Vicinity Map Attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Location Map Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Photos Attached	

**Other Public Agency Review or Permit Required:**

Would the project result in:	YES	NO
Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - 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: A smoke Management Plan, Burn Permit, and an Encroachment Permit will be required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:**

**Project Description and Environmental Setting (describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):**

The project area is located just west of the City Limits of the City of Mt Shasta, in Siskiyou County, California, in the Wildland Urban Interface influence zone. The parcel is owned by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and is managed as a natural area for school classes and other interested groups, and is needed to maintain the water diversion structure on Spring Creek, which serves the Mt Shasta Hatchery located across Old Stage Road. CDFW provides for maintenance of the land in its natural state and protection of the stream, which serves the hatchery. Vegetation treatment on this property helps to protect the property from a devastating fire that could result in destruction of the natural area and damage to the stream and water quality.

The vegetation on the property described as common Sierra Mixed Conifer and Montane Riparian habitat types, with an overstory of Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) and Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), with a significant brushy understory including but not limited to the presence of Pacific dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii*), hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*), Western service-berry (*Amelanchier pallida*), Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus* var. *laevigatus*), mountain pink currant (*Ribes nevadense*), cascara buckthorn (*Frangula purshiana*), thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*), western chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), and Oregon boxwood (*Paxistima myrsinites*).

The main project activity will entail the removal of overgrown understory native and invasive brush and woody vines, removing any dead and dying trees, and removing small diameter conifer saplings and sprouts ( $\leq 8''$  diameter at breast height) from the understory to prevent near-future overcrowding conditions and disease. Larger healthy trees will be pruned up to a height of 10' from the ground.

Dead woody material will be burned or chipped and removed from site. If pile burning is to be used, control lines will be installed around all burn piles, as necessary, by hand crews. Pile burning will be conducted during favorable climatic conditions in compliance with a burn permit and smoke management plan. Burn piles will be established in open areas in order to avoid damage to residual trees, away from the stream and other resource areas.

A public access trail is present, which will be temporarily closed during removal activities to protect the public.

### 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:

The project area is located along a public access trail extending north from Old Stage Road at the Mt Shasta Fish Hatchery in Mt Shasta. Live, healthy, mature trees will be retained. Vegetation removal will consist of overgrown understory vegetation, removing dead and dying hazard trees, and removing small diameter tree saplings and sprouts ( $\leq 8''$  dbh) from the understory to reduce overcrowding conditions and improve overall stand health which will make the area more fire and climate resilient. Large healthy trees will be pruned up to a height of 10' from the ground. The healthy overstory will be retained and native forbs and select understory shrub layer species will be retained such that a more cleaned up, park-like aesthetic is achieved. It is expected, however, that these will quickly revegetate with new brush sprouts and annual grasses and forbs the first spring following completion of operations, and that vegetation management maintenance will be annual to bi-annual to maintain the Natural Area in a fire safe manner.

#### 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, if necessary.  
 Yes  No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?  
 Yes  No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Vegetation removal and thinning will include small saplings and brush, and standing dead trees that pose a hazard. This removal has a potential to impact nesting birds if conducted during the bird breeding and nesting season. During the bird breeding season (March 1-August 1) fallers will be instructed to look for nests before cutting trees or other vegetation where nests could potentially be present. Any live tree or area of brush with a visible nest or cavity will be retained. This will negate any impacts to nesting birds. Where trees are present the goal is to leave a shaded fuel break. To accomplish this, trees will be retained (even if  $\leq 8''$  dbh) at a 15' to 30' spacing.

There are no known active raptor nests within the project area. If active raptor nests are observed in the project area or within 1000' of the project area prior to the onset of vegetation removal, a buffer area adequate to protect the nest will be applied. If vegetation treatment occurs during the nesting season for common nesting birds, a nesting survey will occur within three days prior to the start of the project, and any trees with active nests will be retained.

There are no portions of this project that would constitute Timber Operations under the California Forest Practice Rules. No land conversions or changes in land use will occur as a result of the project.

No healthy, mature, scenic trees will be removed pursuant to CEQA 15304. No negative impacts to Agriculture or Forest Resources are expected from this project.

#### **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:

According to the California Air Resources Board (CARB), the Siskiyou County Air Pollution Control District is currently designated within "attainment" of California's standards related to Particulate Pollution (PM 10 and PM 2.5) and Ozone (ppm).

The proposed project will not result in a significant amount of ground disturbance; therefore, project activities will not result in air quality impacts associated with dust. Some emissions will result from the exhaust associated with the use of transport vehicles, chain saws and other hand tools.

If pile burning is conducted, we will expect smoke emissions from those piles. Burning will not be conducted on "no burn days", when wind is expected to exceed ten miles per hour, or when inversion layers are located below 8000' elevation. Given the overall small area of this project any smoke from pile burning will be insignificant to regional air quality.

Exhaust emissions should not result in detectable impacts to air quality. Potential adverse impacts to air quality are not anticipated given the nature of the project as described above.

#### **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 NDDDB 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:

A one quad query of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was conducted on November 6, 2023, and a California Native Plant Society 9 quad search was conducted on November 7, 2023, centering on the City of Mt Shasta quad. Scoping was conducted to determine the potential occurrence of State or Federally listed plant and animal species (including state candidate species) and any California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Species of Special Concern within or directly adjacent to the project area. The property is a nature study area that is open to the public and according to CNDDDB database information, no rare plants have been observed on the property, and no state or federally listed

plant species are found within the elevation range of the property according to the CNPS 9 quad search, or with in the quad according to the CNDDDB one quad search.

No State or Federally listed plant species are known to occur within the scoping area.

According to the CNDDDB, the following listed animal species have been observed within the City of Mount Shasta quad: bank swallow, Cascades frog, fisher, Foothill yellow-legged frog – North Coast DPS, Franklin’s bumble bee, Sierra Nevada red fox – Southern Cascades DPS, spotted bat, Suckley’s cuckoo bumble bee, Western bumble bee, Western mastiff bat, Western yellow-billed cuckoo, and yellow rail.

There will not be heavy equipment use or any significant ground disturbances resulting from the project, which consists of hand removal of hazardous vegetation and woody material, and burn piles. Work will occur in areas that are regularly used for public access, where wildlife are conditioned to regular human presence.

#### Franklin’s Bumble Bee

Franklin’s bumble bee (*Bombus franklini*) is listed as Federally Endangered and is a State Candidate Endangered species. Franklin’s bumble bee is thought to have the most limited distribution of all North American bumble bee species, restricted to the Klamath mountains in Southern Oregon and Northern California, including parts of Siskiyou and Trinity County. This species has not been observed since 2006.

Habitat includes grassy coastal prairies and coast range meadows at elevations from 500’ to >6,700 feet. This species nests underground, and example food plants include hyssop, star thistle, ceanothus, buckwheat, poppy, lupine, coyote mint, and vetch.

The subject property is within range of this species, and one observation within the City of Mt Shasta quad was recorded in 1993, at Red Fir Flat, off Everett Memorial Highway, on the south slope of Mt Shasta. One female worker was observed on ceanothus, at an elevation of about 6500 feet.

The subject property Elsa Rupp Natural Area does not provide for quality bumble bee habitat, as it is forested and does not include meadow habitat. Due to the lack of quality bumble bee habitat at the Elsa Rupp Natural Area, it is unlikely that Franklin’s bumble bee is present.

#### Suckley’s Cuckoo Bumble Bee

Suckley’s cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*) is a Candidate State Endangered Species. Cuckoo bumble bees are social parasites, and Suckley’s cuckoo bumble bee’s host species is Western bumble bee, which is also a Candidate State Endangered Species, so while Western bumble bee is in decline, Suckley’s bumble bee is in greater decline. The range for Suckley’s bumble bee within the US includes far Northern California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, and Colorado, and is also found in Canada and Alaska. Observations in California are all in Siskiyou County. This species is found in meadows and grasslands at a high range of elevations. Nest sites are usually naturally created cavities or abandoned rodent nests, and queen overwintering sites are generally close to the ground surface under loose soil or leaf litter or similar debris. Suckley’s have been reported on a wide range of flowers, mostly thistles, asters such as rabbitbrush, and clovers. They rely on Western bumblebee workers, who are also short-tongued generalists that like thistles, asters such as rabbitbrush, and clovers, and also blackberry (*Rubus* spp.), buckbrush (*Ceanothus* spp.), lupines (*Lupinus* spp.), geraniums (*Geranium* spp.), and others, and are typically found in grassy areas, chaparral, scrub, and meadows (Center for Biological Diversity, 2020).

The subject property is within the current range for this species. There is one recorded observation of Suckley's bumble bee in the City of Mt Shasta quad. This was a 1958 observation that generally specified the location as the City of Mt Shasta. The Elsa Rupp Natural Area property does not contain quality habitat for Suckley's bumble bee, as the site is generally forested and does not contain meadows or grasslands. Due to the lack of quality bumble bee habitat at the Elsa Rupp Natural Area, it is unlikely that Suckley's bumble bee is present.

#### Western Bumble Bee

Western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*) is a Candidate State Endangered species. Its range is from the Pacific coast to the Rocky Mountains, up to Alaska. Select nectar plants include buckwheat, thistle, clover, sweet clover, star thistle, ceanothus, geranium, lupine, blackberry, and rabbit brush. They inhabit mountain meadows, open grassy areas, urban parks and gardens, chaparral, and shrub areas from sea level to over 6500 feet in elevation. They nest underground and are frequent nectar robbers of long-corolla flowers.

Two observations have been recorded in the City of Mt Shasta quad, a 1960 observation, location unknown, mapped as at the City of Mt Shasta, and a 1939 Ney Springs observation.

Due to the lack of quality bumble bee habitat at the Elsa Rupp Natural Area, it is unlikely that Western bumble bee is present.

#### Cascades Frog

The Cascades frog (*Rana cascadae*) is a Candidate Endangered Species under the California Endangered Species Act. It inhabits wet mountain areas in open coniferous forests to near timberline, including small streams, small pools in meadows, lakes, bogs, ponds, and marshy areas near streams. Typically found in water with no predatory fish. There is an occurrence of Cascades frog from 1941, found ¼ mile northwest of the fish hatchery which is either within the project area or very close. The most recent observation in the City of Mt Shasta quad is from 2011, on the west side of Lake Siskiyou.

Big Springs Creek, which flows through the narrow property, provides habitat for Cascades frog.

There will be no instream work or dewatering occurring in this project so there is no chance of take of this species occurring within the stream zone. If work is going to be conducted during wet periods a visual encounter survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to operations to ensure no Cascade frogs are located in areas of vegetation removal/tree falling. If Cascade frogs are found, operations will be suspended in the area of the observation until the individual(s) move out of the area, or conditions are dry enough to ensure frogs would not be present in upland areas.

#### Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog

The foothill yellow-legged frog (FYLF, *Rana boylei* pop 1), North Coast DPS, is a California Species of Special Concern. It requires low gradient streams and rivers with abundant gravel and cobble bars for basking and foraging. There is an occurrence of FYLF from September 2001, in Big Spring Creek, near Mt Shasta Hatchery. This is the most recent observation of FYLF in the City of Mt Shasta quad.

There will be no instream work or dewatering occurring in this project so there is no chance of take of this species occurring within the stream zone. If work is going to be conducted during wet periods a visual encounter survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to operations to ensure no foothill yellow legged frogs are located in areas of vegetation removal/tree falling. If foothill yellow

legged frogs are found, operations will be suspended in the area of the observation until the individual(s) move out of the area, or conditions are dry enough to ensure frogs would not be present in upland areas.

#### Bank Swallow

Bank swallow (*Iliamna bakeri*) is a State Threatened colonial nester, found in riparian areas with vertical cliffs with fine textured sandy soils, near water, to dig a nesting hole. There is one observation of this species from 2012, at Lake Siskiyou, where four bank swallows were observed. The project area at Elsa Rupp does not have vertical cliffs required for habitat, and no observations have occurred at this location. The project is not expected to result in impacts to bank swallow.

#### Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo

Western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*) is a Federal Threatened and State Endangered species. One occurrence of western yellow-billed cuckoo, including a nest with one egg, was found near the fish hatchery in 1951. The project area is not within the current range for this species which starts just south of Red Bluff, in valley foothill and desert riparian habitat types, where it nests in dense willow thickets.

Although areas of dense riparian vegetation are present at the site, the range for this species has significantly been reduced since 1951, and no longer includes Siskiyou County.

As presence of this species at the site is highly unlikely, the project is not expected to result in impacts to Western yellow-billed cuckoo.

#### Yellow Rail

Yellow rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) is a California Species of Special Concern that inhabits freshwater marshlands. There is one occurrence in the City of Mt Shasta quad, found in 2002 in a large wet meadow used as pasture about 1.5 miles northwest of the Elsa Rupp Natural Area property. Habitat for yellow rail does not occur on the parcel, and no impacts are expected to occur to this species.

#### Spotted bat

The spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*) is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. This species inhabits open and dense deciduous and coniferous forests, hay fields, deserts, marshes, riparian areas, and dry shrub-steppe grasslands, and requires rock crevices in cliffs or caves for roosting.

In 1993, individuals were detected by recorded calls, about 2 miles southeast of the project area. The project area does not provide for adequate habitat for spotted bats as no cliffs or caves are present for roosting. The project is not expected to result in impacts to this species.

#### Western mastiff bat

The western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*) is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. As described in CWHR the species is an uncommon resident in southeastern San Joaquin Valley and Coastal Ranges from Monterey Co. southward through southern California, from the coast eastward to the Colorado Desert. It occurs in many open, semi-arid to arid habitats, including conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, annual and perennial grasslands, palm oases, chaparral, desert scrub, and urban. The species is the largest species of bat native to North America. Other accounts suggest the range of the species is far outside of Siskiyou County; principally believed southwest desert regions of the United States, along the border with Mexico, extending as far north on the Pacific coast as Alameda County, California. There are, however, several occurrences in the CNDDDB in Siskiyou County, the closest being at Ney Springs in around 1993. Suitable habitat consists of extensive open areas with abundant roost locations provided by rock crevices or buildings. Suitable roosting habitat is described as

crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees and tunnels. Reproductive habitat is described as tight rock crevices at least 35” deep and 2” wide, or crevices in buildings.

There is no habitat for Western mastiff bat in the project area as there are no extensive open areas.

No detrimental impacts to Western mastiff bat are anticipated.

**Fisher**

The fisher (*Pekania pennanti*), is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. It is found throughout northern California forests; the southern Sierra ESU is a Threatened Species under the California Endangered Species Act. The fisher is a habitat generalist but generally prefers older forest with at least moderate canopy cover. It usually dens in cavities of hollow trees and snags and utilizes rest sites comprised of large branches, cavities, logs, mistletoe brooms and brush piles. Hollow logs, trees and snags are especially important. It preys on a variety of small birds and mammals, reptiles, fruits and fungi. There are numerous known occurrences within several miles of the project area, the closest being a 2001 observation near Mt Shasta Hatchery.

Habitat for the fisher does occur within the project area. The potential for presence of this species in the project area is low due to it being subject to regular public use, and because only hand tools will be used for the project, detrimental impacts are unlikely.

No detrimental impacts to fisher are anticipated.

**Sierra Nevada Red Fox – Southern Cascades DPS**

The Southern Cascades population of Sierra Nevada red fox (*Vulpes vulpes nicator* pop. 1), is found in the Cascades in Siskiyou County and from Lassen County south to Tulare County. This population is protected with State Threatened status. It is typically found in alpine and sub-alpine zones, but may descend in winter to below the sub-alpine zone to as low as 4600 feet elevation. The Elsa Rupp Natural Area is located at an elevation of about 3500 feet, which is well below the lowest elevation in which this species is encountered. There is one observation of Sierra Nevada red fox from 1904, in the City of Mt Shasta quad, and the location is described as “Mt Shasta” at an elevation of 7000 feet, where one juvenile male was captured. Given the elevation, it is likely that this observation took place on Mt Shasta, at least 5 miles from the Elsa Rupp Natural Area. Habitat for this species is not present in the project area as the elevation is too low. Sierra Nevada red fox is not expected to be impacted by the project.

**Cultural Resources/Tribal 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 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, archaeological or tribal cultural resources?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Because there will not be ground disturbing activities, the project is not expected to result in detrimental impacts to undiscovered historic or prehistoric resources.

**Energy**

- 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:

**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:

The proposed project will not result in significant adverse impact to slope stability or soil productivity due to the following conditions and project parameters:

- The project area does not contain any unstable slopes.
- All vegetation to be removed shall be done by hand with chainsaws or other hand tools to minimize ground disturbance.
- Slopes are flat to gentle in the project area, generally not exceeding a 15% slope.
- Burn piles will be no larger than five feet wide by six feet high to minimize heat and potential scorching to the soil.

**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:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions will result from exhaust associated with the use of chainsaws, masticators, and transport vehicles and from pile burning, if utilized. The project area is 9.5 acres, which is very small in scope and not likely to produce measurable GHG emissions that could result in adverse cumulative impacts on a global scale. Furthermore, treatment activities will be limited to a short time frame and will not lead to long term increases in GHG emissions. In terms of net GHG emissions ensuing from cut vegetation, the probable result is known through the scientific principles of the carbon cycle which explains that CO<sub>2</sub> is released through decay or burning and then sequestered from the atmosphere and the soil as plants absorb CO<sub>2</sub> in order to grow and conduct photosynthesis. The improved growing conditions resulting from the proposed treatment should increase the sites remaining trees ability to carry out photosynthesis and therefore sequester carbon at a higher rate. Furthermore, by reducing the likelihood of catastrophic wildfire this project has the potential to reduce the substantial increase in short term emissions from wildfire.

**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:

State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker was consulted on November 8, 2023, and there are no open water quality cleanup sites in the project area. The closest sites are around 2500 feet to the east on Cedar Street in Mt Shasta, and are underground heating fuel tank leaks that were cleaned up and cases closed in 2021. The Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor database was also consulted on November 8, 2023, and one site was found approximately 1.25 miles southeast of the Elsa Rupp Natural Area: the City of Mt Shasta-owned "Landing" property off Mt Shasta Blvd is currently being cleaned up. It was an old mill site that was actively used until the late 1960s, and soil contamination includes dioxin,



pentachlorophenol, and TPH from motor oil and diesel. No sites were shown in the project area or close enough to result in potential hazardous materials encounters.

Hazards to hand crews and overhead personnel could result from the use of chainsaws and working on steep slopes. All necessary precautions will be implemented to ensure personnel safety including the proper use of personal protective equipment and appropriate training associated with the proper use of chainsaws. Crews will not be allowed to use tools or conduct work beyond their level of training. Pile burning will only be conducted during safe climatic conditions in accordance with State and County Regulations.

The hazardous materials being utilized for this project include diesel, gasoline, oil and other fluids associated with motorized equipment. Equipment used on this project will not be serviced in locations which could allow oil or fuel to contaminate soil or pass into a watercourse.

The project is not likely to result in adverse impacts created by hazardous conditions or hazardous materials.

**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:

Big Springs Creek, a perennial stream, flows through the project area, and serves the fish hatchery downstream, where it is critical that the water is clean for hatchery use. Due to the proximity of the stream, no heavy equipment use is proposed for the project. Vegetation removal will occur with chainsaws and other hand tools, and vegetation will either be chipped and spread on site using a small trail sized chipper, will be hand-hauled out to roadway access areas where vehicles can be staged on the roadway to haul material out, or will be hauled to the burn pile locations located at least 125 feet from the stream, where pile burning can safely be accomplished.

No detrimental impacts to the stream are anticipated.

**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:

**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:

**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:

Chainsaws will be used in the park at times when those portions of the park are closed to the public. The park areas to be treated are in close proximity to residential properties, which may be impacted by noise from the project. Chainsaw operations will be limited to daytime hours between 8am and 5pm.

**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:

**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:

**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:

The project will occur within the public access areas of the state property, including in the direct vicinity of public trails. Public trails will be closed temporarily in order to protect the public during vegetation removal. Closures are expected to be less than one week in duration. There will be no significant detrimental long-term impacts to recreation.

**Transportation and 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:

**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:

**Wildfire**

- 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:

This project is designed to lessen the effects of wildfire within the highly populated Wildland Urban Interface influence zone, adjacent to the City of Mt Shasta, and along the public trail in the state-owned Elsa Rupp Natural Area. Any pile burning of vegetation will be done pursuant to a valid burn permit.

**Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:**

Equipment used on this project will not be serviced in locations which could allow oil or fuel to contaminate soil or pass into a watercourse.

Hand crews will be required to use personal protective equipment and will not be allowed to use tools or conduct work beyond their level of training or comfort level.

Chainsaw operations will be limited to daytime hours between 8am and 5pm.

If work is going to be conducted during wet periods a visual encounter survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist prior to operations to ensure no Cascade or foothill yellow legged frogs are located in areas of vegetation removal/tree falling. If Cascade or foothill yellow legged frogs are found, operations will be suspended in the area of the observation until the individual(s) move out of the area, or conditions are dry enough to ensure frogs would not be present in upland areas.

Vegetation removal of live vegetation is expected to occur outside of the bird nesting season, otherwise trees and brush will be inspected for nests prior to vegetation removal and any nests will be left in place.

	YES	NO
<b>Mandatory Findings of Significance:</b>		
(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):**

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304. Pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4 consists of minor alterations of vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees on public or private land.

The project involves removal of brush species, seedling and saplings, and dead and dying trees only.

**Conclusion:**

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife 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. California Department of Fish and Wildlife 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 at the State Clearinghouse.

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife 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 that 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.

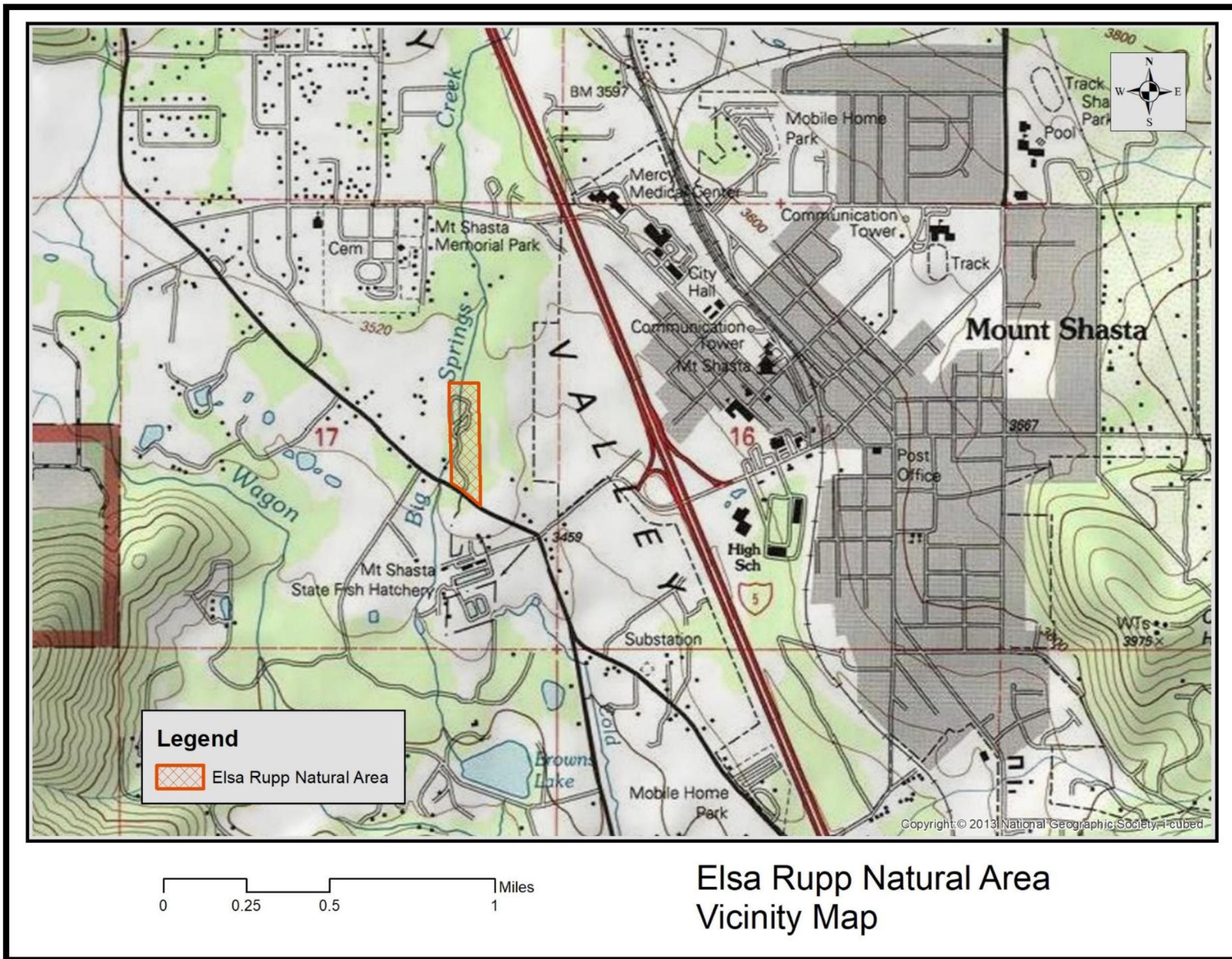


Figure 1. Location map

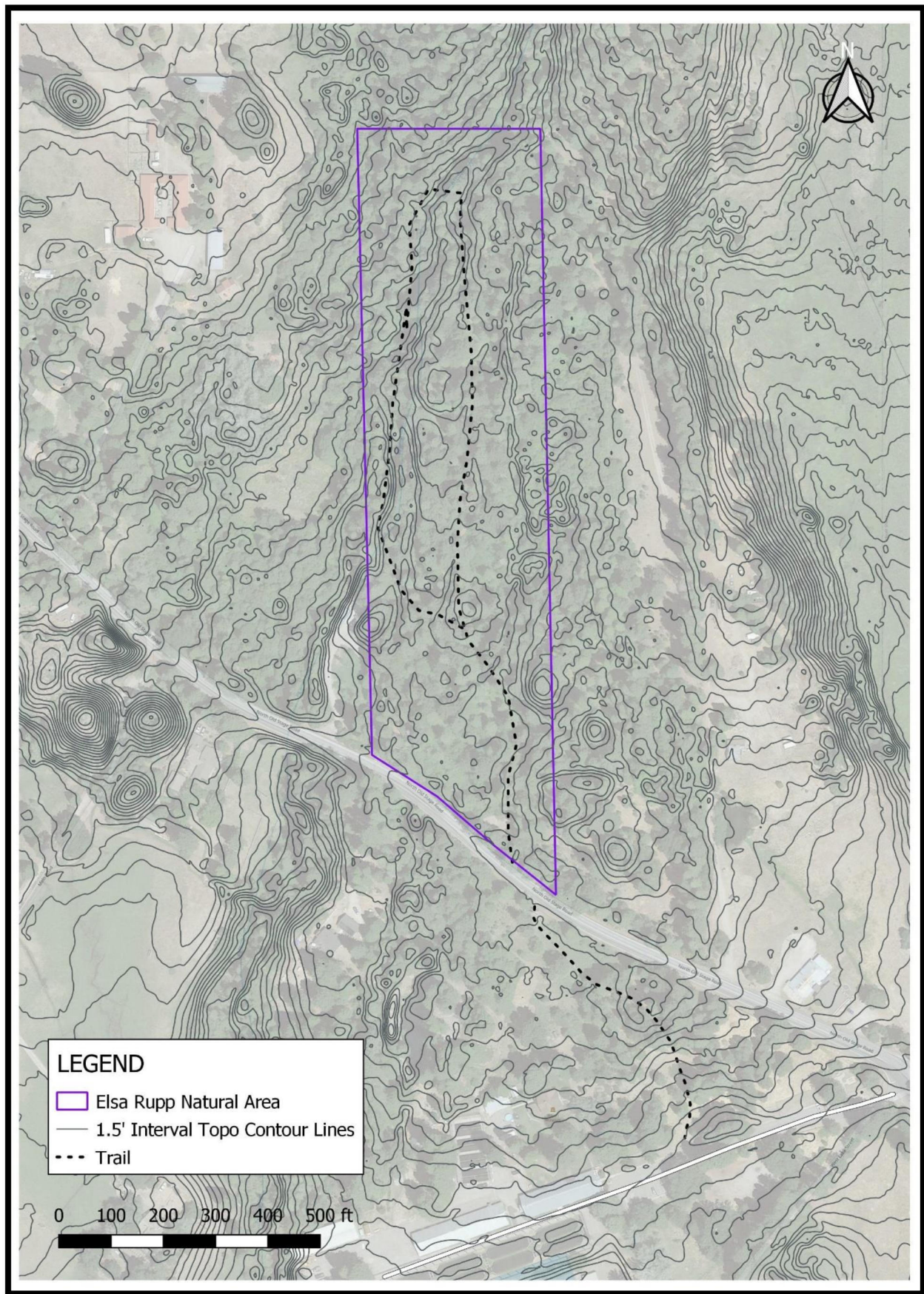


Figure 2. Project area map.