



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Whitebark Institute of Interdisciplinary Environmental Sciences, "ESCCRP: Phase I Implementation:" Reds Meadow Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, Sherwin-Scenic Loop Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, and Three Creeks Jeffrey Pine Forest Health and Restoration Project (USFS)		
PROJECT LOCATION	Mono Lake and Mammoth Ranger District, Inyo National Forest	COUNTY	Mono & Madera
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CAL FIRE would provide funding to the Whitebark Institute to conduct fuel reduction treatments including mechanical & manual thinning, mastication, piling, biomass removal, and prescribed fire treatments that promotes pre-European settlement conditions, featuring open, park-like pine stands dominated by large, old trees, and where frequent low-intensity fire maintains these open forest conditions and does not allow forest fuels to accumulate excessively. These treatments will aid in reducing the intensity of future wildland fires burning in the treated stands and will also allow firefighters to suppress the fire more easily and safely. These treatments will reduce wildfire risks to local resources and community members, promote native plant and wildlife species, and improve forest resiliency.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class
- Statutory Exemption (state code section): Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1)
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

CEQA does not apply to fuel reduction, reforestation, & habitat restoration projects undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the NEPA, if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The proposed project was reviewed in its entirety under the Mono Lake and Mammoth Ranger District, Inyo National Forest NEPA documents: 1) Reds Meadow Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, signed May 27, 2020; 2) Sherwin-Scenic Loop Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, signed March 20, 2013; and 3) Three Creeks Jeffrey Pine Forest Health and Restoration Project Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact, signed January 26, 2018.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

John Melvin

John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director
Resource Management
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

4/23/2024

Date