

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: (Public Agency) Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation
Department
298 Garden Hill Drive
Los Gatos, CA 95032

(Address)

County Clerk / County of Santa Clara

110 W Tasman Drive, 1st floor

San Jose, CA 95134

Project Title: Moody Gulch/ Summit Road Vegetation Treatment Project

Project Applicant N/A

Project Location – Specific:

The project encompasses two treatment areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains, west of Los Gatos in Santa Clara County. The first area, Moody Gulch, extends upslope between Summit Road and State Route (SR) 17 (Township 009S Range 001W, Sections 08 and 17). The second area, referred to as Summit Road, is situated just north of Summit Road (Township 009S Range 001W, Sections 08 and 17).

Project Location - City: Los Gatos

Project Location - County: Santa Clara County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed project consists of treatments to improve forest health and increase fire resilience of the forest by manually thinning underbrush and small trees. The project is funded by a CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant (#8GG20604). The proposed treatment area within the Moody Gulch portion of the project encompasses approximately 19.2 acres, whereas the Summit Road portion of the project covers approximately 3.6 acres. Both areas are located within Santa Clara County, and total approximately 22.8 acres of treatment. In general, forest health fuels reduction activities would include retaining a mosaic of understory that considers retention standards for shrubs, herbaceous vegetation, and hydrophytic species depending on topography and fuel load, as discussed under shrub and herbaceous species retention below. In addition, a mosaic of trees would be retained to achieve approximately 75 to 150 healthy trees per acre, first removing dead, dying, and diseased trees, as well as invasive and non-native trees, and then select live trees less than or equal to 8 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) as needed to meet fuels reduction targets. No live trees greater than 8 inches DBH would be removed except for select dead, dying, or invasive and non-native trees. Snags and woody debris greater than 12 inches DBH that are at least 100 feet from roads and infrastructure depending on topography and fuel load may be retained; generally, target retention minimum per acre is 1 to 2 snags prioritizing snags with cavities for wildlife habitat and 1 to 4 downed logs at least 15 feet in length outside of defensible space as defined in the Public Resources Code (Division 4, Part 2, Section 4291 (a)(1)(A)).

Name of Public Agency Approving Project:

Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department / Santa Clara County Firesafe Council

Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4 – Minor Alterations to Land)
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The proposed project is categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4). Class 4 is applicable to projects that consist of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The minor alterations to vegetation proposed by the project involve manual vegetation removal within 22.8 acres and chipping of biomass. Although tree removal would occur, it would be limited to trees where removal is necessary for forestry purposes to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health, consistent with the criteria of qualifying projects under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4). The evaluation of potential impacts of the project has been conducted and exceptions to the exemption based on location, cumulative impact, a reasonable possibility of significant effects to the environment due to unusual circumstances, scenic highways, hazardous waste sites, and historical resources do not apply to the project.

Lead Agency

Contact Person:

Dana Page

Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 669-242-9586

If filed by applicant:

- 1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
- 2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project:

Yes No

Signature: *Shelan Zukadi*
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Date: 4/26/2024

Title: Natural Resources Planner

Signed by Lead Agency

Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date received for filing at OPR: _____