

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE	North Fork Water Treatment Plant		
PROJECT LOCATION	North Fork Water Treatment Plant Sec. 19 T08S R23E	COUNTY	Madera
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit		
CONTACT	Brian Mattos, Unit Forester Sebastien Cordier, Environmental Scientist	PHONE	(559) 706-8807
ADDRESS	5366 Highway 49 North Mariposa, CA 95338		(559) 706-8808

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Fuel reduction treatments and a training burn on 32 acres within the North Fork Water Treatment Plant. This project area was heavily impacted by the Fork wildfire incident (2022), the goal is to clean up the remaining burned trees and maintain future wildfire resiliency. Located in Madera County, on the Cascadel Point and North Fork CA USGS 7.5 quadrangle maps. Legal Description is Sec. 19 T08S R23E MDB&M. Approximately 1.5 mile south of North Fork. Project elevation is between 2,511ft - 2,736ft. The current landscape is predominantly burned with oaks, gray pines, shrubs, and understory species habitat. To accomplish this project the treatment activities will involve mechanical and manual equipment to cut, pile, and chip, then use prescribed fire to pile burn and broadcast burn. Firelines will be pre-existing roads in the project area, additional firelines will be created by handlines or wet lines where necessary. Mechanical equipment include masticator, dozer, excavator, skid steer, and chipper to help create or treat piles, targeting the dead standing trees and shrubs that were killed in the Fork fire, woody fuels in the understory such as ladder fuels, low branches, shrubs, and trees smaller than 8-inch DBH. With the exception to retain open tree spacing by leaving some smaller trees and shrubs to promote growth and recruit future tree canopy. Lower branches on trees and shrubs will be pruned, but no more than half their height. Remove hazard trees such as dead, dying, or diseased. Initial treatments will focus on clearing the woody debris via chipping and pile burning, then broadcast burning in the future. Maintenance and burning activities are planned in perpetuity.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4, §15304: Minor Alteration to the Land Categorical Exemption
- 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 Class 4, §15304: Minor Alteration to the Land Categorical Exemption to CEQA. Class 4 includes minor public or private alterations in the conditions of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, and scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. Minor temporary use of land having negligible or no permanent effects on the environment.

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that 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 or 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 or traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Mariposa Headquarters at 5366 State Highway 49 North, Mariposa CA 95338.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

David Fulcher

5/13/2024

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David Fulcher, Southern Region Chief Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection