



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE:	Calaveras Unified School District Fuels Reduction and Demonstration Forest Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	T4N, R12E portions of Sections 17 and & 18, MDBM.	COUNTY	Calaveras
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Gary Whitson, Unit Forester CAL FIRE Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit	PHONE	(209) 754-3831
ADDRESS	785 Mountain Ranch Rd., San Andreas, CA 95249		

Project Description: The proposed project consists of 23 acres of fuel reduction, construction of an educational footpath, and maintenance of the fuel reduction area with goat herbivory. The project will reduce hazardous fuel loading on the north side of the Calaveras High School campus in the community of San Andreas in Calaveras County. The project area ranges from approximately 890 to 1,048 feet in elevation. The objective of the project is to reduce hazardous fuel loading and create a shaded fuel break condition around the Calaveras High School campus. Vegetation at the site would best be described as oak woodland. Surface and ladder fuels will be reduced by mastication, chipping, or by hand cutting, piling and burning. Mastication may be conducted by a variety of track laying type tractors. Hand work for chipping, as well as piling and burning will be conducted by hand crews using chainsaws and other hand tools. Trees less than 12-inches in diameter at breast height (dbh), surface fuels and ladder fuels will be masticated, chipped or piled and burned to achieve a target residual tree spacing of 25 to 30-feet between stems. Residual trees will be pruned to a height of approximately 8 to 10-feet above ground level. Tree of heaven and dead trees of any size may be felled and chipped, piled and burned, or masticated. The reduction in vegetation will create an open and parklike shaded fuel break condition that will minimize fire behavior and create a stand structure that is resistant to stand replacing fires. The project area will be maintained using goats to browse on poison oak, live oak, tree of heaven, and other vegetation sprouting in the project area. The project will also construct a foot path approximately four feet wide and up to one mile in length to be used for educational purposes for both Calaveras High School and neighboring schools. The path may be constructed by hand, or a small skid steer type tractor or small excavator may be used to sweep masticated material from the surface or scrape grass from the surface to create the trail. Portions of the trail will use previously graded prisms. Trail construction will result in minimal soil disturbance.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4, §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- 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

This project fits under portions of 15304- Minor Alterations to Land. The project will consist of removing surface and ladder fuels to create a shaded fuel break condition. The project is located in an urban interface area. The project will create an open and park like condition. The project will not involve the removal of mature or scenic trees. Stand health will be improved by removing dead, dying, and suppressed trees and brush, and increasing growing space for mature, healthy dominant and co-dominant trees. Sensitive species will not be impacted by the proposed project. The project was designed to avoid adverse impacts to watercourses. Mastication and chipping will leave a layer of organic material that will provide for excellent erosion control. The project was carefully designed to avoid adverse impacts to archaeological resources. The project was designed to reduce hazardous fuel loading around the Calaveras High School campus and will make Calaveras County more resilient regarding wildfires.

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 forest resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at the Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Headquarters in San Andreas.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

David Fulcher

7/9/2024

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