
NOTICE OF EXEMPTION FROM ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

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

County Clerk of: San Mateo

Project Title: Wavecrest Eucalyptus Grove Fire Resiliency Project

Project Location: APN: 065-011-150

City and County: Half Moon Bay, San Mateo County

Description of Nature and Purpose of Project:

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) in partnership with Coastside Land Trust, CAL FIRE and Xerxes Society, proposes to do a multi-benefit vegetation treatment in a 4.5-acre eucalyptus grove on the Wavecrest bluffs in Half Moon Bay to increase community wildfire resiliency and improve monarch overwintering habitat. The project will reduce fuels to decrease the risk of fire to the local neighborhoods and infrastructure. This work will address stand health in the eucalyptus grove and create microclimatic conditions favored by monarchs and decrease the chance of the habitat being lost to fire. Removing eucalyptus saplings encroaching into the meadows will also help maintain the coastal prairie ecosystem.

Name of Person, Board, Commission or Department Proposing to Carry Out Project:

San Mateo Resource Conservation District
80 Stone Pine Road, Suite 100
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Lead Agency
Responsible Agency

Contact Person: Sara Polgar Telephone: 650-712-7765

EXEMPT STATUS:

Categorical Exemption, Class 4 (15304)

Remarks: See next page.

Date of Determination: August 21, 2024

I do hereby certify that the above determination has been made pursuant to State and Local requirements.



Sara Polgar, Conservation Program Specialist

REMARKS:

The following provides a brief description of the project, and an explanation for why the project qualifies for exemption from CEQA environmental review under Class 4 [CEQA State Guidelines, Section 15304].

Project Description

The San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) in partnership with CAL FIRE, Coastside Land Trust (CLT), and Xerces Society, proposes to do a multi-benefit vegetation treatment in a 4.5-acre eucalyptus grove in a parcel (APN 065-011-150) owned by CLT on the Wavecrest blufftops in Half Moon Bay to increase community wildfire resiliency and improve monarch overwintering habitat. Project work includes thinning existing tree stands from below, removing stems 8 inches and less in diameter, and limbing remaining trees up to 10 ft. from the ground. Additionally, brush and branches on dead/downed trees within the existing tree stand will be reduced to remove ladder fuels, and eucalyptus saplings encroaching into the adjacent coastal prairie habitat will also be removed. To prevent resprouting stumps will be treated by a licensed applicator and comply with EPA protocols for protection of California red-legged frog. A selection of small diameter trees will be retained in the monarch grove for recruitment (this technique is used in RCD forest health projects to increase stand health and resiliency). Chips will be dispersed under trees and piled for use for CLT Junior Land Stewards Program restoration projects at Wavecrest that CLT does with Cabrillo Unified School District students.

The goals of the project are to decrease the risk of fire to the local neighborhoods and infrastructure, improve stand health in the eucalyptus grove and create microclimatic conditions favored by monarchs and decrease the chance of the habitat being lost to fire. Removing eucalyptus saplings encroaching into the meadows will also help maintain the coastal prairie ecosystem, which has been identified as an environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA).

Class 4 (CEQA State Guidelines, Section 15304)

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.

The Project meets this CEQA criteria for exemption from environmental review because the project work (i.e., thinning and limbing up of trees in the 4.5-acre eucalyptus grove on CLT's property) is a minor private alteration in the condition of vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. Furthermore, project activities will not occur in environmentally sensitive habitat areas and precautionary best management practices and measures to avoid impacts to sensitive species will be used. These include working in the dry season and under dry conditions, monitoring by qualified biological monitor for sensitive species (i.e., California red-legged frog and monarch butterfly) before and during the project and if species are present in the work area, stopping vegetation management activities until they leave that area.