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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

PROJECT TITLE	Lushmeadows Ladder Fuels Phase I Agreement #5GG22140, funded by the California Wildfire Prevention Grant Program		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Section 12 & 13, T5S, R19E and Section 7 & 18, T5S, R20E, MDBM	**COUNTY**	Mariposa
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Brian Mattos		
ADDRESS	5366 Highway 49 North, Mariposa, CA 95338	**PHONE**	(209) 742-1907

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Lushmeadows Ladder Fuels Phase I Project is approximately 5 miles east of the unincorporated community of Mariposa in Mariposa County. This project will treat approximately 160 acres of privately-owned land near Darrah, CA and west of the Sierra National Forest. The project will protect hundreds of structures in the Lushmeadows subdivision and adjacent properties. The Lushmeadows area is a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) subdivision located at ~3,300' elevation. The Lushmeadows project is the first phase of mechanical and manual mastication vegetative treatment to protect the property and resources in the general Lushmeadows subdivision. The project area vegetation is mixed Sierra montane conifer with a hardwood component of Black oak and Live oak. In the understory are shrubs/brush heavy to toyon and ceanothus species with grasses in openings. Due to past droughts and beetle activity, mortality is high in the pines; many snags and downed logs exist in the project area. Management goals include restoring forest species composition and structure following large scale, stand-replacing disturbance events such as quick-moving fires or slow-moving insect outbreaks and prevention of catastrophic wildfire. Once implementation work on the project is completed, the goal is to maintain the treated area into perpetuity under the current CEQA document.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- [x] Categorical Exemption Type/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 the description for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption to CEQA. An environmental review was conducted to confirm that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. This review included an on-the-ground field inspection by a Registered Professional Forester during May and June, 2024. A full Archeological Survey Report was prepared and approved by Travis Armstrong, CAL FIRE Archeologist on July 25, 2024. In addition, consultation/correspondence was sent via email to representatives of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Regional Water Quality Control Board. No concerns were raised by the RWQCB Agency Representative, and the concerns raised by CDFW Representative were addressed and included in the Environmental Review Report. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/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/traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at MMU Unit Headquarters in Mariposa.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:
David Fulcher
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9/23/2024

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