

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



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

PROJECT TITLE	Loma Chiquita/ Chual Spur Escape Route		
PROJECT LOCATION	USGS 7.5-minute Quadrangle: Loma Prieta Lona Chiquita Road: T09S-R01E-Section 34, T09S-R01E-Section 35, T09S-R01E-Section 36	COUNTY	Santa Clara
	Mount Chual Spur Road: T09S-R01E-Section 34, T09S-R01E-Section 35, T09S-R01E-Section 26, T09S-R01E-Section 25.		
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT ADDRESS	Edgar Orre Santa Clara Unit 15670 Monterey Rd. Morgan Hill CA, 95037	PHONE	408-206-3704

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this project is to improve ingress and egress safety, reduce wildfire risk, and aid in fire suppression activities through fuel reduction treatments. The Santa Clara County Fire Safe Council, in collaboration with CAL FIRE, is proposing fuel reduction treatments along approximately 3.5 miles of Loma Chiquita Road and 4.5 miles of Mount Chual Spur Road in unincorporated Santa Clara County, California. Vegetation will be thinned and pruned on either side of the road, up to 30 feet from roads edge, totaling up to 53.3 acres. Mechanical treatments will use an excavator with a masticating head to treat the above-ground portion of woody material and small (< 8” DBH) suppressed trees. The excavator will operate from the existing roadway and masticator head will avoid direct contact with the ground to eliminate ground disturbance. Hand crews will employ chainsaws, pole saws, and hand tools to remove ladder fuels and dead and dying trees. Live trees (12” DBH or less) may be removed to improve tree spacing. Larger trees will be pruned to provide for a vertical clearance up to 14 feet. Dead/dying or hazard trees of any size that pose a safety hazard to the roadway or people will be removed. Slash and debris created by this project will either be chipped or lop-and-scattered, and logs will be bucked and left on site. Chippers and masticators will not leave the roadway. Broadcast and pile burning are not proposed. This project includes long-term maintenance of fuel loading and hazard tree removal as necessary.

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 meets the requirements of Class 4 Categorical Exemption per CCR 15304 Minor Alterations to the Land. Class 4 exemptions consist of minor alterations to land, water, and/or vegetation conditions and does not include the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agriculture purposes. The proposed project treatments are primarily intended to reduce the volume of surface vegetation, including woody shrubs and herbaceous plants. Tree removal is limited to the removal of small diameter trees that are 12 inches DBH or less or dead or damaged trees that present a hazard to the roadway. Reducing the volume of surface vegetation can reduce fire severity and improve egress safety for residents. 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/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, populations 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 CAL FIRE’s Santa Clara Unit Headquarters, 15670 Monterey Rd. Morgan Hill, CA, 95037.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

11/7/2024

George Morris III, Northern Region Chief
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection