



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE:	Wards Ferry Fuels Reduction Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	T1N, R15E portions of Sections 13, 14, 23, & 24	COUNTY	Tuolumne
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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Project Description: The proposed project will reduce hazardous fuel loading across properties in the vicinity of Fitch Ranch Road, Anderson Road, and Robin Ridge Road, near the community of Tuolumne. The project area is made up of 14 individual parcels, owned by nine private landowners totaling approximately 456 acres in size. The project area ranges in elevation from approximately 2,200 to 3,000 feet above sea level. The objective of the project is to reduce hazardous fuel loading on these parcels. Vegetation at the site would best be described as oak woodland. Overstory tree species consist primarily of California black oak, gray pine, canyon live oak, valley oak, blue oak and interior live oak with an understory of dense manzanita, ceanothus, toyon, yerba santa, blackberry, and poison oak. Live trees up to 12-inches diameter at breast height (dbh), surface and ladder fuels will be reduced or modified by mastication, chipping, or by hand or machine 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. Live trees up to 12-inches in dbh and surface fuels and ladder fuels will be treated to achieve a target residual tree spacing of 25 to 30-feet between stems. Residual trees may be pruned to a height of approximately 8 to 10-feet above ground level. Dead trees of any size may be felled and chipped, piled and burned, or masticated. Masticated material will be left on site; biomass and chips may be hauled to a biomass facility. The reduction in vegetation will create an open and park-like shaded fuel break condition that will minimize fire behavior and create a stand structure that is resistant to stand replacing fires.

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

The Class of Exemption to be used is 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 in a strategic area near the community of Tuolumne and will make this section of Tuolumne County more resilient regarding wildfires.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

 Date: 12/10/2024

John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection