

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



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

PROJECT TITLE	Whitebark Institute, "Eastern Sierra Climate & Communities Resilience Project (ESCCRP): Phase I Priority Acres" - Inyo National Forest (USFS)		
PROJECT LOCATION	Inyo National Forest	COUNTY	Mono
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CAL FIRE would provide funding to the Whitebark Institute to conduct forest health treatments to reduce the potential of uncharacteristic high-severity wildfire and to improve forest health, resistance, and resilience on Inyo National Forest lands around the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Treatment activities include ecological thinning, fuels reduction, including prescribed burning, and restoration using hand, mechanical, and aerial methods to restore landscape structure and composition and achieve desired conditions as defined in the 2019 Land Management Plan for the Inyo National Forest. The purpose of these treatments is designed to create ecosystems and communities that are able to adapt to future disturbances and climate change.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class
- Statutory Exemption (state code section): Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1)
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

CEQA does not apply to fuel reduction, reforestation, & habitat restoration projects undertaken, in whole or in part, on federal lands to reduce the risk of high severity wildfire that have been reviewed under the NEPA, if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. The proposed project was reviewed in its entirety under the Inyo National Forest Eastern Sierra Climate and Communities Resilience Project NEPA Environmental Assessment and Decision Notice, signed September 19, 2024. NEPA coverage for this project is 43,700 acres, with initial treatments at 2,185 acres.

The NEPA record of project approval is available to the General Public at:
<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=61827>

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by: John Melvin, Assistant Deputy Director Resource Management California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	12/26/2024 _____ Date
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