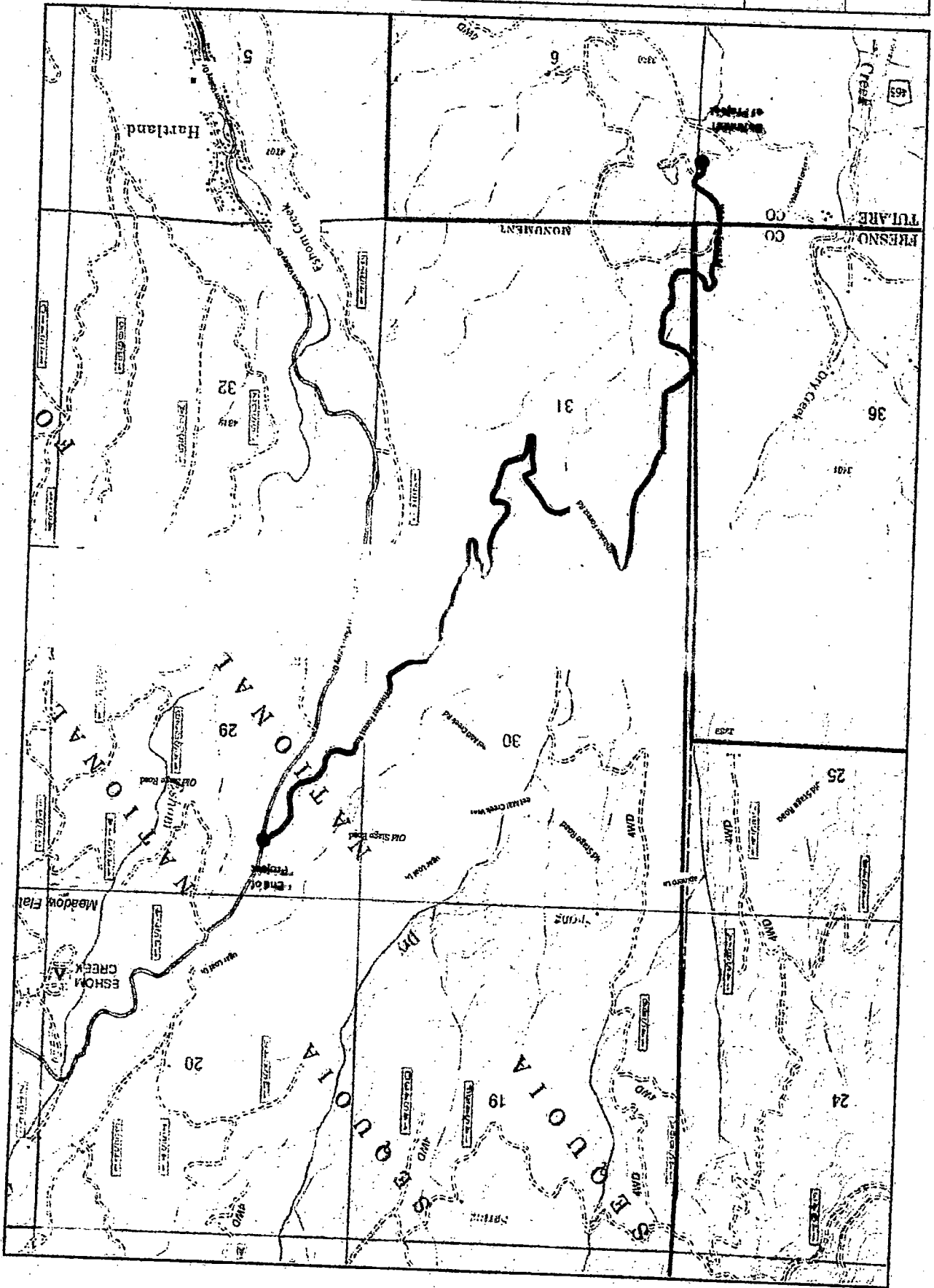


TULARE COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT  
 WILDFIRE FOREST REDUCTION PROJECT  
 1/27/2023

Legend  
 Beginning of Whittaker Forest Roadside Fuel Reduction Project (Whittaker Forest Road 1/2 mile east of Dry Creek)  
 Ending of Whittaker Forest Roadside Fuel Reduction Project (Whittaker Forest Road & Eshom Valley Drive)  
 Fuel reduction project along Whittaker Forest Road (40 foot clearance on both sides of the road)



**Reasons why Project is exempt:**


The Project meets the requirements of a CEQA Article 19 Class 4 Categorical Exemption "Minor Alterations to Land" (Section 15304), Class 7 Categorical Exemption "Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources (Section 15307), and Class 8 Categorical Exemption Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment (Section 15308) as the proposed fuel management activities entail understory brush removal, invasive trees ranging from 3-18" DBH, thinning, pruning, chipping, from an existing roadway, and dead/tree removal to improve access for fire engines and reduce volume of flammable vegetation. 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; Class 7 includes actions taken by regulatory agencies as authorized by state law or local ordinance to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment; and Class 8 entails actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment.

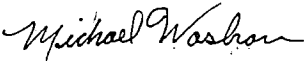
As such, Tulare County has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities, and service systems, or to wildfire. No exceptions apply (Section 15300.2) which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this Project.

**Name of Environmental Assessment Officer:** Reed Shenke, P.E. RMA Director/EAO

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** County of Tulare

**Project Planner/Representative:** Jesse Renteria, Division Chief Operation TCFD      **Telephone:** (559) 802-9808

Signature:       Date: 3/12/2025      Title: Chief Planner,  
Gary A. Mills      Environmental Planning Division

Signature:       Date: 3/12/2025      Title: RMA Associate Director, Designee  
Michael G. Washam, A.C.E.

Signed by Lead Agency

Date submitted to the LCI/SCH: \_\_\_\_\_

# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

## Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

To:  Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Tulare County Clerk  
Room 105, Courthouse  
221 South Mooney Blvd.  
Visalia, CA 93291

Lead Agency: County of Tulare c/o Resource Management Agency  
5961 S. Mooney Blvd.  
Visalia, CA 93277 (559) 624-7000  
Attn: [gmills@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:gmills@tularecounty.ca.gov) and [jwillis@tularecounty.ca.gov](mailto:jwillis@tularecounty.ca.gov)

FILED TULARE COUNTY
MAR 13 2025
ASSESSOR / CLERK-RECORDER BY:
DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING AT TULARE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

Applicant(s): Tulare County c/o Tulare County Fire Department  
835 S. Akers St.  
Visalia, CA 93277 (559) 802-9800

Project Title: Whitaker Forest Roadside Fuel Reduction Project

Project Location - Specific: Unincorporated area along 16 miles of Whitaker Forest Road near Badger in Tulare County, CA. See Project Location Map, Attachment "A", incorporated herein by reference.

Project Location - Section, Township, Range: Section 11, Township 15S, Range 27E

Project Location - City: N/A Project Location - County: Tulare

**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:** The Whitaker Forest Roadside Fuel Reduction Project is located adjacent to the community of Badger in Tulare County, along Whitaker Forest Road. This Project will focus on the modification of vegetation along the roadway by reducing the available fuel, securing the vital ingress and egress route for residents and visitors for the Hartland Christian Camp evacuating from fast moving wildland fires, and reducing the spread of fire from the wildland into the wildland-urban interface. Whitaker Forest Road is a County maintained road that spans 16 miles and is a secondary ingress and egress for 65 permanent habitable residential structures. Additionally, Whitaker Forest Road is located directly adjacent to the community of Bader with a population of 208. 27 acres of this proposed Project are in the High Fire Severity Zone.

This Project will remove fuel approximately 40 feet on either side of the roadway, creating an approximately 110 feet wide area and securing a secondary evacuation route. The project will also have a minimum of two public chipper days that should have a positive effect on the community's defensible space. The fuel along Whitaker Forest Road consists of medium brush, and invasive trees ranging from 3-18 DBH. This evacuation route is identified in the Tulare County Community Evacuation plan as a secondary route of travel for 65 habitable residential structures. The removal of hazardous fuel will span 27 acres and will be treated by chipping. This Project includes approximately 9 miles of roadway. A Project area map is included herein at Attachment "A".

### Exempt Status: (check one)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Common Sense Exemption: CEQA Guidelines 15061(b)(3)
- Categorical Exemption: **CEQA Guidelines Article 19 Class 4 Section 15304 Minor Alterations to Land**
- Categorical Exemption: **CEQA Guidelines Article 19 Class 7 Section 15307 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources**
- Categorical Exemption: **CEQA Guidelines Article 19 Class 8 Section 15308 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment**
- Statutory Exemptions: