

2025-027

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

NAPA COUNTY PLANNING, BUILDING, & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
DEPARTMENT
1195 THIRD STREET, SUITE 210, NAPA, CA 94559

ENDORSED

APR 01 2025

JOHN TUTEUR
Napa County Recorder - County Clerk
By: *[Signature]*
DEPUTY RECORDER - CLERK

To: Office of Planning and Research
PO Box 0334
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814
 Napa County Clerk
900 Coombs St
Napa, CA 94559

EXEMPT FROM RECORDING FEE CG 27383

PROJECT TITLE: NAPA COUNTY RESILIENCY PROJECT #1

PROJECT LOCATION - SPECIFIC: 7200 Wild Horse Valley Road, (Castle View); APNs: 052-190-029-000, 052-190-028-000, 052-190-025-000 and 052-190-027-000
5870 Silverado Trail, (Four Winds); APNs: 032-400-027-000 and 032-400-016-000

PROJECT LOCATION – CITY (NEAREST): Napa

PROJECT LOCATION - COUNTY: Napa

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The project aims to utilize various fire mitigation strategies including, mechanized equipment/techniques, "pile burning", "broadcast burning", etc. with minimal to no ground disturbance to manage and maintain approximate 350 acres of vertical and horizontal fire fuels throughout the County. Out of the 350 acres, approximately all of the 350 acres is within the High Fire Hazard Zone (VHFHZ). The project will manage and maintain fire fuels within the project footprint. This fuel reduction treatment is located in fire prone areas of the County to moderate the movement of wildfire, improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property from catastrophic wildfire events. Additionally, the project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and restoration efforts with non-invasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways. Further details are provided in the CEQA memo attached to this NOE.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Napa

Lead Agency: County of Napa, Planning, Building and Environmental Services Department
ADDRESS: 1195 Third Street – Suite 210 **PHONE:** (707) 253-4437

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Napa County Fire Administrator
ADDRESS: 1195 Third Street – Suite 310 **PHONE:** (707) 259-8199

EXEMPT STATUS (CHECK ONE):

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15268(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines (CEQAG) section number:
Class 4 - Section 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land), and Class 8- Section 15308 (Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources).
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT: Staff has reviewed the approved project to determine the required level of review under the CEQA and has determined the project to be Categorically Exempt from the CEQA pursuant to the following CEQA Guidelines:

- The project meets the requirements of CEQA Article 19 Class 4 (Section 15304) Categorical Exemption "Minor Alterations to Land" as the project aims to utilize mechanized equipment/techniques, including "pile burning" and "broadcast burning" with minimal to no ground disturbance to manage and maintain approximately 350 acres of vertical and horizontal fire fuels throughout the County. Out of the 350 acres, approximately 350 acres is within the High Fire Hazard Zone (HFHZ). The managing and maintaining of vertical and horizontal fire fuels is a common practice within communities. The project will manage and maintain fire fuels throughout the project area. This fuel reduction treatment is strategically located throughout the County to improve defensible space, provide safe egress

for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property from catastrophic wildfire events. Additionally, the project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and restoration efforts with non-invasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways. By managing and maintaining wildfire intensity and severity, it will improve our defensible space, provide safer egress for evacuating citizens, provide safer ingress for emergency resources, and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property. Also, project activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, and/or threatened plant or animal species, or cause sedimentation to surface waters. The project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs), including restoration efforts with noninvasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways.

- The project meets the requirements of CEQA Article 19 Class 8 (Section 15308) Categorical Exemption "Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources" as the project consist of actions by regulatory agencies as authorized by state laws or local ordinances. The project will utilize mechanized equipment/techniques, including "pile burning" and "broadcast burning" with minimal to no ground disturbance to manage and maintain approximately 350 acres of vertical and horizontal fire fuels throughout the County. Out of the 350 acres, approximately 350 acres is within the High Fire Hazard Zone (HFHZ). The managing and maintaining of vertical and horizontal fire fuels is a common practice within communities. This fuel reduction treatment is strategically located throughout the County to moderate the movement of wildfire, improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure, and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property from catastrophic wildfire events. The project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and restoration efforts with non-invasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways. Additionally, the referenced agencies confirmed the hazardous fuel reduction clearance is mandatory to moderate the movement of wildfire, improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure, adhere to PRC 4291 / local ordinances and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property from catastrophic wildfire events.


County staff also reviewed all potential exceptions (Section 15300.2) to the categorical exemptions and determined that no exceptions would apply: (a) because there are no project impacts and/or no cumulatively significant impacts; (b) There would be no significant effects due to unusual circumstances because the routine maintenance and/or removal of hazardous forest/fire fuels to reduce wildfire intensity/severity, including the protection of life and property from catastrophic events is a common practice in communities; (c) There would be no damage to scenic resources, historic buildings, and/or rock outcroppings; (d) The project is not located on a hazardous waste site; and (e) The project is designed to require minimal to no ground disturbance. Furthermore, there are no known special circumstances that exist which would create a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the project meets the criteria outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 and 15308 and would be categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA..

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT PERSON: Dana Morrison, Supervising Planner

PHONE: (707) 253-4437

IF FILED BY APPLICANT:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? Yes No

Signature:  For Title: Dana Morrison, Supervising Planner Date: 4/1/2025
 Signed by Lead Agency Daniel Zador Date received for filing at OPR: 4/3/2025.
 Signed by Applicant Planner II



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Planning, Building & Environmental Services

1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559
www.countyofnapa.org

Brian D. Bordona
Director

To: Napa County Fire Department From: Dana Morrison, Supervising Planner
Conservation Division, PBES

Date: April 1, 2025 Re: CEQA Determination - Castle View and Four
Winds fire fuel management prescribed burns

This memo is in response to your request for a determination of compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines for two fire fuel management prescribed burn projects (Castle View – 7200 Wild Horse Valley Road and Four Winds – 5870 Silverado Trail) proposed to occur within Napa County California. The projects will be implemented and management by the Napa County Fire Department with support from California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Sonoma Lake Napa Unit. The goal of the Castle View and Four Winds projects is to reduce hazardous fuel loads within approximately 350 acres located within areas denoted as High Fire Hazard Severity Zone in Napa County.

Castle View:

For the Castle View Project, the goal of the project is to utilize various fire mitigation strategies including, mechanized equipment/techniques, "pile burning", "broadcast burning", etc. with minimal to no ground disturbance to manage and maintain approximately 250 acres of vertical and horizontal fire fuels in the Wild Horse Valley area of Napa County. Out of the 250 acres, approximately all of the 250 acres is within the High Fire Hazard Zone (HFHZ). The project will manage and maintain fire fuels within the project footprint, see figures at end of document – Castle View project treatment map and Fire Hazard Map. This fuel reduction treatment is located in fire prone areas of the County and this work will help to moderate the movement of wildfire during future wildfire events. Additionally, the project will improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure and ultimately facilitate the protection of life and property during catastrophic wildfire events. Finally, the project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and restoration efforts with non-invasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways.

The project is located at 7200 Wild Horse Valley Road, APN: 052-190-029-000, 052-190-028-000, 052-190-025-000 and 052-190-027-000 in Napa County, California. The proposed project area is largely undeveloped and rural, with limited rural residential development and access roads. Treatment and Fire Hazard Zone Maps are provided at the end of this memo.

Four Winds:

For the Four Winds Project, the goal of the project is to utilize various fire mitigation strategies including, mechanized equipment/techniques, "pile burning", "broadcast burning", etc. with minimal to no ground disturbance to manage and maintain approximate 100 acres of vertical and horizontal fire fuels in the Stag's Leap area east of Silverado Trail in Napa County. Out of the 100 acres, approximately all of the 100 acres is within the High Fire Hazard Zone (HFHZ). The project will manage and maintain fire fuels within the project footprint, see figures at end of document – Four Winds project treatment map and Fire Hazard Map. This fuel reduction treatment is located in fire prone areas of the County and this work will help to moderate the movement of wildfire during future wildfire events. Additionally, the project will improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure and ultimately facilitate the protection of life and property during catastrophic wildfire events. Finally, the project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and restoration efforts with non-invasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways.

The project is located at 5870 Silverado Trail, APN: 032-400-027-000 and 032-400-016-000 in Napa County, California. The proposed project area is largely undeveloped and rural, with limited rural residential development and access roads. Treatment and Fire Hazard Zone Maps are provided at the end of this memo

No Biological Resource Assessment Report was prepared for this project. Neither the Castle View nor Four Winds project are located within potential northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) habitat. The project areas likely support local movement patterns of terrestrial wildlife species and provides food and cover resources for common wildlife species. The projects would not include the removal of any healthy, mature, or scenic trees. Hazardous trees (e.g., dead or dying trees) identified by Napa County Fire Department and CAL FIRE staff would be removed as well as fire-hazardous trees up to 10 inches diameter at breast height (DBH) although typically fire-hazardous trees would be less than 6 inches DBH. Downed dead trees and logs would be removed and cleared. Standing dead vegetation would be removed and cleared, leaving mature, healthy trees. Temporary effects due to noise and increased human activity during project activities would not permanently interfere with these local movement patterns over time or affect the ability of these species to forage or reproduce. Post fire can also create snags for cavity-nesting birds and create even more viable nesting habitat. The controlled burn proposed is low-intensity which should reduce negative impacts and a Best Management Practice has been included to require a survey of the project areas for active nests prior to work, and if any nests are found requiring a 250' buffer in which no fuel work shall occur. Additional BMPs have been included to ensure the project has a less than significant impact on sensitive resource. Furthermore, due to the fact that the proposed project is not a development and is instead only a fuel management project attempting to reduce future potential wildfire risk and provide safe ingress/egress during wildfire events and according to the Napa County Fire Department and CAL FIRE these controlled burns typically help native vegetation to establish while enhancing public safety and defensibility during wildlife events.

BMPs:

1. Work on steep slopes greater than 30% shall be done with hand tools.
2. Napa County Fire Department and CAL FIRE shall survey the project areas prior to implementing the controlled burns and fuel management work to identify any active nests, if

nests are identified a 250' buffer zone shall be demarcated and no hand work or vegetation clearing shall occur within these buffer zones.

3. Increased predation on special-status species due to food trash attractants from project personnel could be considered a significant impact in the context of CEQA. All trash and waste items generated by crew activities shall be properly contained in a covered trash receptacle and removed from the Project area daily. This includes biodegradable items, such as apple cores and banana peels, that attract predators such as raccoons and American crows that could prey upon sensitive wildlife species.

Pursuant to CEQA Section 15300, the proposed project would be considered Categorical Exempt based on at least two Exemption Classes. The project site is not listed on any hazardous waste sites enumerated under Government Code Section 65962.5. As a result, there is no reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment.

EXEMPT STATUS (CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION SECTIONS):

- Class 4 15304 (Minor Alterations to Land): 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 8 15308 Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources: 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. Construction activities and relaxation of standards allowing environmental degradation are not included in this exemption.

FINDINGS FOR EXEMPTIONS:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) {Section 21000, et. seq. of the California Public Resources Code}, requires analysis of agency approvals of discretionary 'projects. " A "project, „under CEQA, is defined as "the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. " The Project is defined as a project under CEQA.

Staff has reviewed the approved project to determine the required level of review under the CEQA and has determined the project to be Categorical Exempt from the CEQA pursuant to the following CEQA Guidelines:

- The project meets the requirements of CEQA Article 19 Class 4 (Section 15304) Categorical Exemption "Minor Alterations to Land" as the project aims to utilize mechanized equipment/techniques, including "pile burning" and "broadcast burning" with minimal to no ground disturbance to manage and maintain approximately 350 acres of vertical and horizontal fire fuels in the County. Out of the 350 acres, approximately 350 acres is within the High Fire Hazard Zone (HFHZ). The managing and maintaining of vertical and horizontal fire fuels is a common practice within communities. The project will manage and maintain fire fuels throughout the project area. This fuel reduction treatment is strategically located to improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property from catastrophic wildfire events. Additionally, the project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and restoration efforts with non-invasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways. By

managing and maintaining wildfire intensity and severity, it will improve our defensible space, provide safer egress for evacuating citizens, provide safer ingress for emergency resources, and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property. Also, project activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, and/or threatened plant or animal species, or cause sedimentation to surface waters. The project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs), including restoration efforts with noninvasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways.

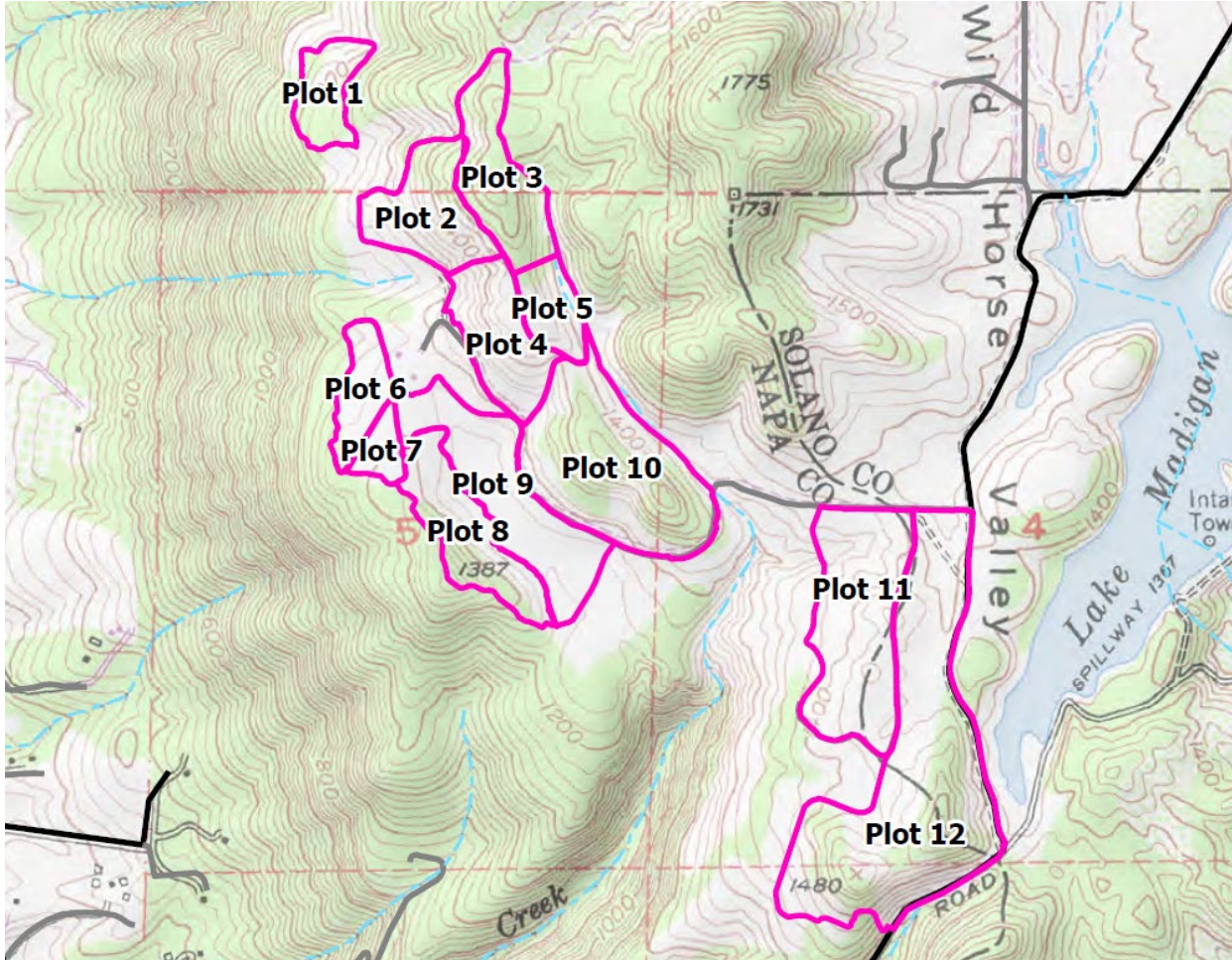
- The project meets the requirements of CEQA Article 19 Class 8 (Section 15308) Categorical Exemption "Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources" as the project consist of actions by regulatory agencies as authorized by state laws or local ordinances. The project will utilize mechanized equipment/techniques, including "pile burning" and "broadcast burning" with minimal to no ground disturbance to manage and maintain approximately 350 acres of vertical and horizontal fire fuels throughout the County. Out of the 350 acres, approximately 350 acres is within the High Fire Hazard Zone (HFHZ). The managing and maintaining of vertical and horizontal fire fuels is a common practice within communities. This fuel reduction treatment is strategically located to moderate the movement of wildfire, improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure, and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property from catastrophic wildfire events. The project will implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) and restoration efforts with non-invasive species to restore natural habitats and help prevent and/or reduce the amount of sediment and runoff into nearby drainages/waterways. Additionally, the referenced agencies confirmed the hazardous fuel reduction clearance is mandatory to moderate the movement of wildfire, improve defensible space, provide safe egress for evacuating citizens, provide safe ingress for emergency resources, protect critical infrastructure, adhere to PRC 4291 / local ordinances and ultimately facilitate in the protection of life and property from catastrophic wildfire events.

County staff also reviewed all potential exceptions (Section 15300.2) to the categorical exemptions and determined that no exceptions would apply: (a) because there are no project impacts and/or no cumulatively significant impacts; (b) There would be no significant effects due to unusual circumstances because the routine maintenance and/or removal of hazardous forest/fire fuels to reduce wildfire intensity/severity, including the protection of life and property from catastrophic events is a common practice in communities; (c) There would be no damage to scenic resources, historic buildings, and/or rock outcroppings; (d) The project is not located on a hazardous waste site; and (e) The project is designed to require minimal to no ground disturbance. Furthermore, there are no known special circumstances that exist which would create a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant adverse effect on the environment. Therefore, the project meets the criteria outlined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 and 15308 and would be categorically exempt from the requirements of CEQA. No further CEQA review is required.

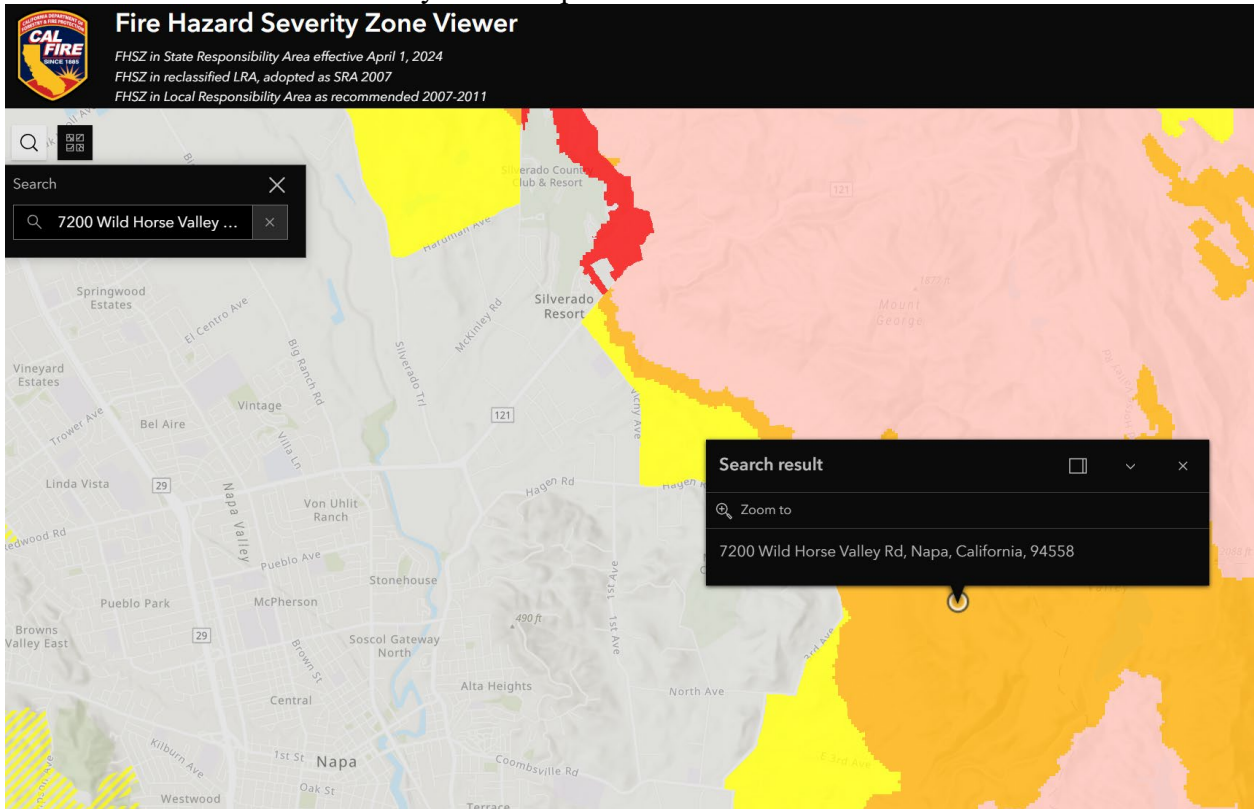
This determination is solely based on information provided by the Napa County Fire Department and Mike Wink, CAL FIRE Sonoma Lake Napa Unit. Should the proposed project be modified, or new evidence be presented that environmental impacts have not been fully disclosed, this determination would not be valid.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Dana Morrison at (707) 253-4437 or by e-mail at dana.morrison@countyofnapa.org.

Castle View Project Treatment Map (250 acres):



Castle View Fire Hazard Severity Zone Map:



Four Winds Project Treatment Map (100 acres):



Four Winds Project Treatment Map (100 acres):

A screenshot of the Fire Hazard Severity Zone Viewer interface. At the top left is the CAL FIRE logo. Below it, text reads: "FHSZ in State Responsibility Area effective April 1, 2024", "FHSZ in reclassified LRA, adopted as SRA 2007", and "FHSZ in Local Responsibility Area as recommended 2007-2011". The main map area shows a geographic region with color-coded hazard zones: yellow, orange, and red. A search bar on the left contains the text "5870 Silverado Trail". A search result popup on the right displays "Search result", "Zoom to", "5870 Silverado Trl, Napa, California, 94558", and "Show more results". The map also shows labels for "Rutherford", "Oakville", "Yountville", and "Oak Knoll".