



**State of California – The Resources Agency  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION**

**NOTICE OF EXEMPTION**

**TO:** Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation  
1400 Tenth Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**FROM:** Department of Parks and Recreation  
Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District  
12301 North Hwy 1  
Mendocino, CA 95460

**PROJECT TITLE:** Redwood Lake Prescribed Fire

**LOCATION:** Austin Creek State Recreation Area

**COUNTY:** Sonoma

**DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PROJECT:** This project will implement a series of controlled broadcast burns in Austin Creek State Recreation Area to meet long-term goals of creating and maintaining habitat for native wildlife and plant species and an improved upland habitat that is more resilient to catastrophic changes due to wildfire. It will also provide training opportunities for staff and partner agencies and organizations, build relationships with tribal governments and members, and help protect critical infrastructure and other park facilities. There are three phases for implementation of successful prescribed fire projects: unit preparation, ignitions, and mop-up, and reducing potential fuel loads.

Burn units will cover approximately 255 acres and will be generally located in the Giliam and Schoolhouse creek watersheds. Burn units will utilize handlines and existing or legacy roads and trails as control lines. Workers will use handtools such as hoes, rakes and Pulaskis; small equipment such as string trimmers, brush cutters, leaf blowers, and chainsaws; and heavy equipment such as mowers and tractors. Vegetation removal on, under and around department structures shall meet the *Guidelines for the Protection of Structures from Wildland Fire*. More specifically, fuel modification work will:

- Remove limbs up to a height of 15-ft (from the uphill side) on trees;
- Modify, relocate, and reconfigure downed and dead material;
- Selectively remove tree seedlings, saplings, and poles less than 11-in. DBH;
- Create spacing between shrubs and trees (2x the shrubs height);
- Fell dead and dying trees while maintaining sufficient snags for wildlife habitat;
- Mow dry grass and relocate clippings;
- Rake away excess litter and duff or create a scratch line around the base of trees, snags, stumps, infrastructure, developed areas, structures, or other resources; and
- Dig to mineral soil for handlines.

Prior to start of controlled burns, a DPR Environmental Scientist(s) shall identify protected wildlife and plant species and habitat and prescribe proper measures to maintain or increase populations and habitat and avoid adverse impacts, and a DPR Archaeologist(s) shall identify protected sites and prescribe proper treatments to avoid adverse impacts. Tribal consultation shall be initiated when required.

The project may require temporary closure of trails and other facilities during project implementation, and/or have trail use be restricted, for public safety. Adjacent property owners will be notified before any broadcast burn event. Public notifications will be made via social media and/or news outlets before any broadcast burn event.

**PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING THE PROJECT:** California Department of Parks and Recreation

**NAME OF DIVISION OR DISTRICT CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT:** Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District


**EXEMPT STATUS:**

Categorical Exemption    *Class: 1 and 4*                      *Section: 15301 & 15304*

**REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT:** Project consists of the operation, maintenance, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond current levels, and minor public or private alterations in the condition of land and vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is included as "Prescribed burns to restore native vegetation, reduce fuel loads, and control invasive exotic or alien species" and "Resource management projects" in the Department of Parks and Recreation's list of exempt activities in accordance with CCR § 15300.4.

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4/14/2025  
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William Maslach DATE  
District Superintendent  
Sonoma-Mendocino Coast District