

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



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

PROJECT TITLE	Weitchpec Community Infrastructure Protection Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Communities of Weitchpec and Wautec	COUNTY	Humboldt
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Ross Dollarhide, CAL FIRE Humboldt-Del Norte Unit		
ADDRESS	118 Fortuna Blvd, Fortuna, CA 94450	PHONE	707-599-6554

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Yurok Fire Department received a CAL FIRE grant to reduce hazardous fuel accumulations within and around the communities of Weitchpec and Wautec located on the Upper Yurok Reservation. Of the 241-acre project area, 55 acres is located on private property and an additional 186 acres is located on tribal trust land and underwent NEPA review. Project treatments will improve defensible space around structures of elderly, handicap or disabled persons, protect critical tribal infrastructure, and improve egress/ingress safety by creating a shaded fuel break along roads including sections of Highway 96 and 169. Treatment activities will include the manual removal of understory brush, small trees under 5 inches DBH, and ladder fuels using hand tools, including chainsaws. Larger brush will be chipped using a gas-powered woodchipper and left on-site. Biomass may also be piled and burned. Treatments will be applied to a 300-foot perimeter around the residences and to 50 feet on both sides of proposed sections of road. The project will provide jobs for low-income households, build local capacity, and provide educational opportunities for the public to learn about fire safety and the benefits of defensible space. Signage will be placed on highways when the work is being conducted, and traffic control will also be provided for public safety as necessary.

EXEMPTION STATUS

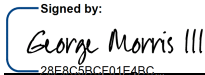
- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4, 15304, Minor Alteration to land
- Statutory Exemption (state code section): Public Resources Code Section 4799.05(d)(1)
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under portions of 14 CCR §15304 Minor Alterations to Land. After completing a thorough environmental review, CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland or timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, 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, energy, wildfire, transportation or traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is available at the Humboldt-Del Norte Unit Headquarters located at 118 Fortuna Blvd, Fortuna, CA 94450.

CAL FIRE has provided funding for implementation of the activities as described above on 186 acres of federal lands that have been analyzed under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The California Environmental Quality Act does not apply to prescribed fire, thinning, or fuel reduction projects undertaken 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. Project design features relevant to the proposed action as listed in the Decision of NEPA adequacy [TR 4432b-P5 52562T FY2024] Yurok Tribe CAL FIRE Weitchpec Community Infrastructure Protection Project, signed January 2025, will be implemented.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Signed by:  <small>2858C5BCF01E4BC</small> George Morris III, Northern Region Chief California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection	4/15/2025 Date
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