

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



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

PROJECT TITLE	Round Tree Fuel Break – Forest Service Parcels		
PROJECT LOCATION	Ponderosa Basin, Round Tree Saddle Road (5S03) T05S R20E Sec. 14, 15, 23, 26. T06S R20E Sec. 1. T06S R21E Sec. 6	COUNTY	Mariposa
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Madera-Mariposa-Merced Unit		
CONTACT	Brian Mattos, Unit Forester Sebastien Cordier, Environmental Scientist	PHONE	(559) 706-8807
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

CAL FIRE will manage the implementation of the Round Tree Fuel Break project on the associated Forest Service (FS) parcel to complete fuel reduction activities. The entire shaded fuel break would treat approximately 502 acres of private, Bureau of Land Management, and Forest Service ownership. It would remove 300 ft of fuels on each side of approximately 6 miles of Round Tree Saddle Road (AKA: Standard Mill Road or Forest Road #5S03) across the Ponderosa Basin community and up towards Sonny Meadows. The fuel break would treat approximately 262 acres FS parcels. The project would be accomplished by reducing dense surface fuel loads, reducing live and dead understory and mid-story fuel loading (ladder fuels), and by increasing crown spacing and retaining large fire-resistant trees within the remaining overstory fuels. Dead trees will be felled via manual or mechanical (tractor, feller/buncher skid steer, or grapple) means and either pile burned, utilized for biomass power generation, or merchantable where feasible. Heavily stocked areas will be thinned to anything less than 12” DBH. The primary objective is to restore and maintain a healthy, diverse, fire-resilient forest structure that would reduce high intensity fire behavior, reduce public health and safety risks, and make suppression efforts more effective.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section:
- 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

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 National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) if the primary role of a state or local agency is providing funding or staffing for those projects. CAL FIRE would provide funding to the FS to reduce forest fuels on federal land. All the proposed project activities are included in the Decision Memo prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. Signed by Dan Tune, Bass Lake District Ranger, Sierra National Forest, on 4/17/2025.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

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Mike van Loben Sels, Southern Region Chief Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection