



Idyllwild Fire Protection District Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

Note: This report form is intended for use by Idyllwild Fire Protection District staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a notice of exemption document for a proposed project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable categorical exemptions, this report presents Idyllwild Fire protection District review for possible exceptions that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by Idyllwild Fire Protection District.

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Project Name: Idyllwild Right of Way Fuel Reduction.
Project Number: 23-WP-RRU-58300485
Program Type: Wildfire Prevention Grant Awards
CAL FIRE Unit: Riverside Ranger Unit
County: Riverside
Acres: 269
Legal Location:
Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s): Idyllwild
☒ Project Vicinity Map Attached ☒ Project Location Map Attached ☒ Photos Attached

Other Public Agency Review or Permit Required:

Would the project result in:

Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)
Conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)
Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)
Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)
Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)
Other:

YES

☐
☐
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☐
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NO

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Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:

Project Description and Environmental Setting (describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):

The Idyllwild Fire Protection District will implement a project identified in the San Jacinto Mountains Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This plan was approved in November 2017. The District's project name is the "Idyllwild Right of Way Fuel Reduction.", the project description is "Identify and remove fuels from public easements and rights-of-way, including walking paths and utility easements." The District has identified two hundred and sixty nine acres of easements and right-of-ways that need to be evaluated and treated. Reducing fuel loading will ensure safe evacuation routes during a wildfire.

Less than five percent of the District has experienced wildfire since detailed records of the area were first kept in the early 1900's. This lack of fire history has led to a significant buildup of fuel and thus increased our risk for wild fire. Some areas in the District have a significant ground and ladder fuel load increasing the potential for devastating crown fires. The brush fields adjacent to and intermixed with the timber component can easily transfer a fire front into the timber. This reduction in fuel will also provide for firefighter safety during suppression operations on a wildfire.

The District is located in a mixed conifer forest with oak and cedar trees laced throughout. There are also components of chaparral and grasses intermixed with timber. The proposed fuel reduction treatments involve the removal of ladder fuels and selectively thinning subdominant trees and brush to break the continuity of the fuels (vertical and horizontal continuity) to reduce rate of fire spread, duration, intensity, or crown fire. Additionally dead or dying trees that pose a threat to public health and safety will be removed as conditions warrant. The fuel reduction treatments will be accomplished with hand crews utilizing string trimmers, chainsaws, and a tow-behind chipper that will be operated on existing roads. No heavy equipment operations are proposed and no soil disturbance is expected. Prescription has been discussed and designed through an RPF. All cut material will be chipped on site where feasible. Cut materials that are not feasible to be chipped will be loped and scattered to CAL FIRE standards or may be stacked or piled for use by landowner or to create wildlife habitat.

Environmental Impact Analysis

Aesthetics

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Impacts to visual resources would be particularly small in comparison to impacts that are associated with wildland fire and accompanying suppression impacts. The project is visible mainly to the nearby residential areas and highway where treatments occur. Some treatments may be visible to the travelling public due to the location, topography, and the type of treatment, which entails hazardous fuel reduction and chipping. Overall, the aesthetic appeal of the areas should be improved through fuel reduction treatments and will result in negligible impacts to scenic quality and visual resources. Landowner privacy will be considered and maintained as directed by each participating landowner through pretreatment consultations. The project will have no significant impact on scenic vistas, scenic resources, or the existing visual character and quality of the areas. The project will not create a new source of light that would adversely affect daytime or nighttime views.

Agriculture and Forest Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ Yes ☐ No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds, if necessary.
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Thinning will only occur in the understory. Trees over 10 inches in DBH will not be removed unless they pose a threat to operations or if they are dead/dying. Most of the trees that require thinning are between 0 and 6 inches DBH. Thinning shall not be conducted in the over story stands. Before any tree is felled it will be assessed for the presence of any nests. If any active nest is observed the tree will not be felled. Prescription has been discussed and designed through an RPF. No healthy, mature, scenic trees will be removed by this project pursuant to section 15304 of CEQA. No impacts to agriculture and forest reserves is expected.

Air Quality

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ Yes ☐ No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Project implementation may produce small amounts of particulates as a consequence of chipping cut vegetation. The processed material will be broadcast away from roads and structures. Dust abatement is not a concern since all vehicles and equipment will be operating from existing roads and stationary during operating periods. No burning is proposed, hence no smoke impacts will occur. The project will not result in any significant impact to air quality.

Biological Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a current California Natural Diversity Database review completed? Results discussed below:
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A query of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) was conducted to identify State and Federally listed species that might be present in the project area. The search yielded seven species. Of the seven species identified, one may be present in the project area. The project is designed to minimize or eliminate possible impacts to these species. Species evaluations are documented below. "Documented occurrences" refers to species occurrences in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) unless otherwise noted. Additional surveys will be performed to identify, flag, and avoid any potential impacts during the project.

Dicots:

Abronia villosa var. aurita Chaparral sand-verbena

Annual herb. Sandy soils in chaparral, coastal scrub, desert dunes at 751600m elevation. Southern CA, Arizona, Baja. Bloom: (Jan) Mar-Sep. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, one documented within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Boechera johnstonii Johnston's rockcress

Perennial herb. Rocky areas, gravelly or eroded clay soils in chaparral, grassland, and lower montane coniferous forest (open oak/pine woodland) at 1350-2150m elevation. San Jacinto Mts in Riverside Co. Bloom: Feb-Jun: Occurrence Probability: Absent; potentially marginal habitat subject to ongoing disturbance, one documented occurrence (from 1937) within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Castilleja lasiorhyncha San Bernardino Mountains owl's-clover

Hemiparasitic annual herb. Mesic areas in chaparral, montane meadows, pebble plains, riparian woodland, upper montane coniferous forest at 1300-2390m elevation. Moist edges of springs/seeps on clay soil, wet meadows, openings in coniferous forest. Riverside, San Diego, San Bernardino Co.; San Bernardino Mts, San Jacinto Mts. Bloom: May-June. Occurrence Probability: Low; no or marginal suitable habitat, one documented occurrence within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Chaenactis parishii Parish's chaenactis

Perennial herb. Rocky soils in chaparral at 1300-2500m elevation. Riverside and San Diego Cos., Baja. Bloom: May-Jul. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, three documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Chorizanthe parryi var. parryi Parry's spineflower

Annual herb. Sandy or rocky soils and openings in chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland at 275-1220m elev. LA, Riverside, San Bernardino Co. Bloom: Apr-Jun. Occurrence Probability: Not expected; no or marginal habitat, above elevation range, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Chorizanthe polygonoides var. longispina Long-spined spineflower

Bloom: Apr-Jul Annual herb. Often on clay soils in chaparral, coastal scrub, meadows and seeps, valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools at 30-1530m elevation. Orange, Riverside, Santa Barbara, and San Diego Co., Baja. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, above elevation range, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Chorizanthe xanti var. leucotheca White-bracted spineflower

Bloom: Apr-Jun Annual herb. Sandy or gravelly soil in coastal scrub (alluvial fans), Mojavean desert scrub, pinyon and juniper woodlands at 300-1200m elevation. LA, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego Co. Bloom: Apr-Jun. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, above elevation range, one documented occurrence within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Deinandra mohavensis Mojave tarplant Annual herb.

Mesic areas in chaparral, coastal scrub, riparian scrub at 6401600m. Inyo, Kern, Riverside, San Diego, Tulare Cos. Presumed extirpated in San Bernardino Co. Bloom: (May)JunOct (Jan). Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, slightly above elevation range, multiple documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Eriogonum evanidum Vanishing wild buckwheat

Annual herb. Sandy or gravelly soils in chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, pinyon and juniper woodland at 11002225m elevation. Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego Cos. and Baja. Bloom: Apr-Jun. Occurrence Probability: Not expected; no or marginal habitat, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Galium angustifolium ssp. jacinticum San Jacinto Mountains bedstraw Perennial herb.

Partially shady or open lower montane mixed and coniferous forest at 1350-2100m. Riverside Co. (San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mts) and San Diego Co. (Laguna and Volcan Mts). Bloom: Jun-Aug. Occurrence Probability: Absent; potentially marginal habitat subject to ongoing disturbance, 10 documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Galium californicum ssp. Primum Alvin Meadow bedstraw

Rocky slopes, river, basins, 1350-1700 m, Bloom: February-May
Occurrence Probability: Low; potentially marginal habitat, 10 documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Lasthenia glabrata spp. coulteri Coulter's goldfields

Bloom: Feb-Jun Annual herb. Coastal salt marshes and swamps, playas, vernal pools at 11220m elevation. Scattered locations in CA, Baja. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, above elevation range, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Limnanthes alba ssp. parishii Parish's meadowfoam

Bloom: Apr-Jun Annual herb. Vernal mesic areas in lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, vernal pools at 600-2000m elevation. Riverside and San Diego Cos. Occurrence Probability: Not expected; no suitable habitat, two documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Monardella nana ssp. leptosiphon San Felipe monardella

Bloom: Jun-Jul Perennial rhizomatous herb. Chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest at 1200-1855m elevation. Riverside and San Diego Cos., Baja. Occurrence Probability: Low; potentially marginal habitat, five documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Penstemon californicus California beardtongue Perennial herb.

Sandy soils in chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest, pinyon and juniper woodland at 1170-2300m. Orange and Riverside Cos., Baja. Bloom: May Jun(Aug). Occurrence Probability: Low; potentially suitable or marginal habitat, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Scutellaria bolanderi ssp. austromontana Southern mountains skullcap

Perennial rhizomatous herb. Mesic areas in chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest at 425-2000m elevation. Often in meadows and along streams. LA, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego Cos. Presumed extirpated in LA and San Bernardino Cos. Bloom: Jun-Aug. Occurrence Probability: Low; no or marginal habitat, 12 occurrences within 5 mi, not observed during surveys.

Sidothea emarginata White-margined oxytheca

Annual herb. Chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest, pinyon and juniper woodland at 1200-2500m. Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mts in Riverside Co. Bloom: (Feb)AprJul(Aug). Occurrence Probability: Low; no or marginal habitat, three documented occurrences within 5 mi, not observed during surveys.

Symphotrichum defoliatum San Bernardino aster Perennial rhizomatous herb.

Near ditches, streams, springs in cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps, valley and foothill grasslands (vernally mesic) at 2-2040m elevation. Southern and Central California. Bloom: Jul-Nov. Occurrence Probability: Not expected; no suitable habitat, three documented occurrences within 5 mi, not observed during surveys.

Thysanocarpus rigidus Rigid fringe pod

Annual herb. Dry, rocky slopes in pinyon juniper woodland at 600-2200m elevation. LA, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego Co., Baja. Known from fewer than 10 occurrences in CA and one in Baja. Bloom: Feb-May. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Monocots:

Allium marvinii Yucaipa onion

Perennial bulbiferous herb. Clay soils in openings in chaparral at 7601065m. Riverside and San Bernardino Cos. Bloom: Apr-May. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, well above elevation range, two documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Calochortus palmeri var. munzii Munz's (San Jacinto) mariposa lily

Perennial bulbiferous herb. Seasonally moist, fine granitic loam soils on exposed knolls in yellow pine forest and moist, sandy clay in chaparral and meadows. Chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest (open yellow pine forest), meadows and seeps at 8552200m elevation. San Jacinto and Santa Rosa Mts in Riverside Co. and scattered locations in San Diego Co. Bloom: Apr-Jul. Occurrence Probability: Absent; potentially marginal habitat subject to ongoing disturbance, 12 documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Lilium parryi Lemon lily

Perennial bulbiferous herb. Mesic soils in upper and lower montane coniferous forest, riparian forest, meadows and seeps at 1220-2745m elevation. LA, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego Co, Arizona, Sonora Mex. Bloom: July-Aug. Occurrence Probability: Low; no or marginal suitable habitat, multiple documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Birds:

Tricolored blackbird (Agelaius tricolor)

Breeds colonially in freshwater marshes, nomadic among marshes and fields in winter; almost completely endemic to Calif. Occurrence Probability: Low (foraging), absent (nesting); no suitable habitat, few eBird records in vicinity.

Cypseloides niger Black swift

Coastal belt of Santa Cruz and Monterey counties; central & southern Sierra Nevada; San Bernardino & San Jacinto mountains. Breeds in small colonies on cliffs behind or adjacent to waterfalls in deep canyons and sea-bluffs above the surf; forages widely. Occurrence Probability: Low (foraging), absent (nesting); marginal foraging habitat, no nesting habitat, 6 documented occurrences within 5 mi., a few eBird records in vicinity.

***Haliaeetus leucocephalus* Bald eagle**

Breed in large trees, usually near major rivers or lakes. Winters more widely. Wide but scattered distribution in N America, esp. coastal regions. Occurrence Probability: Absent (foraging and nesting); no suitable habitat.

***Progne subis* Purple martin**

Inhabits woodlands, low elevation coniferous forest of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and Monterey pine. Nests in old woodpecker cavities mostly; also in human-made structures. Nest often located in tall, isolated tree/snag. Broadleaved upland forest, lower montane coniferous forest. CNDDDB only tracks nesting. Occurrence Probability: Low (foraging and nesting); suitable habitat, one documented nest within 5 mi., few eBird observations in area (from 1970s-1980s).

Reptiles:

***Anniella stebbinsi* (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*) Southern California legless lizard**

Various habitats, mainly shrublands, <6500 ft. elev. Coast Ranges from Bay area to N Baja CA, SW Sierra Nevada, parts of the Central Valley, Transverse & Peninsular Ranges. Occurrence Probability: Low; no or marginal suitable habitat, no documented occurrences within 5 mi. Not observed during surveys, but species is fossorial.

***Charina umbratica* Southern rubber boa**

Found in a few locales in San Bernardino & San Jacinto Mtn. ranges. Woodland & coniferous forest. Usually found within several hundred meters of water. 5000-9150 ft. elev. Occurrence Probability: Low; potentially marginal habitat; 11 documented occurrences within 5 mi. not observed during surveys but is secretive.

***Crotalus ruber* Red-diamond rattlesnake**

Desert scrub, thorn scrub, chaparral below 4,000ft. San Bernardino County S through most of Baja California, Mexico. Fed: None Calif: SSC, S3 M. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, above elevation range, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

***Phrynosoma mcallii* Flat-tailed horned lizard**

Restricted to desert washes and desert flats in central Riverside, eastern San Diego, and Imperial counties. Critical habitat element is fine sand, into which lizards burrow to avoid temperature extremes; requires vegetative cover and ants. Desert dunes, Mojavean and Sonoran desert scrub. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, outside known range, no documented occurrences within 5 mi.

Mammals:

***Antrozous pallidus* Pallid bat**

Rock outcrops of shrublands, ≤ 6000' elevation; southwest North America to interior Oregon and Washington; hibernates in winter. Locally common at low elevations in grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting. Forages over open ground. Roosts in caves, crevices, mines, hollow trees, buildings. Very sensitive to disturbance of roosting sites. Occurrence Probability: Low (foraging), not expected (roosting); marginal potential foraging habitat, roosting not expected in proximity to human disturbance, one documented occurrence within 5 mi. from 1994 mapped in general vicinity of Idyllwild.

***Corynorhinus townsendii* Townsend's big-eared bat**

Throughout California in a wide variety of habitats. Most common in mesic sites. Roosts in the open, hanging from walls and ceilings. Roosting sites limiting. Extremely sensitive to human disturbance. Broadleaved upland forest, chaparral, chenopod scrub, Joshua tree woodland, lower and upper montane coniferous forest, meadow and seep, Mojavean and Sonoran desert scrub, riparian forest/woodland, Sonoran thorn woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Occurrence Probability: Low (foraging), not expected (roosting); suitable habitat but human disturbance, two documented occurrences within 5 mi.

***Perognathus longimembris brevinasus* Los Angeles pocket mouse**

Nocturnal, active Apr-Aug. Annual grassland, sage scrub, alluvial sage scrub. S California from Rancho Cucamonga (W boundary), San Geronio (E), Aguanga & Oak Grove, San Diego (S). Open ground with fine, sandy soils. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, no documented occurrences within 5 mi.

Insects:

***Bombus crotchii* Crotch bumble bee**

Coastal CA E to Sierra-Cascade crest & S into Mexico. Open grassland and scrub habitats. Food plant genera include *Antirrhinum*, *Asclepias*, *Chaenactis*, *Lupinus*, *Medicago*, *Salvia*, *Phacelia*, *Clarkia*, *Dendromecon*, *Eschscholzia*, and *Eriogonum*. Lives in colonies that may be underground in rodent holes or above ground in rock piles, tree cavities, etc. Occurrence Probability: Not expected; no or marginal suitable habitat, one documented occurrence in Tahquitz Valley from 1939.

Amphibians:

***Rana muscosa* Southern mountain yellowlegged frog**

Streams, creeks, and small pools with cool, perennial water. Always encountered within a few feet of water. Tadpoles generally restricted to permanent still water deeper than a meter and may require up to 2 years to complete development. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, 10 documented occurrences within 5 mi. Nearest occurrence along Strawberry Creek may be extirpated. Site is not within critical habitat.

Bryophytes:

***Sphaerocarpos drewei* Bottle liverwort *Ephemeral* liverwort.**

Grows on soil in openings in chaparral and coastal scrub at 90-600m elevation. Riverside and San Diego Cos. Occurrence Probability: Absent; no suitable habitat, no documented occurrences within 5 mi., not observed during surveys.

Cultural Resources/Tribal Cultural Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Was a CAL FIRE staff or contract archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project effect any historic, archaeological or tribal cultural resources?
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will follow the Cal Fire list of exempt practices per the "Cultural Resource Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects-List of Exempt Practices": **#11 Fire-Safe Projects**: "Treatment of vegetation surrounding communities to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires through thinning and/or removal of vegetation by crews using hand tools or non-ground disturbing equipment. To be exempt such projects must involve the **chipping and removal of woody material or the chipping and scattering of woody material**".

No burning or ground disturbing activities are proposed with this project. Therefore, no archaeological record check or cultural survey is required per the April 3, 2020 "Cultural Resource Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects-List of Exempt Practices". The project will have no significant impact on cultural resources as only hand crew work will take place through vegetation hand cutting, chipping, removal of woody material, and scattering of woody material. No ground disturbing equipment will be utilized throughout the pre-disturbed right-of-ways and easements.

Energy

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply to this project as the proposed treatments will not affect energy efficiency in any way. No energy will be produced or altered, the project will not result in any unnecessary energy consumption. No effect to energy is anticipated.

Geology and Soils

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The proposed project should not result in significant adverse impacts to slope stability or soil productivity due to the following conditions and project parameters:

The treatment areas do not contain any known unstable areas and only hand crews will be used for this project.

Additionally, the entire overstory stand, and most of the understory stand will be retained. No impacts related to geology and soils is anticipated.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

A small amount of GHG emissions will result from vehicle traffic going to and from the project site, as well as the operation of a diesel chipper and gas chainsaws. However, the amount of GHGs released would be negligible in comparison to those released by a catastrophic wildfire. This project mitigates the risk of catastrophic wildfire and any associated GHG emissions. Most of the biomass will be piled or chipped and left on site allowing a slow decay and release of sequestered carbon. Emission from the decomposition of treated material is expected to be re-sequestered by the remaining vegetation and established trees in future years as the project site revegetates. The project is intended to reduce the risk of uncontrolled wildfire which would result in a rapid release of carbon and other greenhouse gasses at a higher rate. Because of the relatively low level of estimated carbon dioxide emissions and a further delay due to gradual decomposition of cut biomass, it is determined that adverse impacts to greenhouse gas emissions will be less than significant. Implementation of this project will likely result in a net reduction of GHG emissions and will not conflict with CA AB32.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Safety hazards could result during the operations phase through the use of, chainsaws, and chippers. All necessary precautions will be implemented to ensure personnel safety. These precautions include proper training and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). This project will require the use of two cycle fuel and diesel fuel to operate equipment. A hazardous materials endorsement will not be required. Equipment will be refueled only on existing roads or at least 100ft from water ways.

Hydrology and Water Quality

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

All active watercourses or bodies of water will be afforded a minimum 50' no cut buffer. The project will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or substantially deplete groundwater supplies, alter existing drainage patterns, or contribute to runoff that would exceed storm water drainage systems. The project will have no significant impact on Hydrology or Water Quality.

Land Use and Planning

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply as the project will not change or conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation. No effect is anticipated.

Mineral Resources

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This section does not apply as there are no known mineral resources found within the treatment area, no effect is anticipated as a result of this project.

Noise

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Vegetation treatment will require the use of chainsaws and a chipper, which will generate noise that may be audible to landowners within and near the project areas. However, work will occur during the day and residents have been informed of the nature of work and the associated noise. In addition, the project areas are surrounded by private properties, where chainsaws and other internal combustion engines are regularly operating. This project will not significantly increase adverse noise levels.

Population and Housing

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will decrease the fire risk to human population and housing. This project will not have an adverse impact to population and housing.

Public Services

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project is intended to reduce the risk of a wildfire to the public. This project will not have an adverse impact to public services.

Recreation

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No impacts to recreation is anticipated.

Transportation and Traffic

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will generate an insignificant amount of road traffic from work crews and project management. This project will not generate road blockages or impede ingress or egress to or from the treatment areas. No impacts to transportation and traffic is anticipated.

Utilities and Service Systems

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will not interfere with utilities or service systems. This project will not have an impact to utilities and service systems.

Wildfire

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will allow multiple treatments to occur within the project footprint. These treatments have the potential to mitigate extreme fire behavior diminishing the effects of catastrophic wildfire.

Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:

Best management practices, including project design features have been incorporated into the project and significant impacts to resources will be non-existent.

Mandatory Findings of Significance:**YES****NO**

(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

☐☒

(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects.

☐☒

(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

☐☒**Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):**

The proposed project qualifies for a Categorical Exemption under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304. Pursuant to Section 15304, Class 4 consists of minor private alterations of vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. No exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The project consists of minor treatments to land and vegetation in the form of hand thinning and chipping via hand crews. The activities do not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, or sedimentation to surface waters. This project will not convert forestland to non-forest uses, and all treated vegetation will have the ability to grow back. No significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/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, transportation/traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire.

Conclusion:

☒ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, Idyllwild Fire Protection District has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. Idyllwild Fire Protection District considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A notice of exemption will be filed at the State Clearinghouse.

☐ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, the project proponent has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site that precludes the use of a categorical exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a negative declaration or a mitigated negative declaration.

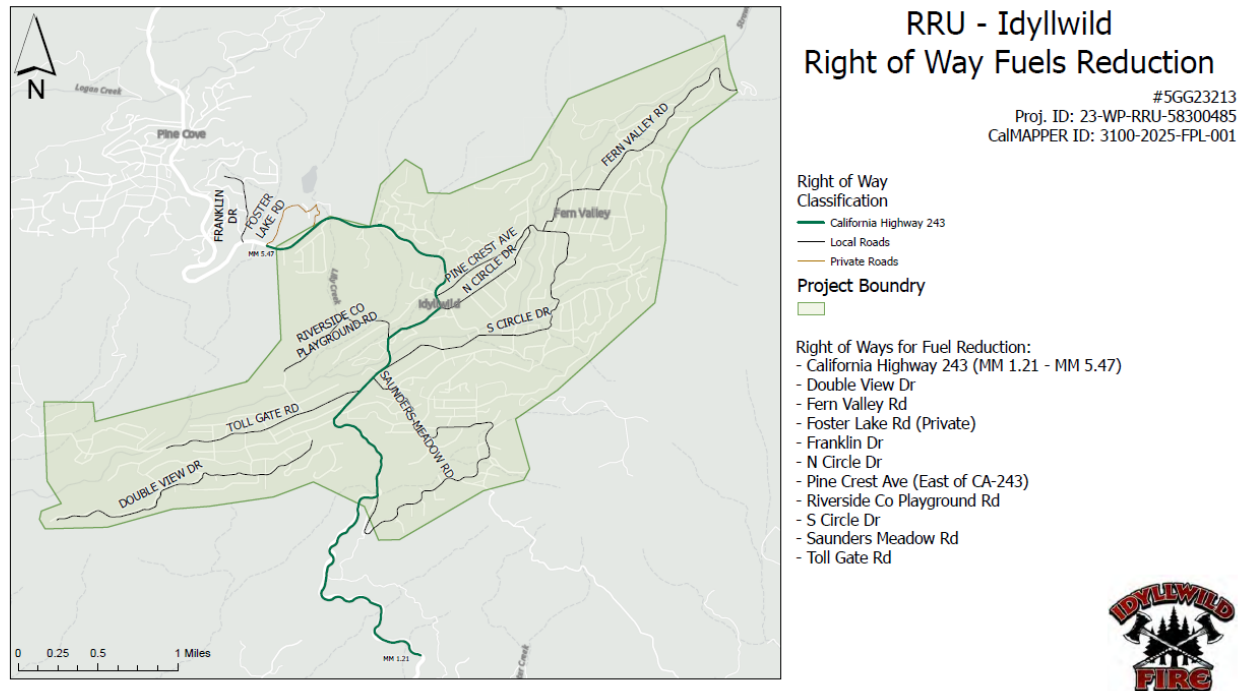


Figure 1 Project Vicinity Map.



Figure 2 Roadside Fuel Reduction.



Figure 3 Roadside Fuel Reduction.