Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District
1203 Main Street, Suite B, Morro Bay, CA 93442
805-772-4391 | www.coastalrcd.org

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814
&
SLO County Clerk

From: Coastal San Luis RCD
1203 Main Street, Suite B
Morro Bay, CA 93420
(805) 772-4391
rravarra@coastalrcd.org

Project Title: CAL FIRE Forest Improvement on Non-Industrial Private Forest Landowners (NIPFL): Huasna, Arroyo Grande

Project Applicant: Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District

Project Location: 35°07'55.0"N 120°26'10.6"W. Coordinates represent the center of the work area. See Attachment 1.

SCH#:

Project Location- City: Arroyo Grande ***County:*** San Luis Obispo

Description and Purpose of Project: The purpose of the project is to implement forest improvement practices in the Huasna valley in Arroyo Grande to improve the longevity of stands, and increase fire resilience and climate change adaptation. Improvements include tree pruning, chipping, mastication, and bucking; and other similar or suitable forest improvement practices approved by the lead agency.

Public Agency Approving Project and Carrying out Project: The Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District will carry out the project with willing landowners. The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts approved grant funds for the above-described project.

Categorical Exempt Status:

Class 4 (Sec 15304)

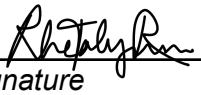
Reasons why the project is exempt:

This project involves minor alterations to land, specifically focusing on vegetation management for forestry purposes. The primary goal is to enhance the forest's fire resilience and its ability to adapt to climate change. As part of this initiative, we will implement management tactics aimed at reducing fuel loads in high to very high Fire Hazard Severity Zones, thereby improving fire resilience.

The project may include the removal of trees, primarily for thinning, in alignment with the exemption's allowance for sustainable and managed forestry practices. It is important to note that the removal will not target healthy, mature, or scenic trees. Moreover, the project will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species nor will it result in significant erosion and sedimentation of surface waters. This approach is consistent with the intent of the exemption and supports the project's goals of enriching forest health, conserving habitats, and mitigating wildfire risks—all integral aspects of the exemption objectives.

By strictly adhering to the conditions outlined, such as ensuring environmentally compatible activities, limiting grading and tree removal to forestry purposes, and conducting responsible fuel management, this forestry project qualifies for the exemption and aims to create a more resilient and healthier forest ecosystem.
See Attachment 2

Contact Person: *Rhealynn Ravarra* ***Title:*** *Sustainable Agriculture Project Manager*

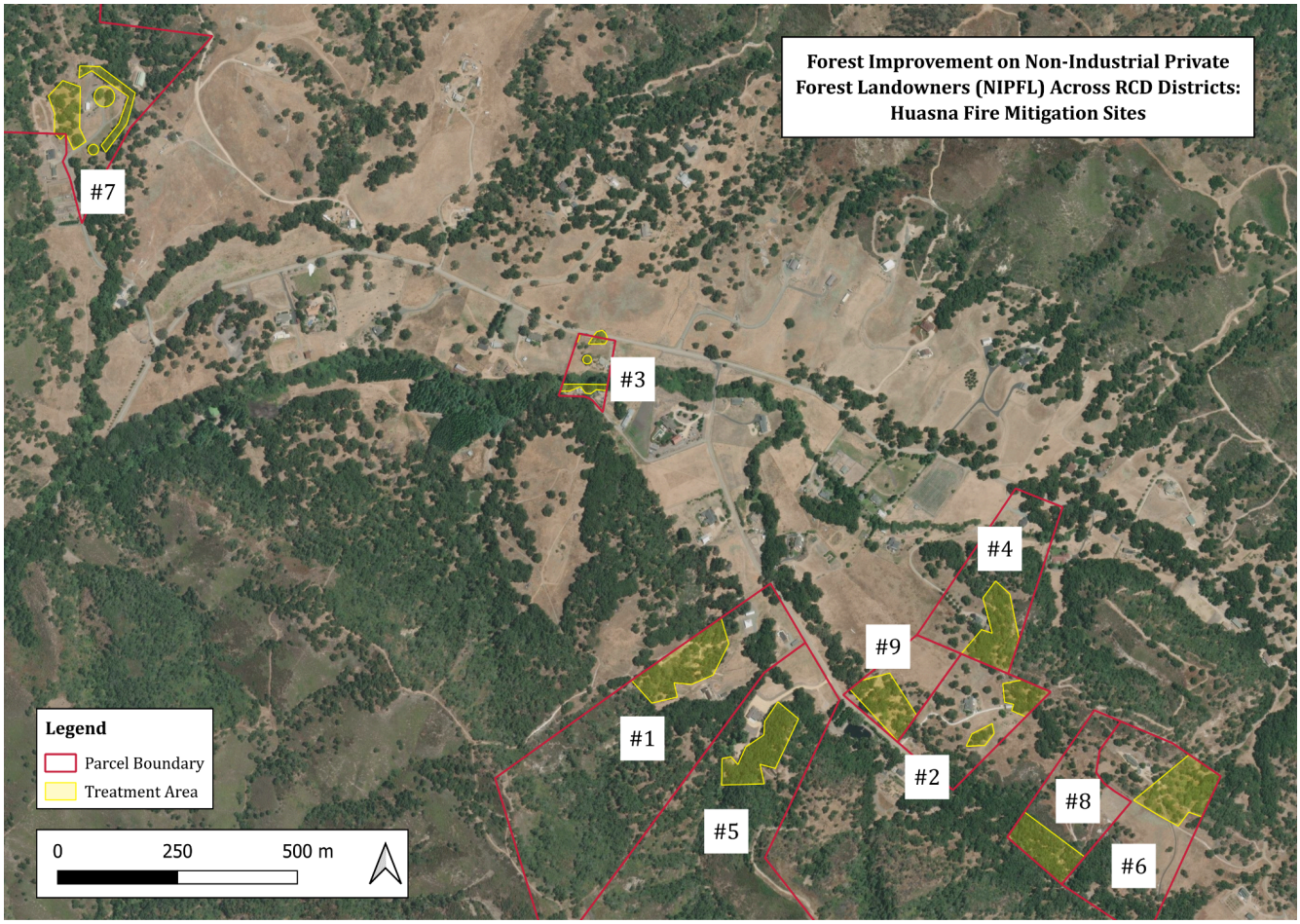


7/15/2025

Signature *Date*

*Date received for filing with OPR:*_____

ATTACHMENT 1.



Treatment Area Total: 24.13

Site 1: 7790 Mary Hall Rd, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420





Site 2: 7979 Mary Hall Rd, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420





Site 3: 7680 Huasna Rd, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420





Site 4: 8350 Huasna Rd, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420





Site 5: 7850 Mary Hall Rd, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420





Site 6: 8045 Mary Hall Rd, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420





Site 7: 35°08'27.5"N 120°27'05.6"W





Site 8: 35°07'36.9"N 120°25'46.8"W





Site 9: 7909 Mary Hall Rd, Arroyo Grande, CA 93420





ATTACHMENT 2.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION		
Project Applicant: Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District		
Project Name: CAL FIRE Forest Improvement on Non-Industrial Private Forest Landowners (NIPFL): Huasna, Arroyo Grande		
Lead Agency: Coastal San Luis Resource Conservation District		
Description: The purpose of the project is to implement forest improvement practices in the Huasna valley in Arroyo Grande to improve the longevity of stands, and increase fire resilience and climate change adaptation. Improvements include tree pruning, chipping, mastication, and bucking; and other similar or suitable forest improvement practices approved by the lead agency.		
Environmental Setting: The project would occur in an oak woodland located in Arroyo Grande, California.		
Exemption Qualifications	**Applicable Items**	**Supporting Information or Explanations**
Class 4 Minor Land Alteration	X	Minor alterations in the condition of vegetation for the purpose of forestry and fire resilience.
Federal Statutes/Critical Concerns	**Applicable Items**	**Supporting Information or Explanations**
Agricultural Land	NA	The Project will not impact agricultural land.
Air Quality Regulations	NA	Construction of MPs may require the use of equipment for short durations. Due to the small size of the project, it is expected that air quality impacts will be insignificant and not expected to trigger any air quality permit thresholds. The majority of equipment travel will be on paved roads.
Archaeological/Historical	NA	The project will result in minimal to zero ground disturbance. Based on accounts from landowners, no archaeological or historical sites are known to exist in the area. In the unlikely event that an archeological site is found, work will stop immediately until a qualified professional reviews the site.
Coastal Zone	NA	The project site is not within the coastal zone
Endangered Species	X	A review of the California Natural Diversity Database and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service identified a list of potentially sensitive species (See Appendix A). We will mitigate for both federally listed threatened and endangered species (T&E) and their critical habitats within the project area. To address impacts on birds, mitigation measures, such as scheduling work outside the nesting season will be implemented. Additionally, a biologist will monitor insects and amphibians prior to any work on the site. In the event that sensitive species are identified during the field survey, an appropriate biologist will be present during activities to monitor and relocate the species as necessary. If any sensitive species are found, those areas will be flagged and buffered according to the recommended guidelines for the specific species. Activities may also be avoided in those areas to ensure the protection of the identified species. The project will not affect the plant species identified in Appendix A. A field survey will be conducted prior to project installation to identify any sensitive plants on the project site. The project treatment sites are located outside the suitable habitat of sensitive aquatic species identified in Appendix A, ensuring there will be no impact on these species.

Flood Plain	NA	The project will not occur within or impact adjacent floodplains.
National Forest	NA	There is no national forest within the project area.
Wetlands	NA	The project will not impact wetlands.
Wild and Scenic Rivers	NA	There are no wild and scenic rivers within the project area.
Unusual Circumstances	**Applicable Items**	**Supporting Information or Explanations**
Biological Resources	NA	No unusual circumstances (including future activities) resulting in (or which might reasonably result in) significant impacts that threaten the environment.
Cumulative Impacts	NA	
Climate	NA	
Erosion/Sedimentation Control	NA	
Flooding/Drainage	NA	
Geologic/Seismic	NA	
Groundwater	NA	
Growth Inducement	NA	
Health and Safety	NA	
Noise	NA	
Open Space	NA	
Public Services	NA	
Recreation	NA	
Scenic Attributes	NA	
Soils	NA	
Topography	NA	
Toxic/Hazardous Materials	NA	
Water Quality	NA	
Water Supply	NA	

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION FINDINGS

APPLICANT	EXEMPTION CLASS	PROJECT NO.	DATE
Coastal San Luis RCD	Class 4		7/15/25

PROJECT TITLE: CAL FIRE Forest Improvement on Non-Industrial Private Forest Landowners (NIPFL): Huasna, Arroyo Grande

CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION QUALIFICATIONS

1. Is there a reasonable possibility that the project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances?	YES ☐ NO ☒ UNDETERMINED ☐
2. If a Class 4 exemption, will the project involve 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?	YES ☒ NO ☐ NA ☐ UNDETERMINED ☐

FINDING

Based on the preceding findings and attached worksheet, it has been determined that this project is exempt from CEQA (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15304, Class 4).

Environmental Scientist: Rhealynn Ravarra **Signature:** 	**Date: 07/15/2025**

APPENDIX A.

Sensitive Species List

Mammals	Status
Giant Kangaroo Rat, *Dipodomys ingens*	Endangered

Birds	Status
California Condor, *Gymnogyps californianus*	Endangered
California Ridgway's Rail, *Rallus obsoletus obsoletus*	Endangered
Least Bell's Vireo, *Vireo bellii pusillus*	Endangered
Prairie Falcon, *Falco mexicanus*	N/A
Yellow-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus*	Threatened

Reptiles	Status
Southwestern Pond Turtle, *Actinemys pallida*	Proposed Threatened

Amphibians	Status
California Red-legged Frog, *Rana draytonii*	Threatened
Foothill Yellow-legged Frog, *Rana boylii*	Endangered
Western Spadefoot, *Spea hammondii*	Proposed Threatened

Insects	Status
Monarch Butterfly, *Danaus plexippus*	Proposed Threatened

Crustaceans	Status
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp, *Branchinecta lynchi*	Threatened

Plants	Status
California Jewelflower, *Caulanthus californicus*	Endangered
Gambel's Watercress, *Rorippa gambellii*	Endangered
Slender Bush Mallow, *Malacothamnus jonesii var. gracilis*	Rare/Endemic to California
Spreading Navarretia, *Navarretia fossalis*	Threatened