



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Pine Mountain Fuel Break Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Sec. 30, T18N, 12W; Sec. 2-5, 9-11, T17N, R13W; Sec. 25, 27, 33-36, T18N, R13W; Mt. Diablo Base & Meridian	COUNTY	Mendocino
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT ADDRESS	Monica Morris VMP Environmental Scientist 802 North Main Street Fort Bragg, CA 95437	PHONE	707-972-9837

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this 234-acre project is to maintain and expand a 2019 Governor's Priority Project located approximately 4 miles southeast of Willits. This project will maintain and extend a ridgeline fuel break and create a network of roadside shaded fuel breaks designed to reduce wildfire risk, improve egress and support fire suppression activities around Willits and the Pine Mountain community. The existing ridgeline fuel break is approximately 1.1 miles long and lies directly upslope and south and southeast of the Willits Water Plant and Morris Dam in three, disconnected segments. Its width and condition vary, ranging from a 50ft wide shaded fuel break to a 200ft wide non-shaded fuel break. This project will maintain and extend the ridgeline fuel break by 0.6 miles, create a consistent width of 200 feet, and connect it to new roadside shaded fuel breaks. The ridgeline fuel break will be maintained as a non-shaded fuel break, except in areas with steep slopes (>40%) or within watercourse buffer zones. All true oaks >12 DBH will be retained. The 193 acres of roadside shaded fuel breaks will extend up to 50 feet on either side of Middle Road, Old Boy Scout Road (east to Tomki Road), and Willits Watershed Road, and up to 30 feet on Bear Canyon Road and Mariposa Creek Road, depending on vegetation density and landowner permission. Work will be completed primarily using manual methods to remove surface and ladder fuels and small trees. Trees ≤12 inches dbh will be thinned, and larger trees pruned to a 14-foot vertical clearance. Slash will be chipped, masticated, or lop-and-scattered. Logs will be bucked and left on-site. Where appropriate, excavators or skid steers with masticator heads will remain on the roadway and reach into surrounding areas to treat above-ground vegetation. Dead, dying, or hazardous trees of any size that pose a risk to roadways, people, or infrastructure will be removed. The project also includes long-term maintenance of the fuel break and ongoing hazard tree removal as needed.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 § 15304 Minor Alterations to Land
Type/Section: Class 1 § 1662.1 Existing facilities
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- ☐ 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 project fits under portions of Class 4 § 15304 -Minor Alterations to Land and Class 1 § 1662.1 - Existing facilities. As such, CAL FIRE has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, 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. No exceptions apply (Section 15300.2) which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Mendocino Unit, 802 N. Main Street. Fort Bragg, CA 95437.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Signed by:

George Morris III

8/13/2025

George Morris III, Northern Region Chief Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection