Print Form

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Ventura County
Hall of Administration, Main Plaza
800 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura, CA 93009

From: (Public Agency): Ventura County Resource Conservation District
PO Box 147, Somis, CA 93066
(Address)

Project Title: Oak Woodland Conservation (Restoration and Under-story Fuels Reduction)

Project Applicant: Ventura County Prescribed Burn Association

Project Location - Specific:

Quail Springs, Sloan Ranch, Besant Highschool, MRCA Land, RSRPD Land, CSUCI

Project Location - City: Ojai, Simi Valley, and more Project Location - County: Ventura County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Ventura County Prescribed Burn Association (VCPBA) plans to conduct thinning, brushing, chipping, and prescribed burning (pile burning and broadcast burning) across numerous sites in Ventura County. The purpose of this project is to reduce dead woody fuels and certain vegetation growing under mature oak canopy to reduce risk of catastrophic wildfire and fire-harden mature oak trees (primarily Quercus agrifolia, Q. lobata, and Q. john-tuckeri). VCPBA will also be surveying and managing golden spotted oak borer (GSOB). GSOB amplifier trees will be felled and chipped immediately to slow the spread of this non-native invasive beetle. Oak trees that that are minimally infested will be treated with insecticide and/or their bark will be burnt to reduce the spread and proliferation of these high risk beetles. At other project sites, dead vegetation and dead wood will be pile burned. Oak plantings may also occur on some project sites to encourage oak reforestation in non-native invasive plant habitats (particularly Centaurea solstitialis). Ventura County Fire Department (VCFD) will inspect burn units, prior to broadcast and pile burning. VCPBA will acquire burn permits from both VCFD and from Ventura Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD), prior to any prescribed burns. Beneficiaries of this project include residents across Ventura County, particularly in certain areas of Lockwood Valley, Ojai, and Simi Valley.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Ventura County Resource Conservation District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Ventura County Prescribed Burn Association

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Minor alteration to land, Section 15304
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

This project involves minor brushing, thinning, chipping, pile burning, and broadcast burning to improve oak forest health by addressing GSOB and by reducing potential for cambium kill and canopy fire. Chainsaw crews will primarily operate outside of bird nesting season (Sep--Nov). If saw work is conducted within bird nesting season (Feb--Aug), avian biologists will be consulted to prevent a "bird take" and ensure compliance within the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. This project will reduce the risk of fire spread, protecting communities of people and critical ecosystems. No impacts to hazardous or critical resources and no cumulative effects from successive projects will occur. The District finds that this project does not have the potential to significantly degrade environmental factors, such as aesthetics, agriculture/forestry, long-term air quality, biological/cultural/tribal resources, geology/soils, greenhouse gases, hydrology/water quality, land use, minerals, population, public services, recreation, transportation, or utilities and is therefore, categorically CEQA exempt.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Kevin Mason Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (805)-764-5135

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? ▪ Yes ☐ No

Signature: Kevin Mason Date: February 20, 2025 Title: Fire Preparedness Coordinator

▪ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____