

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



State of California
 The Natural Resources Agency
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

PROJECT TITLE	Fremont Fuel Reduction Agreement #5GG23211, funded by the California Wildfire Prevention Grant Program		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Sections 10 and 15, T5S R18E, MDBM	COUNTY	Mariposa
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Brian Mattos	PHONE	(209) 742-1907
ADDRESS	5366 Highway 49 North, Mariposa, CA 95338		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Fremont Fuel Reduction Project is approximately 0.75 miles northwest of the town of Mariposa. This project will treat approximately 66 acres of publicly-owned land adjacent to the John C. Fremont Hospital and the CAL FIRE MMU HQ. Multiple and recent past wildfires have wreaked havoc in Mariposa County; the County has an EXTREME risk of wildfire over the next 30 years. The purpose of the project is to modify the structure and continuity of hazardous fuels via mastication and prescribed burning to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, while protecting local structures/infrastructure and the community of Mariposa.

The Project contains two Class III watercourses which occur on the east side of the project area. The project area vegetation consists of a Gray Pine overstory with a hardwood mid-story component of Live oak, Blue oak and Buckeye. In the understory are shrubs/brush heavy to whitethorn, toyon, and whiteleaf manzanita. Ground vegetation includes poison oak and grasses in openings. Management goals include restoring forest species composition and structure following large scale, stand-replacing disturbance events such as quick-moving fires or slow-moving insect outbreaks and prevention of catastrophic wildfire. The silvicultural strategy is to retain healthy trees – especially the Blue oak - to create a shaded fuelbreak condition with tree crowns spaced for full utilization of available sunlight, water and nutrients. The majority of dead and decadent stands of shrubs/brush and other ladder fuels will be treated. Treatment methods include mastication as the initial treatment and prescribed fire as the maintenance treatment. Once implementation work on the project is completed, the goal is to maintain the treated area into perpetuity under the current CEQA document.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4, §15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- 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

This project fits under the description for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption to CEQA. An environmental review was conducted to confirm that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. This review included an on-the-ground field inspection by a Registered Professional Forester during March, April and May, 2025. A full Archeological Survey Report was prepared by the RPF and approved by Connor Buitenhuis/CAL FIRE Archeologist, in September 2025. In addition, consultation/correspondence was sent via email to representatives of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Regional Water Quality Control Board. No concerns were raised by the RWQCB Agency Representative, and the concerns raised by CDFW Representative were addressed and included in the Environmental Review Report. The Department 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, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/ traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at MMU Unit Headquarters in Mariposa.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

 10/30/2025
 Mike Van Loben Sels, Southern Region Chief Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection