

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: Trinity

From: (Public Agency): Trinity County Resource Conservation District
30 Horseshoe Lane
Weaverville, CA, 96093

(Address)

Project Title: Evans Bar Project

Project Applicant: Trinity County Resource Conservation District

Project Location - Specific:

Trinity County, approximately three miles of south of Junction City.

Project Location - City: Junction City Project Location - County: Trinity

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) is acting as CEQA Lead Agency for the Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC), who plans to implement manual thinning and prescribed burning activities in the 80-acre Evans Bar project area. The primary objectives of the Evans Bar Project are 1) restore the historical fire regime and 2) implement fuels treatment that will reduce stand densities and modify wildfire behavior. Fuel treatments will include hand thinning and prescribed fire.

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

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: The Watershed Research and Training Center

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: Class 4 15304 Minor Alterations to Land
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

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. The project involves removal of small diameter understory trees and brush species to reduce the vertical and horizontal continuity of forest fuels. The trees being removed are in a suppressed state and are not considered healthy. The entire project area has been evaluated by an RPF and a qualified wildlife biologist. Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been incorporated into the project design. The project will have no significant environmental impacts to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, Tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. An archaeological survey and report was completed for this project in fall 2025. All resources will be protected as directed by the professional archaeologist in the Evans Bar Confidential Archaeology Letter. No substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources shall occur. Field review confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by TCRCD is kept on file at 30 Horseshoe Lane, Weaverville, CA 96093.

Lead Agency

Contact Person: Kelly Sheen Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (530) 623-6004

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: Kelly D Sheen Digitally signed by Kelly D Sheen
Date: 2025.12.24 12:42:32 -08'00' Date: 12/24/2025 Title: Executive Director

■ 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: _____



Notice of Exemption

Trinity County Resource Conservation District

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PROJECT TITLE	Evans Bar Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	The project is located within Trinity County approximately three miles south of Junction City. T33N R10W, Section 32 (Mount Diablo Base & Meridian)	COUNTY	Trinity
LEAD AGENCY	Trinity County Resource Conservation District		
CONTACT	Dylan Kirkley, EC Program Manager – dkirkley@tcrd.net		
ADDRESS	P.O Box 1450, Weaverville, CA 96093	PHONE	530-623-6004

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Trinity County Resource Conservation District (TCRCD) is acting as CEQA Lead Agency for the Watershed Research and Training Center (WRTC), who plans to implement manual thinning and prescribed burning activities in the 80-acre Evans Bar project area. The primary objectives of the Evans Bar Project are 1) restore the historical fire regime and 2) implement fuels treatment that will reduce stand densities and modify wildfire behavior. Fuel treatments will include hand thinning and prescribed fire. Hand thinning will remove suppressed trees (less than 10" DBH) and brush/shrubs in strategic locations. No snags >10" DBH may be felled unless they pose an immediate risk to structures or personnel. All species may be thinned, and the residual materials will be treated by piling and burning and/or lop and scatter. All prescribed burning will be completed under a prescribed fire burn plan, following all required permits and laws.

The property has a variety of vegetation types due to its varying topography, aspects and geology types. These vegetation types include 1) a strip of riparian vegetation on the western boundary where the property borders the Trinity River, 2) roughly 10 acres of open meadows dominated by annual grasses, 3) another approximately 10 acres of mature second growth mixed conifer/hardwood stand (Douglas fir and ponderosa pine in the overstory with occasional black oaks and madrone in the mid to lower canopy), and 4) eventually transitioning into white oak woodlands with encroaching conifer and manzanita scrub in the higher elevation on the east side.

The physical actions in the project consist of:

Hand Thinning (with chainsaws): Up to 80 acres of the project area will be hand thinned with chainsaws to remove suppressed trees less than 10" DBH and brush/shrubs in strategic locations to reduce fire intensities and protect residual trees. No snags >10" DBH may be felled unless they pose an immediate risk to structures or personnel. Thinned material will be treated by piling and/or lop and scatter. Hand piles will be compact and constructed in areas where burning can be safely controlled. Lopped and scattered material will be pulled at least 3' away from residual trees.

Prescribed Burning – Pile Burning: Up to 80 acres of the project area will be pile burned. Pile burning treatments would pile biomass from manual treatments using hand crews and burn the material using drip torches, propane torches, leaf blowers, water trucks, hand tools, etc. Pile burning will mainly occur in areas with little to no live overstory in "open canopy gaps". Pile burning will occur when burn windows permit and will generally occur on slopes less than 50% to reduce the risk of roll-out.

Prescribed Burning – Broadcast Burning: Up to 80 acres of the project area will be broadcast burned. Broadcast burning will be used to reduce fuels over larger areas. Burns will be designed to consume 50% - 90% of cured grass and/or thatch in grasslands/oak savannahs; in hardwood-dominated woodlands reduce litter, 1hr, and 10hr fuels by 20 – 90% and limit mature hardwood mortality to less than 10%; in mixed conifer reduce litter, 1-hour and 10-hour fuels from 20 – 90% immediately post-fire and limit mature tree mortality to less than 10%. Understory burns would be implemented according to the environmental prescription set out in the respective burn plan. A burn plan defines the desired objectives, fuel types, slopes, aspect, environmental prescription and expected fire behavior, staffing levels, and containment lines and strategies. The overall prescription is designed to safely contain the fire within the planned fire perimeter. Broadcast burns may occur in fall, winter,

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spring and early summer, but are most likely to occur in fall and spring during conditions that are conducive to burning targeted fuels. Broadcast burning may require the construction of new control hand lines or enhancement of existing control hand lines. The ground disturbance associated with these activities includes hand construction of approximately 2'-4' wide scrape fire lines down to mineral soil. No dozer lines or use of heavy equipment for line construction is proposed. Broadcast burning ignition will be conducted with handheld devices such as drip torches, fusees, propane torches, pitch sticks, Very pistols (i.e., flare guns), or other ignition devices. Equipment could include a truck with a water trailer, ATVs, UTVs, hand tools, leaf blowers, weed trimmers, drip torches, and chainsaws.

All the vegetation types found within the project area are fire adapted, requiring frequent fire to maintain vigor and health. This project helps actively manage the land in a way that is more consistent with historical disturbance regimes, thus creating a landscape that is more resilient and resistant to high intensity wildfires. Maintenance treatments are estimated to occur approximately every 3-10 years but may occur as needed, depending on vegetative regrowth and the availability of funding and resources to conduct treatment.

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

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. The project involves removal of small diameter understory trees and brush species to reduce the vertical and horizontal continuity of forest fuels. The trees being removed are in a suppressed state and are not considered healthy. The entire project area has been evaluated by an RPF and a qualified wildlife biologist. Standard Best Management Practices (BMPs) have been incorporated into the project design. The project will have no significant environmental impacts to aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation, Tribal cultural resources, utilities and service systems, and wildfire. An archaeological survey and report was completed for this project in fall 2025. All resources will be protected as directed by the professional archaeologist in the Evans Bar Confidential Archaeology Letter. No substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources shall occur. Field review confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by TCRCD is kept on file at 30 Horseshoe Lane, Weaverville, CA 96093.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

X Kelly D Sheen Digitally signed by Kelly D Sheen
Date: 2025.12.24 12:43:09 -08'00'

Kelly Sheen
Executive Director

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