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: Modoc

From: (Public Agency): California Department of Fish and Wildlife
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
(Address)

Project Title: Surprise Valley Wildlife Area Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project

Project Applicant: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Project Location - Specific:

Surprise Valley Wildlife Area, west side of Surprise Valley Road, ~5 miles north of Eagl

Project Location - City: Eagleville Project Location - County: Modoc

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

CDFW is conducting hazardous fuels reduction at Surprise Valley Wildlife Area including removal of juniper trees and dead and decadent brush, and light fuels reduction (grasses, forbs, rabbit rush, juniper seedlings), through the use of hand tools (chainsaws, weedeaters, loppers etc.), mechanical equipment (masticators, chippers), prescribed or cultural fire, pile burning, herbicide, and/or prescribed herbivory.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Fish and Wildlife

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: 15304, Class 4, and 15308, Class 8
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees. The project is not expected to result in the taking of rare, endangered, or threatened plant or animal species, or significant erosion or sedimentation to surface waters. The project does not involve construction activities and will not result in environmental degradation.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Teresa Spade Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 530-319-1345

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: DocuSigned by: Teresa Spade 6CE71BF455854D9... Date: 07/09/2026 Title: Environmental Scientist

▪ 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: 07/09/2026

State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Region 1-Northern
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director

ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
Surprise Valley Wildlife Area Hazardous Fuel Reduction Project

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), through its Region 1 Timberland Conservation and Fire Resiliency Program, has approved a fire resiliency project for the purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)(Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) that includes fuel reduction treatments to reduce the potential for detrimental wildfire impacts. CDFW is conducting hazardous fuels reduction at Surprise Valley Wildlife Area including removal of juniper trees and dead and decadent brush, and light fuels reduction (grasses, forbs, rabbit rush, juniper seedlings), through the use of hand tools (chainsaws, weedeaters, loppers etc.), mechanical equipment (masticators, chippers), prescribed or cultural fire, pile burning, herbicide, and/or prescribed herbivory. Treatments will occur throughout the 460 acre property at various times as needed.

CDFW approved the Project, relying on the Class 4 and Class 8 Categorical Exemptions, respectively, (CEQA Guidelines, §§ 15304, 15308.)[1] Each exemption is relevant to the project as discussed below.

Class 4 Categorical Exemption

CDFW finds the Project to be exempt pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15304, the exemption for "Minor Alterations to Land." Class 4, as relevant here, consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water and/or vegetation, which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agriculture purposes. The project falls within the class because it involves minor public alterations to land consisting of alterations in the condition of vegetation. The project does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees.

Class 8 Categorical Exemption

CDFW finds the Project to be exempt pursuant to CEQA guidelines Section 15308, the exemption for "Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment." Class 8, as relevant here, consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, or protection of the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. Construction activities and relaxation of standards allowing environmental degradation are not included in this exemption. The project falls within the class because CDFW is a regulatory agency authorized by

[1] The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with Section 15000.

California Fish and Game Code and its mission (ie § 712.1. (a)(1) and (2)), to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife and plant resources and their habitats, including but not limited to the management of departmental lands and facilities. CDFW is additionally tasked by the Governor's Forest Management Task Force in the comprehensive strategy outlined in the 2021 document, "California's Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan," to expand forest management on state-owned lands, to improve resilience against wildfires and other impacts of climate change, and assist Calfire and other state agencies in scaling up fuel treatments to the target of 500,000 acres annually. Fire resiliency activities proposed are for the protection of the environment to reduce the potential for devastating catastrophic wildfire through fuel load reduction. The project does not include proposed construction, or relaxation of environmental standards that would result in environmental degradation.