NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO:	County Clerk Shasta County, CA 1450 Court Street, Suite 108 Redding, Ca 96001	**FROM:**	Resource Conservation District of Tehama County 202 Walnut Street Red Bluff, CA 96080

PROJECT TITLE	Rock Creek Road Fuel Break (307-6)
PROJECT LOCATION	**PROJECT LOCATION** – Manton, Ca **COUNTY -** Shasta
DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE, AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT	The project is located on privately owned Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) timberlands in southern Shasta County, California, along Rock Creek Road beginning at the intersection with Forwards Mill Road and extending approximately 0.55 miles northeast to approximately 300 feet west of Carobe Lake. The treatment area extends up to approximately 650 feet from the roadway edge, where necessary to establish an effective shaded fuel break while avoiding sensitive resources. The total treatment area will not exceed 30 acres. The project location is shown on the attached project map and can be further identified by the applicable APNs, Township/Range/Section, and/or geographic coordinates included in the project administrative record. Existing vegetation consists primarily of mixed conifer forest with intermixed hardwoods, dense brush fields, regenerating conifers, and accumulations of dead and down woody material resulting from decades of fire exclusion and previous disturbance. Surface and ladder fuels provide vertical fuel continuity capable of supporting high-intensity wildfire and crown fire spread adjacent to Rock Creek Road. Terrain consists of gently rolling to moderately steep forested slopes typical of the Manton area with generally stable volcanic-derived soils. Mechanical mastication will primarily target shrubs, brush, small trees, and ladder fuels. Removal of trees will generally be limited to suppressed or non-merchantable conifers and hardwoods less than 10 inches DBH. Approximately 60-80 percent of understory vegetation within treatment areas may be reduced while retaining healthy mature overstory trees to maintain canopy cover, long-term forest health, wildlife habitat, and shaded fuel break characteristics. The Rock Creek Road Fuel Break Project consists of mechanical fuels reduction activities intended to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels and improve wildfire resilience adjacent to Rock Creek Road within the Manton Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Total Project area not to exceed 30 acres. Project activities include: • Mechanical mastication of understory vegetation. • Removal of non-merchantable conifer and hardwood trees less than ten (10) inches diameter at breast height (DBH). • Removal of brush, ladder fuels, and downed woody material. • Retention of healthy mature overstory trees to maintain a shaded fuel break. • Distribution of masticated material across the treatment area with average slash depths not exceeding twelve (12) inches. • Minor incidental use of existing access routes necessary to conduct treatment activities.

No commercial timber harvest is proposed. No road construction, road widening, grading, stream alteration, or permanent land conversion is proposed. The project is intended to reduce wildfire intensity, improve firefighter access, enhance secondary emergency ingress and egress for the Manton community, and protect nearby residences, utility infrastructure, and forest resources. Construction is anticipated to commence during Fall 2026.

Mandatory Project Design Features and Environmental Protection Measure

The following measures are mandatory components of project implementation and shall be incorporated into all project activities. Compliance with these measures is required to avoid or minimize potential impacts to biological, cultural, water quality, and other environmental resources. Supporting biological reviews, cultural resource reviews, Sierra Pacific Industries operational requirements, applicable resource maps, and associated documentation shall be maintained in the project administrative record:

- Compliance with applicable California Forest Practice Rules.
- Compliance with Sierra Pacific Industries operational requirements.
- Mechanical operations shall occur only during suitable soil moisture conditions to minimize rutting, compaction, and erosion.
- Protection of Class I, II, and III watercourses in accordance with applicable regulations.
- Avoidance of wetlands, meadows, springs, and other sensitive habitats.
- Retention of healthy overstory trees.
- Immediate stabilization of disturbed soils where necessary.
- Suspension of work if protected wildlife species or active nests are encountered until appropriate resource protection measures are implemented.
- All applicable resource protection buffers identified during biological or cultural resource review shall be flagged or otherwise identified in the field prior to treatment.
- Equipment shall remain outside excluded resource areas shown on project maps.
- Previously undiscovered cultural resources shall immediately halt work in the vicinity until appropriately evaluated.

Prior to implementation, the project shall undergo an appropriate cultural resources review consistent with applicable state and federal requirements, as appropriate for project funding and permitting. Existing cultural resource information, project maps, and available records shall be reviewed to identify known cultural resources within or adjacent to the project area. Sierra Pacific Industries resource protection requirements and any recommended avoidance measures shall be incorporated into project implementation. Documentation of the cultural resources review, applicable resource maps, and correspondence shall be maintained in the project administrative record.

LEAD AGENCY	Resource Conservation District of Tehama County (RCDTC)		
CONTACT PERSON	Drew Barnhart	**PHONE**	(916) 525 5510
ADDRESS	202 Walnut Street, Suite D Red Bluff, CA 96080		

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption — Type/Section: CEQA Guidelines §15304 – Class 4 (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 project consists of minor alterations to land through selective vegetation management to reduce wildfire hazards. Activities are limited to understory mastication, removal of small-diameter trees and ladder fuels, and associated fuel reduction activities. No commercial timber harvesting, land conversion, or expansion of existing facilities is proposed. Project activities occur within an existing managed forest landscape adjacent to Rock Creek Road on Sierra Pacific Industries timberlands. The project does not involve expansion of an existing use or conversion of land to another use, but rather maintains and improves forest conditions through hazardous fuels reduction. Although treatment widths may extend up to approximately 650 feet from portions of the roadway, treatment is limited to selective fuels reduction within an existing managed forest landscape. Existing forest cover, mature overstory trees, natural topography, drainage patterns, and land use will remain unchanged. The work consists of minor vegetation management intended solely to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels and therefore qualifies as a minor alteration to land under CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 (Class 4)

Findings Supporting the Exemption

RCDTC finds that:

- The project consists solely of minor vegetation management activities intended to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels.
- Treatments are limited to understory vegetation, brush, downed woody material, and non-merchantable trees less than ten inches DBH.
- Healthy mature overstory trees will remain in place to maintain canopy cover and long-term forest health.
- No commercial timber harvesting or land conversion is proposed.
- No stream crossings, grading, excavation, channel modification, or permanent infrastructure will occur.
- Applicable California Forest Practice Rules will minimize potential effects to soils, water quality, biological resources, and other environmental resources.
- The project improves public safety through wildfire hazard reduction and enhancement of emergency access.
- Treatments are selective in nature and retain the existing forest canopy, topography, drainage features, and overall land use.
- The project does not constitute broad land clearing or forest conversion but rather improves existing forest conditions through targeted hazardous fuels reduction within an existing managed forest.

Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2, RCDTC has determined that none of the exceptions to the use of a categorical exemption apply. Specifically:

- Cumulative Impacts: The project has been evaluated in conjunction with nearby past, current, and reasonably foreseeable fuels reduction activities, including Sierra Pacific Industries forest management, previous roadside fuels reduction and shaded fuel break projects along Rock Creek Road, adjacent CAL FIRE wildfire prevention projects, and routine vegetation management conducted by public agencies and utilities within the Manton Wildland-Urban

Interface. Collectively, these activities are intended to reduce hazardous wildfire fuels while maintaining forest cover and ecosystem function. The proposed project represents a small-scale (not to exceed 30 acres), selective fuels reduction treatment that retains the existing mature overstory, avoids land conversion, and does not involve commercial timber harvest, road construction, or permanent disturbance. Rather than creating cumulatively significant environmental impacts, the project complements previous and planned fuels management efforts by improving landscape connectivity of existing fuel breaks and enhancing wildfire resilience. Accordingly, the project will not contribute to a cumulatively considerable environmental impact.

- No unusual circumstances exist that would create a reasonable possibility of a significant environmental effect.
- The project is not located on a hazardous waste site listed pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.
- The project will not damage scenic resources within a designated State Scenic Highway.
- The project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

IF FILED BY APPLICANT:

1. Attached certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project? x yes

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SIGNATURE:_____ **DATE:** ___7/15/2026_____

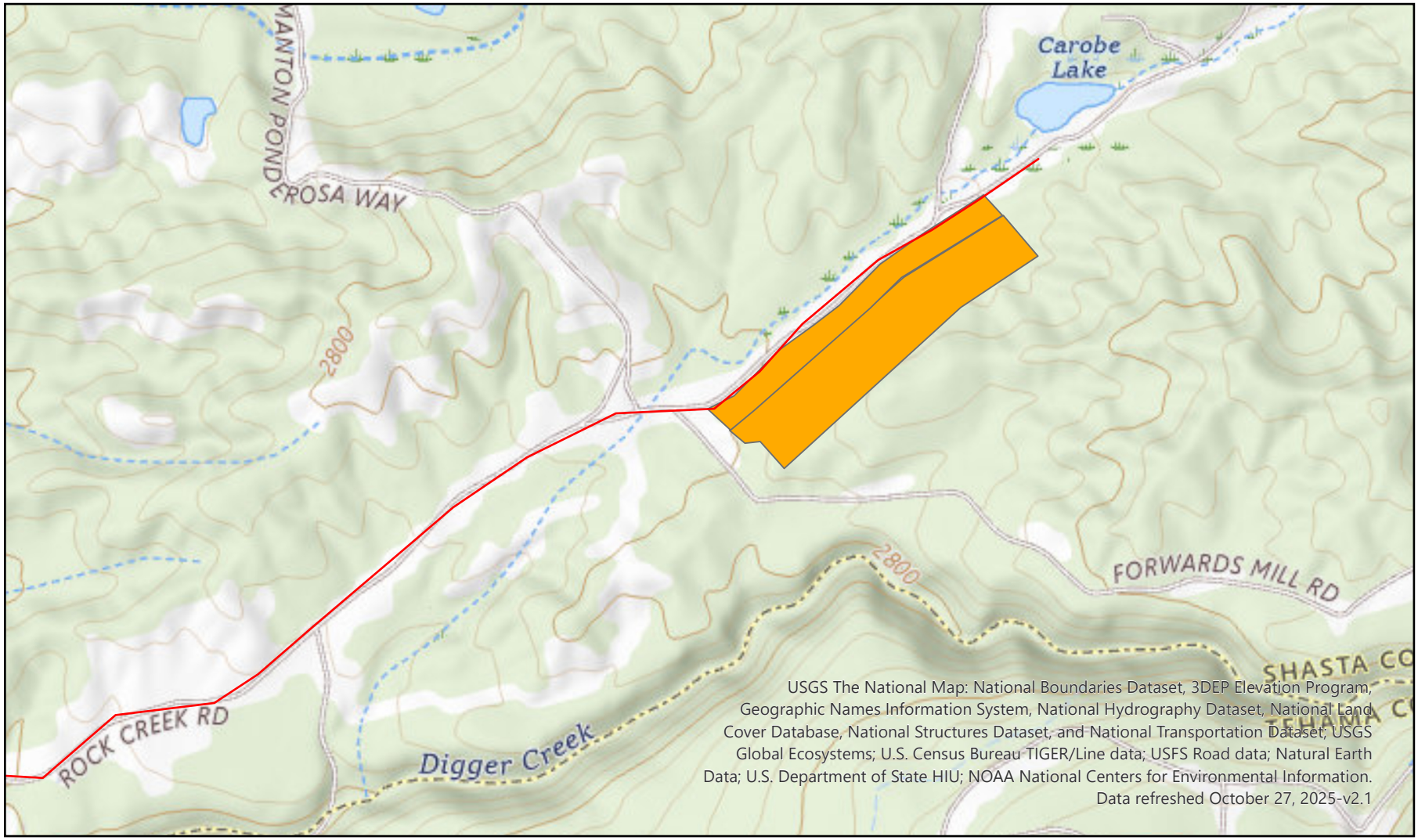
Title: Resource Conservation District of Tehama County
Project Manager II, Drew H. Barnhart

X Signed by Lead Agency
□ Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR:

Rock Creek Road - Fuel Break

RCDTC Project # 307-6



N

PGE_Distribution_Line

307-6 Project Area

0 0.17 0.35 0.7 Miles

SCALE: 1:14,457

RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT OF TEHAMA COUNTY