

ATTACHMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION Upper Mill Creek Forest Health Project

Project Location (Specific)

The Project is located on the Grouse Meadow Unit of the Slinkard/ Little Antelope Wildlife Area in Mono County, State of California. The Project is located 6 miles south of the community of Walker in portions of Sections 29 and 30, in Township 7 North, Range 23 East, Mount Diablo Base Meridian. It is mapped on the Chris Flat 7.5 Minute USGS topographic quadrangle. Geographic coordinates: ~ 38.42535, -119.48885.

Project Description

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), through its Inland Deserts Region Lands Program, has approved the Upper Mill Creek Forest Health Project for purposes of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) that includes fuel reduction activities within the riparian corridor of Mill Creek, and associated tributaries, as it passes through the Grouse Meadow Unit of the Slinkard-Little Antelope Wildlife Area , thereby improving wildlife habitat, forest health, and fire resiliency (collectively, the Project). The fuels reduction activities will occur within approximately 60 acres of the 280-acre Grouse Meadow Unit. Work will be completed by hand crews. CDFW approved the Project relying on the Class 4, 7, and 8 Categorical Exemptions, respectively. (CEQA Guidelines, §§ section 15304, section 15307, and section 15308.) Each exemption relevant to the Project is 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 alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. The Project falls within the class because it involves minor vegetation management activities on an officially designated wildlife area that will result in improvement of habitat and reduce wildfire risk.

Class 7 Categorical Exemption

CDFW finds the Project to be exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines section 15307, the exemption for "Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources". Class 7, as relevant here, consists of actions taken by regulatory agencies, as authorized by state law or local ordinance, to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. The Project falls within the class because it involves the enhancement of forested areas and reduces the potential for high severity wildfire impacts to these natural resources.

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. The Project falls within the class because it involves the enhancement of forested areas and reduces the potential for high severity wildfire impacts to these environmental resources.