



State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Three Creeks Riparian Resilience Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Township 10S, Range 34E, Section 21, Mountain Diablo Meridian	COUNTY	Inyo
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	David Haas		
ADDRESS	3800 N. Sierra Way San Bernardino, CA 92405	PHONE	(909) 881-6955

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Identified in the 2025 CAL FIRE San Bernardino-Inyo-Mono Unit Fire Plan and Inyo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, this project aims to reduce wildfire risk to the community situated at the confluence of Birch and Tinnemaha Creeks by treating strategic areas of riparian habitat and adjacent uplands on LADWP and Owens Valley Indian Water Commission property. Riparian treatments will include manual vegetation removal and subsequent herbicide application if necessary. Adjacent upland areas will also be treated to increase effectiveness and may include mechanical treatment. Work will occur in dry channels and next to wetted channels, with no removal of material from wetted areas. Large, downed material will be retained where feasible but may be redistributed to reduce fuel densities. Fuels will be modified via prioritized removal of non-native/invasive species including trees, dead and/or downed material including dead material from live individuals, and dead/dying/diseased/otherwise hazardous native trees of all sizes. Removal of non-listed native understory and upland species, and healthy native trees <12" DBH, may occur to meet above retention objectives. Retained trees will be limbed 6 ft. except where roads require additional clearance. Ground-based equipment may include skid steers, chippers, curtain burners, and hauling trucks/trailers, for treatment of manually cut material, as well as vehicles and fire apparatus to support crews and burning operations. Low ground pressure equipment (<10 PSI) will be utilized to the extent feasible. Only existing permanent roads and watercourse crossings will be used. Depending on site conditions and timing, cut material will be lopped and scattered, chipped, burned in piles or a curtain burner, or hauled away.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☐ Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class
- ☐ Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- ☐ Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- ☒ Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(4); 15269(c))
- ☐ Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Pursuant to CEQA Section 21080(b)(4) and CEQA Guidelines Section 15269 (c) a project is exempt from CEQA if it is a "specific action necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency." On March 1, 2025, Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist due to catastrophic wildfire risks created by forest conditions and found that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exist within the State of California due to these conditions. Pursuant to the Emergency Proclamation, a critical fuels reduction project qualifies for CEQA exemption if: (1) it has as one of its primary objectives at least one of the following activities: (a) removal of hazardous, dead, and/or dying trees; (b) removal of vegetation for the creation of strategic fuel breaks as identified by approved fire prevention plans, including without limitation CAL FIRE Unit Fire Plans or Community Wildfire Preparedness Plans; (c) removal of vegetation for community defensible space; (d) removal of vegetation along roadways, highways, and freeways for the creation of safer ingress and egress routes for the public and responders and to reduce roadside ignitions; (e) removal of vegetation using cultural traditional ecological knowledge for cultural burning and/or prescribed fire treatments for fuels reduction; or (f) maintenance of previously-established fuel breaks or fuels modification projects; (2) has been approved by the appropriate Agency Secretary, or their designee, as being eligible to be conducted under the suspension; and (3) is conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Protection Plan (EPP). This project's primary purpose is consistent with (1)(b) above, has been approved by the Secretary of Natural Resources as being eligible to be conducted under the suspension, and will be conducted in accordance with the EPP. The action is therefore exempt from CEQA. Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. Documentation of the environmental review completed by CAL FIRE is kept on file at 3800 N. Sierra Way, San Bernardino, CA 92405.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

DocuSigned by:

Mike Van Loben Sels

8/24/2026

Mike van Loben Sels, Southern Region Chief Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection