

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research (OPR)
P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812

County Clerk-Recorder
County of Monterey
168 W. Alisal Street, 1st Floor
Salinas, CA 93901

From (Public Agency):

Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District (MPRPD)
P.O. Box 223340
Carmel, CA 93922-3340

FILED

AUG 21 2026

XOCHITL MARINA CAMACHO
MONTEREY COUNTY CLERK
DEPUTY

2026-0125

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Garland Meadow Prescribed Burn Project (EPP Project No.: cd69cd86-85e3-4a28-80ef-465047576544)

Project Applicant: Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District

Project Location – Specific: Garland Ranch Regional Park, 700 West Carmel Valley Road, Carmel Valley, CA 93924.
Approximate center of project area: 36.494230, -121.763383. Total treatment area 102 acres.

Project Location – City: Unincorporated community of Carmel Valley, CA 93924

Project Location – County: Monterey

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT

The District will conduct prescribed burning on approximately 102 acres (90 acres broadcast burning and 12 acres pile burning) within Garland Ranch Regional Park (GRRP) to reduce horizontal and vertical wildfire fuel continuity, facilitate nutrient cycling, improve soil health and water infiltration, promote recruitment of fire tolerant native perennial grass species, reduce dominance and seed bank of non-native annual grasses, reduce encroachment of brush species which threaten type conversion of grasslands, and protect and restore habitat for native wildlife species. Within the project boundary, approximately 41.5 acres have been identified for manual understory thinning and 11.5 acres have been identified for mechanical mowing to establish and improve control lines prior to burning.

MPRPD will reduce hazardous fuels through limited mechanical treatment and low intensity broadcast burns in grassland/oak savannas (which are being heavily impacted by brush encroachment) using light-impact methods to protect natural and cultural resources. The existing network of service roads and trails will be used to establish control lines around designated burn units. Horizontal fuels (fine grasses, shrubs and surface debris) will be mowed and/or hand cut to improve control lines around broadcast burn plots before burning operations. Prior to burning, vertical brush and tree understory will be reduced by manually thinning small stems (<8in DBH). Trees greater than 8 inches DBH will be limbed up to 8 feet in height, while preserving approximately 60-80% of the canopy and retaining legacy trees. Work will follow established SOD hygiene BMPs, and no woody material will be removed from site. Treatment will prioritize dead, diseased, and invasive material. Within Broadcast burn units, cut material will be either chipped in place or lopped and scattered within the project area prior to burning. Within the pile burning unit, slash will be hand piled (6ft x 6ft x 4ft), cured through the dry season, and burned in the wet season. If the piles are not able to be burned due to weather or permitting issues, then piles may be chipped in place or lopped and scattered at a later date. Larger logs will be laid flat to the ground be retained for habitat and to promote nutrient recycling. Rare and sensitive species will not be treated, and prescriptions may be reduced in sensitive habitats.

Equipment is limited to hand and light powered tools, 4x4 trucks, UTVs, and trailered chippers, which will remain on established roads and service road/trails. No new roads will be constructed and no significant ground disturbance will occur.

The purpose of the Project is to promote grassland and oak savanna health, reduce the risk of a catastrophic wildfire originating in or spreading through the Park, improve firefighter access within the park's backcountry, and to provide increased protection between the backcountry and the community. Beneficiaries are the residents and businesses of the Carmel Valley community and the surrounding Monterey Peninsula communities, emergency responders, users of District lands, and the habitat resources of the Park itself.

APPROVING AND IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District

EXEMPT STATUS (CHECK ONE)

- ☐ Ministerial (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); Guidelines § 15268)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); Guidelines § 15269(a))
- ☒ **Emergency Project (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); Guidelines § 15269(b), (c))**
- ☐ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____
- ☐ Statutory Exemption. State code number: _____

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT

Under Public Resources Code section 21080(b)(4) and CEQA Guidelines section 15269(c), a specific action necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency is not subject to CEQA.

On March 1, 2025, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency to exist within the State of California due to the catastrophic wildfire risks created by forest conditions across the state, finding under Government Code section 8558(b) that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons and property exist as a result of those conditions. Paragraph 2 of the Proclamation suspends state statutes, rules, regulations, and requirements within the jurisdiction of the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) and the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) — expressly including CEQA, Public Resources Code sections 21000 et seq. — to the extent necessary for expediting critical fuels reduction projects. Executive Order N-38-25, signed December 31, 2025, extended the Proclamation. Under the Proclamation, only projects submitted by May 1, 2026 are eligible for a secretarial suspension authorization.

Under the Proclamation, a critical fuels reduction project may proceed under the suspension where (1) it includes as a primary objective at least one of the activities listed in Paragraph 4 of the Proclamation; (2) the appropriate Agency Secretary, or the Secretary's designee, has determined that the project is eligible to be conducted under the suspension (Paragraph 3); and (3) the project is carried out in accordance with the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan (EPP) (Paragraph 5).

The Project satisfies each condition:

1. Primary objectives. The Project has as primary objectives the removal of hazardous, dead, and/or dying trees; the removal of vegetation for the creation of strategic fuel breaks as identified by approved fire prevention plans; the removal of vegetation for community defensible space; the removal of vegetation along roadways for the creation of safer ingress and egress routes for the public and responders and to reduce roadside ignitions; and the maintenance of previously established fuel breaks or fuels modification projects — Paragraph 4(a), (b), (c), (d), and (f) of the Proclamation.
2. Secretarial suspension authorization. CalEPA issued a Secretarial Suspension Authorization for the Project on April 2, 2026, signed by Alana Mathews, Deputy Secretary for Law Enforcement and General Counsel, as designee of the Secretary for Environmental Protection. CNRA issued its Secretarial Suspension Authorization on April 3,

2026, signed by Keali'i Bright, Undersecretary, as designee of the Secretary for Natural Resources. Both authorizations find that the Project was submitted by May 1, 2026, that it has a permissible primary objective, and that issuance serves the purpose of expediting critical fuels reduction activities while protecting public health and the environment. The CNRA authorization expressly suspends Public Resources Code sections 21000–21189.91 (CEQA) and all implementing regulations as to the Project.

3. Environmental Protection Plan. The Project will be conducted in conformance with the Statewide Fuels Reduction Environmental Protection Plan (EPP), as required by the Secretarial Suspension Authorizations.

Consistent with the EPP, the Project involves manual and mechanical treatment and prescribed burning only; no new road construction, no watercourse crossings, and no significant ground disturbance. District staff have reviewed the Project and identified no circumstances that would preclude reliance on this exemption.

The suspension applies only to state statutes, rules, and regulations. The District will comply with all applicable local and federal requirements, including the federal Endangered Species Act as to any federally listed species, for which the District will coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Documentation supporting this determination — the Proclamation, Executive Order N-38-25, the EPP, the District's suspension application and project maps, the CalEPA and CNRA Secretarial Suspension Authorizations, and the CDFW Biological Resources Advisories — is on file with the District's Planning and Conservation Management Department at 4860 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, CA 93923 and is available for public review. Project details may also be found online at the CalEPA/CNRA/CALFIRE [Request to Suspend State Statutes and Regulations Application and Dashboard](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/44774e7d2cb1438ca901a38793e2fdec/page/Approved-Projects-Dashboard) (<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/44774e7d2cb1438ca901a38793e2fdec/page/Approved-Projects-Dashboard>).

LEAD AGENCY CONTACT

Contact Person: Jake Smith, Planning & Conservation Program Manager

Telephone: 831-372-3196 x116

Email: jsmith@mprpd.org

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

Not applicable. The District is both the public agency approving the Project and the agency carrying it out.

Signature Eric Morgan

Date 08-21-2026

Signature

Date

Print Name and Title: Eric Morgan, General Manager

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Public Resources Code sections 21083 and 21110. Reference: Public Resources Code sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1.

Date Received for Filing: _____

Aerial Imagery_Project Boundary



12/18/2025

- Rx Burn Units
- MPRPD_LandHoldings_Simplified
- World Imagery

- Low Resolution 15m Imagery
- High Resolution 60cm Imagery
- High Resolution 30cm Imagery

Citations

4.8m Resolution Metadata

1:17,164



0 0.1 0.2 0.35 0.4 mi

0 0.17 0.35 0.7 km

Vendor, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Joshua Carpenter
MPRPD