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

FILED
AUG 21 2026
XOCHITL MARINA CAMACHO
MONTEREY COUNTY CLERK
DEPUTY
2026-0128

From (Public Agency):

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

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Guerrin's Ranch Fuels Reduction Project (EPP Project No.: 461fa164-fcea-403a-87be-249a668d92db)

Project Applicant: Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District

Project Location – Specific: Palo Corona Regional Park, 4860 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel, CA 93923. Coordinates of approximate center of project area: 36.492889, -121.902396. Total treatment area 13.2 acres.

Project Location – City: Carmel (and adjacent unincorporated area)

Project Location – County: Monterey

DESCRIPTION OF NATURE, PURPOSE AND BENEFICIARIES OF PROJECT

The District will conduct mechanical fuels treatment on approximately 13.2 acres of enclosed pastural paddock within the backcountry of Palo Corona Regional Park to reduce hazardous fuel loading, reduce encroachment of highly flammable invasive French Broom (*Genista monspessulana*), promote grassland ecosystem health and recruitment of fire tolerant native perennial grasses, and improve fire fighter access.

Mechanical treatment is limited to surface level mastication and repetitive mowing, with a target height of 6 inches, preferentially targeting Genista during its growing season to reduce fuel load and limit reseeding potential. Encroaching coyote brush may also be targeted, but with emphasis on creating and maintaining a functional mosaic of habit with gaps of at least twice the shrub height (i.e. ~20ft between shrubs or groups). Mowing will be conducted using a combination of light tractors, masticators, and trailered wood-chippers. Touch-up mowing may also be conducted using a combination of weed-trimers, chainsaws, pole-saws, loppers, brush-cutters, etc. In strategic cases, around sensitive sites, genista may be removed by the root using weed wrenches. A minimal amount of manual thinning may occur around individual native trees to create vertical separation of fuels up to 8ft. Mowed woody debris will be either masticated, chipped, or lopped and scattered in place. Woody debris will be treated within the season to reduce fuel loading. Slash/chip depth is not to exceed 4 inches.

The purpose of the Project is to reduce the risk of a catastrophic wildfire originating in or spreading through the Park, to improve emergency ingress and egress along a previously identified fire road, to reduce roadside ignition risk, and to promote grassland health. Beneficiaries are the residents and businesses of Carmel 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 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(b), (c), (d), and (f) of the Proclamation.

2. Secretarial suspension authorization. CalEPA issued a Secretarial Suspension Authorization for the Project on March 18, 2026, signed by Yana Garcia, Secretary for Environmental Protection. CNRA issued its Secretarial Suspension Authorization on April 7, 2026, signed by Wade Crowfoot, 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 surface level mechanical treatment 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).

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.

Eric Morgan 08-21-2026

Signature Date

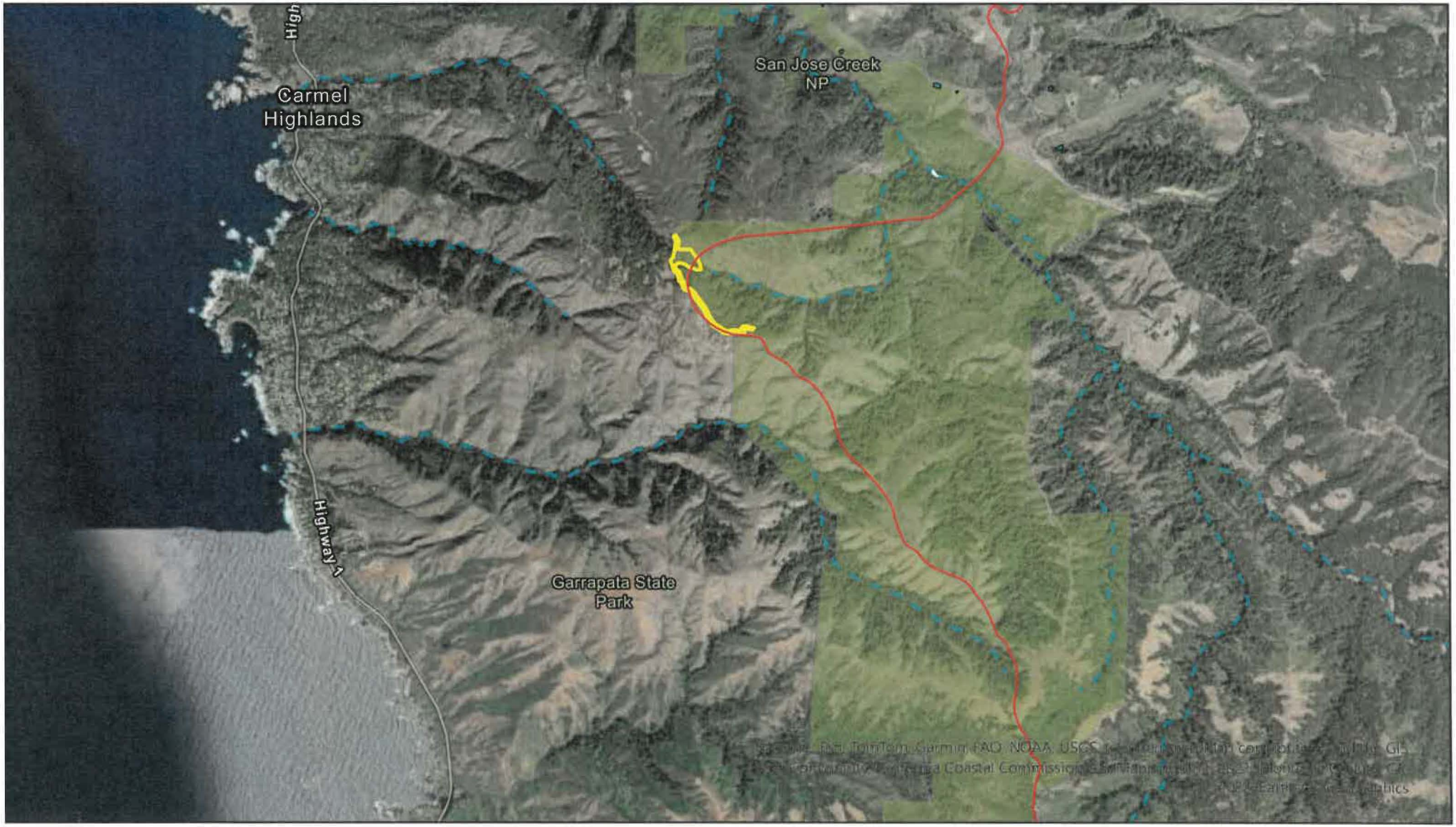
Print Name and Title: Eric Morgan, General Manager

☒ 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: _____

Guerrin's Ranch Fuels Reduction Project



Legend

- Ponds
- Wetlands
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- UnderstoryThiningArea
- Fuels Treatment Boundary
- MPRPD_LandHoldings_S
- Coastal_Zone_Boundary

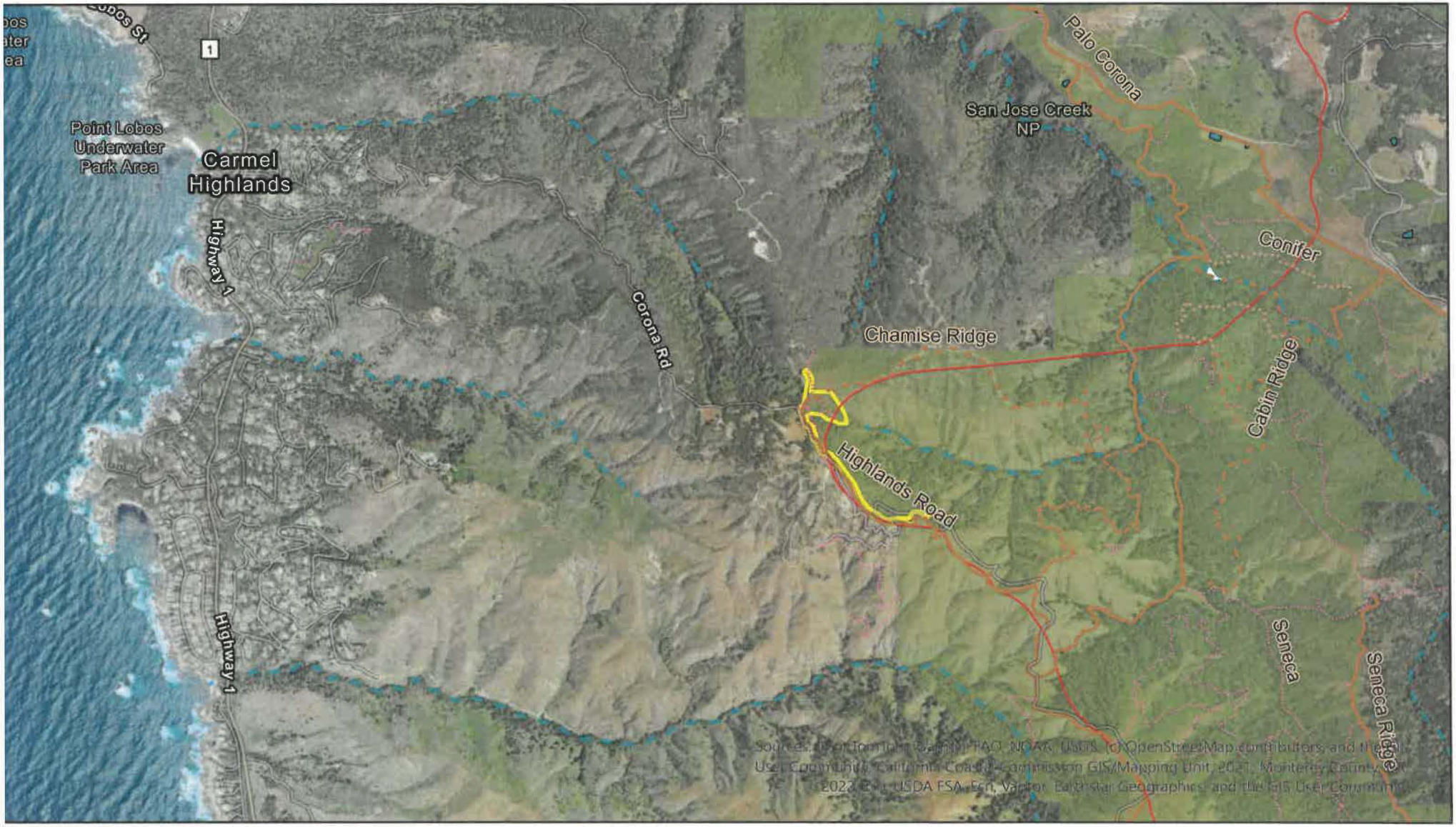
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N

Author: Joshua Carpenter

Copywrite: MPRPD 2025

Guerrin's Ranch Fuels Reduction Project



Legend

MPRPD_Roads_Trai
- Car/ Light-Duty SUV
- Pickup Truck / SUV
- RTV
- ATV
- No Vehicles
- Other
- Ponds
- Wetlands
- Perennial Stream
- Intermittent Stream
- UnderstoryThiningArea
- Fuels Treatment Boundary
- MPRPD_LandHoldings_S
- Coastal_Zone_Boundary

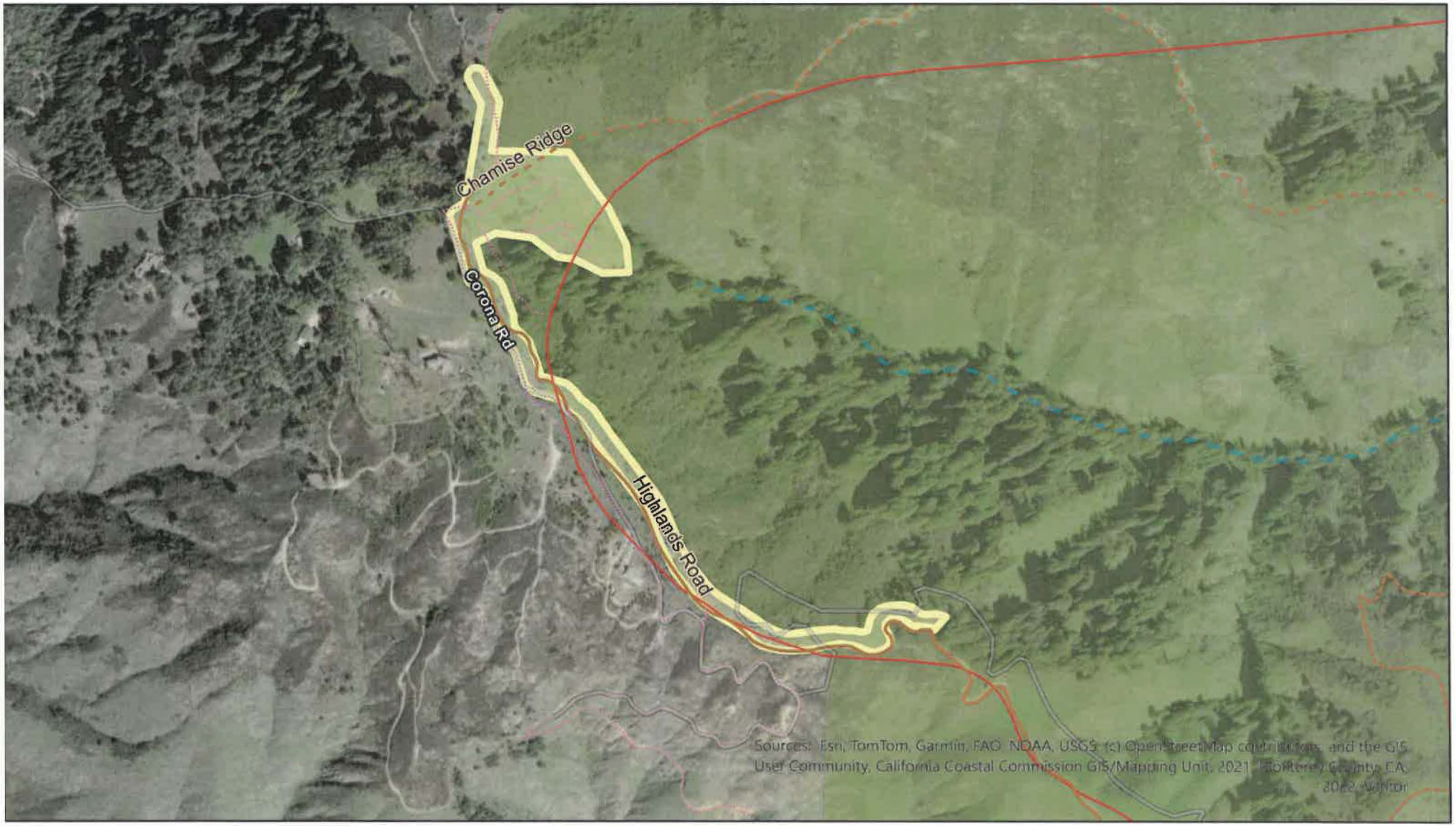
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N

Author: Joshua Carpenter

Copywrite: MPRPD 2025

Guerrin's Ranch Fuels Reduction Project



Legend

MPRPD_Roads_Trai
- Car/ Light-Duty SUV
- Pickup Truck / SUV
- RTV
- ATV
- No Vehicles
- Other

- Wetlands
- Intermittent Stream
- MowingArea
- UnderstoryThiningArea

- Fuels Treatment Boundary
- MPRPD_LandHoldings_S
- Coastal_Zone_Boundary

0 0.07 0.15 0.3 Miles

N

Author: Joshua Carpenter
Copywrite: MPRPD 2025