Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk
County of: Sonoma

From: (Public Agency): Camp Meeker Recreation and Park District
PO Box 461, Camp Meeker, CA 95419
(Address)

Project Title: Hampton Fire Road Shaded Fuel Break Project

Project Applicant: Camp Meeker Recreation and Park District

Project Location - Specific:
Hampton Road, Camp Meeker, CA 95419

Project Location - City: Camp Meeker, CA Project Location - County: Sonoma

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
An existing shaded fuel break project along Hampton Fire Road will be expanded in fall 2026. The project borders the southern edge of the densely forested community of Camp Meeker. Project area slopes are moderate (20-40 degrees). Vegetation is

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Camp Meeker Recreation and Park District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Bryan Almquist

Exempt Status: **(check one):**

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: 15304 Minor Alteration to Land
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:
The project is exempt because the planned activities meet the definition of " forestry " in PRC§753, and have been reviewed and approved by a Registered Professional Forester in consultation with experts from other pertinent fields who have attested that the activities proposed in this project will only have the potential for at

Lead Agency
Contact Person: Bryan Almquist Area Code/Telephone/Extension: 707-872-5198

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

Signature: _____ Date: 10/22/2026 Title: Vice President

■ Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

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

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

Note: This report form is intended for use by Resource Conservation District (RCD) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a notice of exemption document for a proposed vegetation management project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable categorical exemptions, this report presents RCD's review for possible exceptions that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by the RCD associated with the project.

Author:	Adriana Stagnaro
Title:	Forestry Project Manager
Address:	Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District, 2776 Sullivan Road, Sebastopol, CA 95472
Phone:	707-823-5244 x 13
Email:	Adriana@goldridgercd.org

Project Name:	Hampton Fire Road Shaded Fuel Break Project
Project Number:	
County:	Sonoma
Acres:	<20
Legal Location:	Hampton Fire Road just south of Hampton Road, Camp Meeker, CA, 95419

Name of USGS 7.5'Quad Map(s):

☒Project Vicinity Map Attached ☒Project Location Map Attached ☒Photos Attached

Other Public Agency Review or Permit Required:

Would the project result in:	YES	NO
Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)	☐	☒
Conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)	☐	☒
Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)	☐	☒
Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)	☐	☒
Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)	☐	☒
Other:	☐	☒

Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:

Project Description and Environmental Setting (describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):

An existing shaded fuel break project along Hampton Fire Road will be expanded in fall 2026. The project borders the southern edge of the densely forested community of Camp Meeker. Project area slopes are moderate (20-40 degrees). Vegetation is primarily a coast redwood alliance forest. Work includes removing invasive French broom (Genista monspessulana), thinning the understory, removing snags, and pile burning. Work will be completed along an existing walking path at the east end of Hampton Road and along the road itself. The project will avoid impacts to sensitive resources, retain mature trees, and support long-term forest health and fire resilience. The purpose of the project is to reduce wildfire fuels and increase public safety. The residents of Camp Meeker will benefit from this project.

Environmental Impact Analysis

Aesthetics

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Project activities propose to cut small trees and brush, and further treat downed woody material via lop/scatter, chipping/masticating, or pile burning. The removal of these trees and subsequent treatment of woody material will not substantially change the character of the pre-operations forested condition.

Agriculture and Forest Resources

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

☒ Yes ☐ No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds, if necessary.

☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?

☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?

☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Trees felled during the project will be relatively small diameter, not to exceed 10" diameter at breast height, which generally make up the understory of the existing stand of forested vegetation. Trees of this size can be expected to be replaced via natural regeneration, unless the removal of trees/vegetation are for the purposes of preventing the conversion of native oak woodlands to other ecosystem types. The removal of these trees and subsequent treatment of woody material will not substantially change the character of the pre-operations forested condition.

Air Quality

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ Yes ☐ No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Any burning of vegetation/debris which result from actions taken during this project will be done so under the authority and permitting requirements of the local Air Quality Control District and/or CALFIRE.

Biological Resources

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ Yes ☐ No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a current California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) review completed? Results discussed below:
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The CNDDB was queried for the project area. It identified one threatened species that could be significantly impacted by the project activities: the Sonoma tree vole (Arborimus pomo). A biological survey of the treatment area was completed on October 12, 2026 by Jennifer Michaud, Swift Biological. The survey assessed existing habitat conditions for the Sonoma tree vole and evaluated potential habitat trees for the species. No Sonoma tree vole nests (either active or inactive), feeding signs, or individuals were detected within the treatment area or along immediately adjacent canopy trees. Based on the observed conditions and wildlife observations, no additional surveys or protection measures for the Sonoma tree vole are recommended for this fall 2026 treatment. A follow-up preconstruction survey is recommended if the project is delayed by more than 6 months from the original survey date. The full biological report is attached to this form.

Nesting birds will be protected by working outside of the nesting season (February 1 – August 31) and by retaining any trees that contain a nest. If work is delayed to a time during the nesting bird season, this analysis will need to be revised.

Cultural Resources

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ Yes ☒ No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:
☐ Yes ☒ No Was a CAL FIRE staff or contract archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:
☐ Yes ☒ No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project effect any historic, archaeological or tribal cultural resources?
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Pile burning is the only ground disturbing activity in this project; all piles will be burned on the fire road, an area that already receives disturbance. Pile burning is not expected to have a significant impact on any cultural resources.

Geology and Soils

☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
☐ Yes ☒ No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

Removal of live vegetation will unavoidably generate the emission of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) through the use of internal-combustion engines in vehicles and equipment used on site; the direct act of cutting live vegetation will also inevitably produce GHG emissions when that vegetative matter is either burned or decomposes over time. The material in this project is not of commercial size, and does not have value as a product which may be preserved via maintenance, such as lumber or furniture. However, the treated vegetation within this project represents a relatively small amount of the stored carbon potential on site, and the treatment of this vegetation will aid in the long term stability of carbon stored in live residual vegetation and in organic soil matter found on the site. The removal of this vegetation will also increase the available soil nutrients and water to residual trees, which will generally increase the growth rates of these trees, which will help to increase the rate at which CO2 is sequestered. There are no feasible market alternatives such as biomass energy generation for material from this project to go to as a way to offset the initial GHG emission from the project, but in the context of the current forest health crisis, the emissions anticipated from this project are not significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Hydrology and Water Quality

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Treatments will not take place within 75-100 feet of Class I or II watercourses. Equipment use will be limited to established permanent roads or pre-designated crossings of dry Class III watercourses. Treatments occurring within 75-100 feet of watercourses will be limited to hand crews, and the small diameter vegetation removed from the site will not remove significant amounts of overstory canopy; because of this there will be no significant impact to water quality in either temperature or sediment load.

Land Use and Planning

☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Mineral Resources

☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Noise

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Crews will be asked to keep operations between the hours of 8am and 5pm

Population and Housing

☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Public Services

☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Recreation
☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Transportation and Traffic
☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Utilities and Service Systems
☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

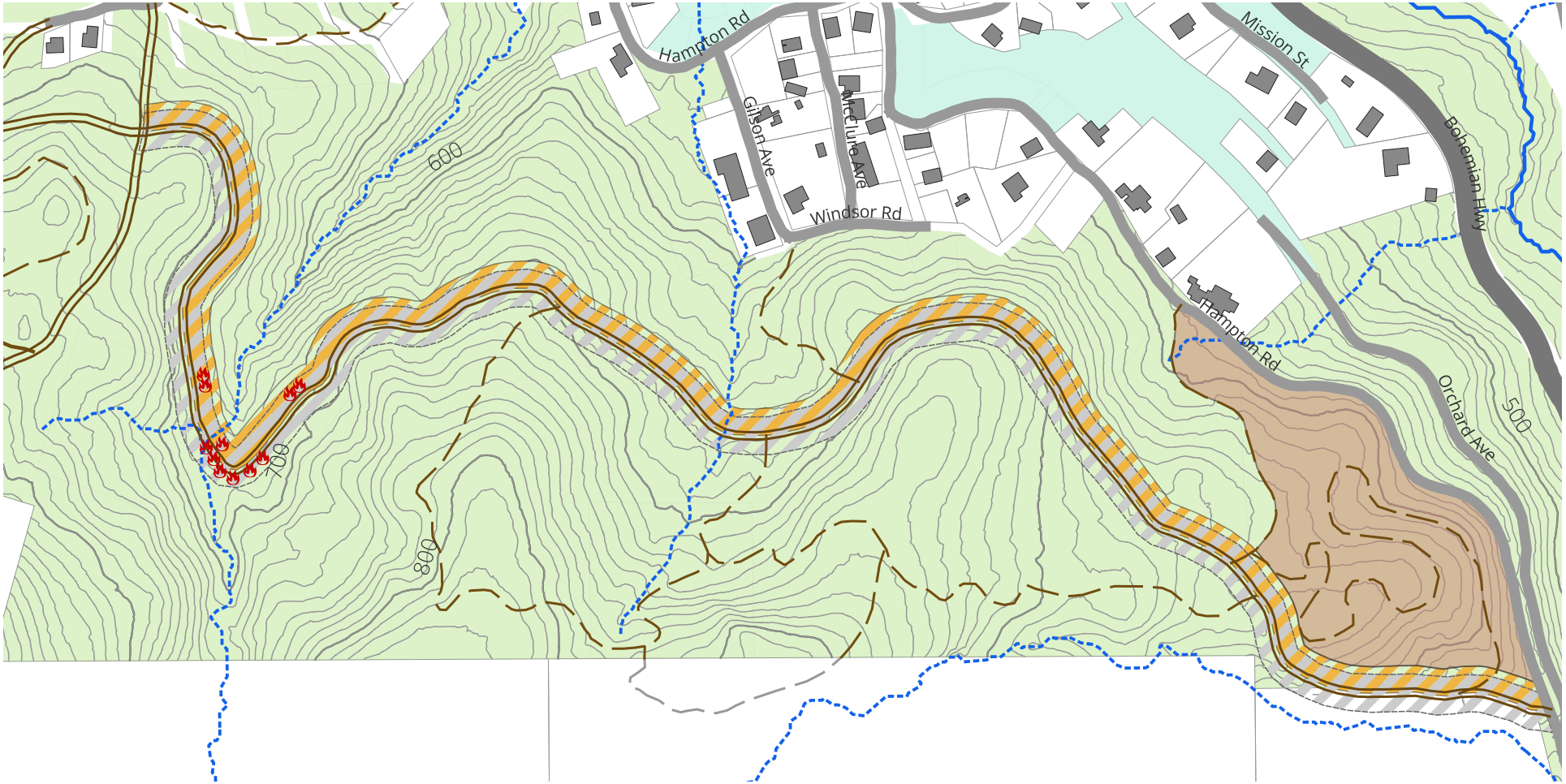
Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:
None. Operations will be conducted in accordance with typical operating procedures.

Mandatory Findings of Significance:	**YES**	**NO**
(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒
(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects.	☐	☒
(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒

Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):
PRC §15304 Minor Alterations to Land- *Consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes.*
The planned activities meet the definition of "forestry" in PRC§753, and have been reviewed and approved by a Registered Professional Forester in consultation with experts from other pertinent fields who have attested that the activities proposed in this project will have the potential for at most impacts that are less than significant to the environment, having provided adequate measures for avoidance of sensitive environmental resources.

Conclusion:
☒ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, RCD has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. RCD considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A notice of exemption will be filed at the State Clearinghouse.

☐ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, RCD has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes



Hampton Fire Road Shaded Fuel Break - Supplemental Scope of Work

Legend

Burn Pile

Forest Health Treatments

- Initial treatment area
- Increase depth of initial treatment
- Improve existing trail system

Parcels

- Camp Meeker Rec & Park Dist.
- Camp Meeker Forest Open Space
- Private Ownership

0 250 500 '

SWIFT BIOLOGICAL

October 12, 2026

Ray Lunardi, President
Amy Beilharz, Safer West County
Occidental Community Services District
3821 Bohemian Highway
Occidental, CA 95465

Subject: Preconstruction Sonoma Tree Vole Survey
Hampton Fire Road Shaded Fuel Break Project, Camp Meeker

The Occidental Community Services District is completing a shaded fuel break project along Hampton Fire Road in fall 2026. Work includes removing invasive French broom (*Genista monspessulana*), thinning the understory, removing snags, and pile burning. Work will be completed along an existing walking path at the east end of Hampton Road and along the road itself. The County of Sonoma is requiring a survey for the Sonoma tree vole (*Arborimus pomo*) before issuing project permits. The Occidental Community Services District retained Swift Biological Consulting LLC (Swift Biological) to complete the survey, and this memo summarizes the results.

Species Account

The Sonoma tree vole is recognized as a California Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). This small arboreal rodent spends nearly its entire life in the canopy of mature forests. Its range includes humid coniferous forests in northwestern California, from Sonoma County north to Del Norte County. It occurs primarily in coniferous forests dominated by Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) or where firs co-occur with coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), Sitka spruce (*Picea sitchensis*), western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), or grand fir (*Abies grandis*). Tree voles eat only Douglas fir and grand fir needles. They eat only a portion of the needle, chewing around the thin resin ducts. They either discard the resin ducts or use them to line their nests. Resin ducts are a primary indicator of this species' presence. Nests are typically built 6 to 150 feet above ground, preferably in tall trees, on outer branches or whorls of limbs against the trunk. Tree voles breed year-round, with peak activity from February to September. The primary predators of tree voles are spotted owls, saw-whet owls, and possibly raccoons.

Methods

A biological survey of the treatment area was completed on October 12, 2026; see the figure below. Jennifer Michaud, owner/biologist of Swift Biological, completed the survey[1]. The survey assessed existing habitat conditions for the Sonoma tree vole and evaluated potential habitat trees for the species. The survey followed the Survey Protocol for the Red Tree Vole (Arborimus

[1] This survey represents Swift Biological's best professional effort to identify all habitat features and special-status species occupying the site at the time of the survey. It should be noted that wildlife observations are dependent on wildlife activity patterns, camouflaging abilities of focal species, timing of survey, and habitat composition. Swift Biological cannot guarantee that special-status wildlife are not present within the project site. Therefore, the project proponent should use caution when working in these sensitive environments.

longicaudus; Huff et al. 2012) and the Field Guide to Red Tree Vole Nests (Lesmeiste and Swingle, undated). A protocol survey for Sonoma tree vole has not been developed; given these species' similarities, the above-referenced protocol is widely accepted. The survey evaluated all conifer species within the treatment area and a buffer around it and identified suitable habitat trees. All trees were inspected for nest structures, and the ground surrounding the base of suitable trees was examined for tree vole signs (e.g., cuttings, resin duct piles, and fecal pellets).

Survey conditions were clear and sunny, with no cloud cover or wind. The air temperature ranged from 54- 65°F at 10:00 am. Visibility was good. The survey was conducted under suitable weather conditions to assess habitat suitability and species presence. The survey included walking at a slow, ambling pace throughout the treatment area, stopping to scan all trees and appropriate habitats, and observing animal presence. No trees were climbed as part of the survey. During the survey, all animal species were identified by sight or sound. Binoculars (Swarovski 10x42) were used during the survey. The list of observed animal species is included below. Representative photographs of the project site and habitat features were taken; see below.

Existing Site Conditions and Findings

The treatment area consists primarily of mapped occurrences of the *Sequoia sempervirens* Alliance, with a small section mapped as *Pseudotsuga menziesii* Alliance along the eastern edge, and an *Umbellularia californica* stand within the lower trail area along Hampton Road (Sonoma Veg Map 2013[2]). The mature mixed conifer–hardwood forest is dominated by a coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) canopy, with additional Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) canopy. The midstory, where present, contains a diverse hardwood layer of Pacific madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*), tanoak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), and bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), over a shrub and herbaceous understory of evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*), western sword fern (*Polystichum munitum*), and modesty (*Whipplea modesta*). Coast redwoods average 18 to 36 inches in diameter at breast height (DBH), and Douglas-fir trees average 12 to 30 inches.

While the Sonoma tree vole predominantly nests in mature Douglas-firs, individuals also nest in coast redwoods, though less often, when interspersed within mixed conifer stands. Because Douglas-fir needles serve as the primary forage source and nest-building material for the species in Sonoma County, the presence of several mature Douglas-firs within the treatment area provides suitable habitat, particularly along the eastern edge. All suitable canopy trees within the treatment area and a surrounding buffer were systematically evaluated for potential nest structures, resin ducts, cuttings, and fecal pellets. Suitable trees exhibiting complex branch whorls, platform limbs, or hollows were closely examined. No Sonoma tree vole nests (either active or inactive), feeding signs, or individuals were detected within the treatment area or along immediately adjacent

[2] Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and Sonoma County Water Agency (District and SCWA). 2013. Sonoma County Vegetation Mapping and LIDAR Program (Sonoma Veg Map). GIS files from http://sonomavegmap.org/data-downloads/.

canopy trees. The only arboreal nest structure detected was a small western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*) nest located within a California bay tree outside of the work area.

Conclusions

Suitable Sonoma tree vole habitat is present within the treatment area; however, this species was not observed during the survey. The treatment area supports many Douglas fir trees of suitable size, the primary nest tree and food source for the Sonoma tree vole. Based on the observed conditions and wildlife observations, no additional surveys or protection measures for the Sonoma tree vole are recommended for this fall 2026 treatment. A follow-up preconstruction survey is recommended if the project is delayed by more than 6 months from the original survey date.

This concludes Swift Biological's biological survey and reporting requirements for the project. If you have any questions, please contact me at 707-217-7179 or via email at swiftbiological@gmail.com.

Jennifer Michaud, Owner/Biologist
Swift Biological Consulting LLC

Wildlife Observations

Acorn Woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*)
American Robin (*Turdus migratorius*)
Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*)
Brown Creeper (*Certhia americana*)
Chestnut-backed Chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*)
Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*)
Golden-crowned Kinglet (*Regulus satrapa*)
Hairy Woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*)
Hutton's Vireo (*Vireo huttoni*)
Northern Flicker (*Colaptes auratus*)
Pacific Wren (*Troglodytes pacificus*)
Pileated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus pileatus*)
Pygmy Nuthatch (*Sitta pygmaea*)
Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*)
Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*)
Ruby-crowned Kinglet (*Corthylio calendula*)
Spotted Towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*)
Steller's Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri*)
Western Gray Squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*)

Photographs – October 12, 2026



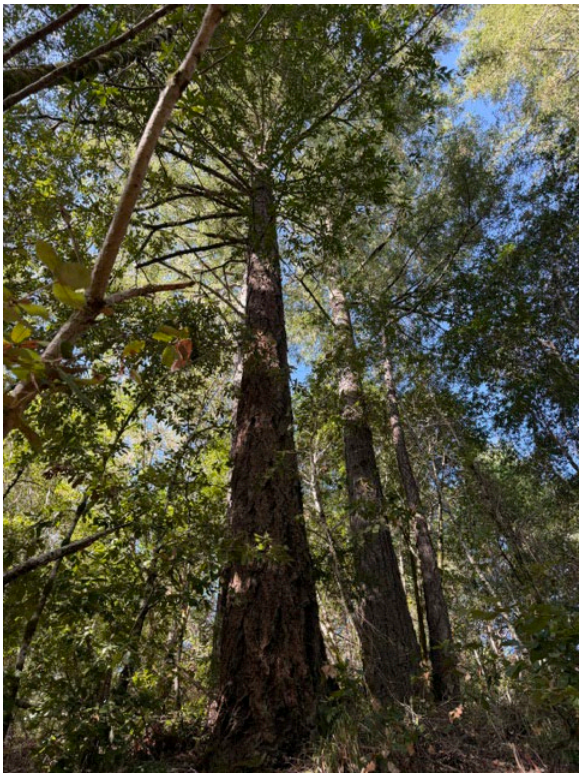
Redwood forest along Hampton Road (above) and burn piles (below)

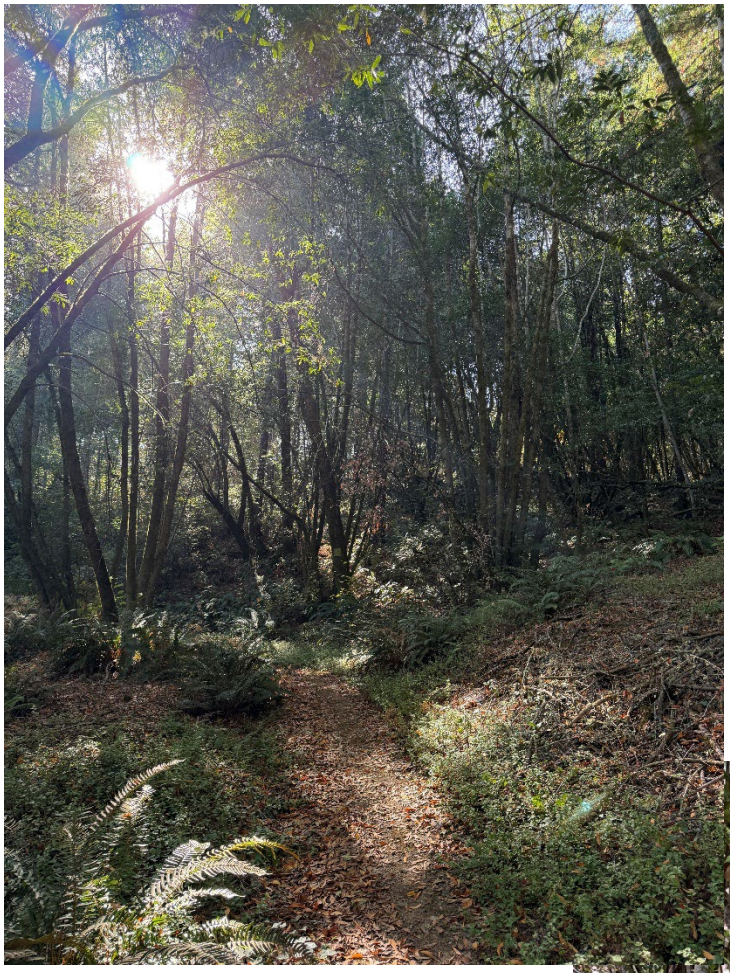




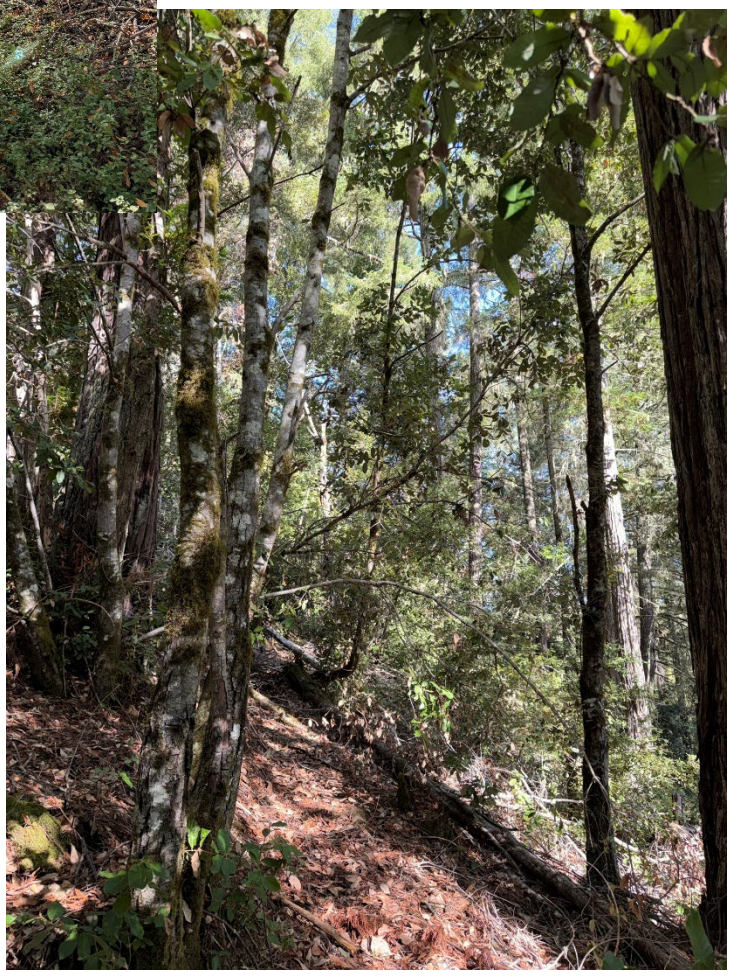
Redwood and Douglas-fir trees along Hampton Road (above) and
Douglas-fir trees within the treatment area (below)

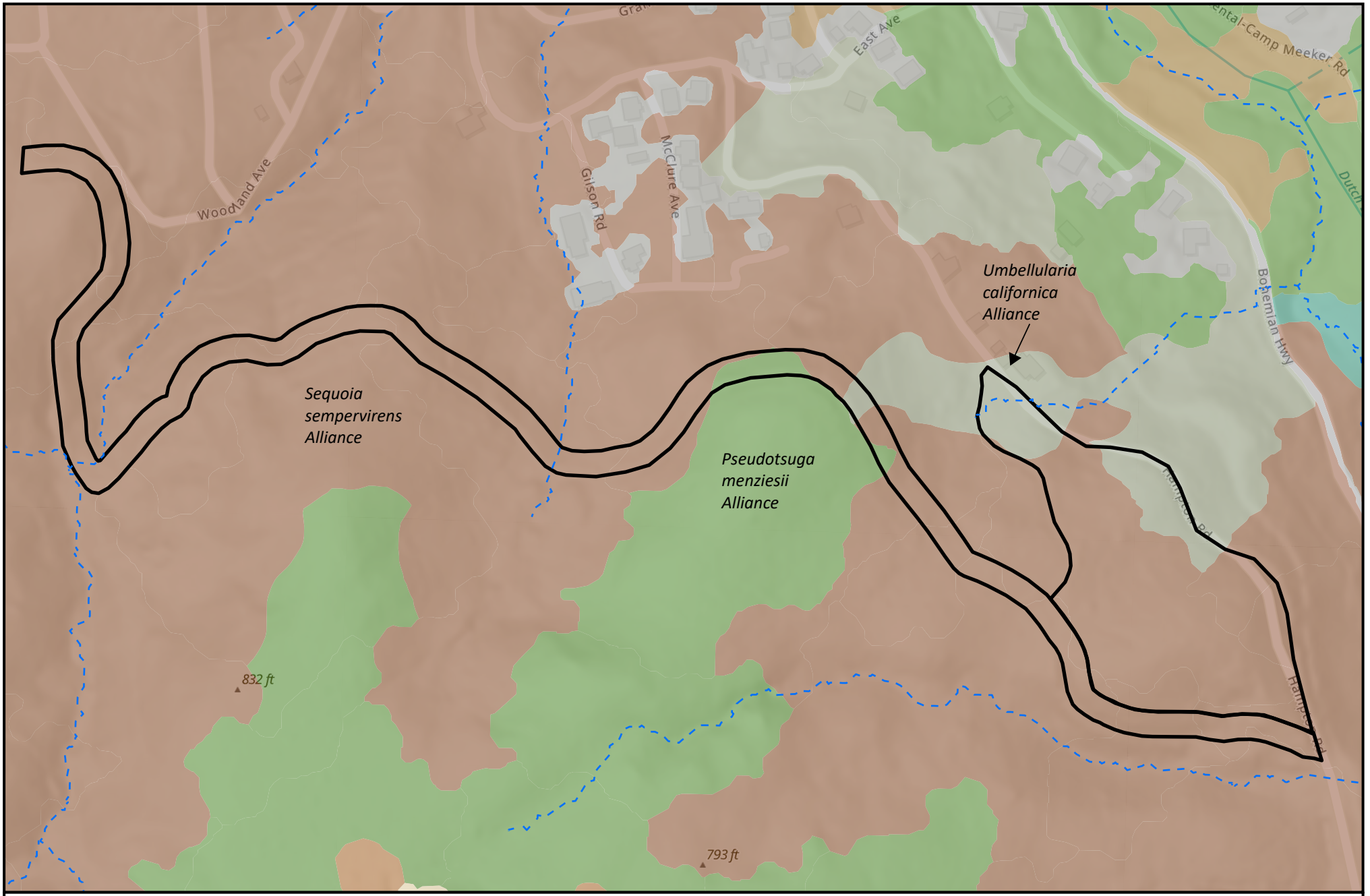






Habitat conditions within the walking path treatment areas





0 80 160 320 480 Feet

Treatment Area

Stream Centerlines

Sonoma Tree Vole Survey Area

Hampton Fire Road Shaded Fuel Break Project

October 2026

SWIFT BIOLOGICAL

Sources: Base Map - ESRI, Vegetation - Sonoma County