

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



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

PROJECT TITLE	Bennett Valley Roadside Fire Break and Shaded Fuel Break		
PROJECT LOCATION	Township 6N, Range 7W, Sections 2 and 11 (38° 23.256, -122° 36.112)	COUNTY	Sonoma
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Megan Scheeline, Forester I		
ADDRESS	CAL FIRE Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit Headquarters 1199 Big Tree Road, St. Helena CA 94574	PHONE	707-967-1428

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is planning maintenance of an existing fire break along Bennett Valley and Old Bennett Ridge Roads to the southeast of the city of Santa Rosa. The Bennett Ridge Community Association has maintained the fire break since 2004 for the improved protection of Bennett Ridge homes. The fire break consists of a strip paralleling the road, approximately six feet wide, where all vegetation has been removed down to bare mineral soil. The purpose of the fire break is to stop or slow a fire that starts near the road, thereby increasing the fire protection of adjacent homes and the uphill Bennett Ridge community. The fire break will be within a roadside shaded fuel break of approximately 11 acres, which will consist of reduction of brush, shrubs, and small trees (less than 6" diameter) to eliminate ladder fuels and lessen flame lengths in the event of a fire. Vegetation will be removed from within the County right of way and continue onto private property to maintain the six-foot wide fire break and extend the shaded fuel break to a distance of up to 50 feet from the edge of pavement. Material treated by the project will be chipped and hauled away. Vegetation along the road varies from open grass to oak woodland with grass and brush understory.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption** Type/Section: Class 4 §15304
Minor Alterations to Land
- Statutory Exemption** (state code section):
- Ministerial** (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency** (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project** (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))
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REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits the description for a Class 4, §15304 – Minor Alterations to Land Categorical Exemption to CEQA. Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The project consists of minor treatments to land and vegetation in the form of fire break maintenance and woodland understory brush and ladder fuel removal. The activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, or sedimentation to surface waters. CAL FIRE staff has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

 7/2/15
Duane Shintaku, Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

