

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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| PROJECT TITLE | Foss Valley Community Perimeter Shaded Fuel Break | | |
| PROJECT LOCATION | Portions of Sections 15, 21, 22 and 27 of, Township 7 North, Range 4 West, Rutherford Quad Map, MDB&M | COUNTY | Napa |
| LEAD AGENCY | California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) | | |
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION The purpose of this shaded fuel break project is to reduce the volume of fuels on the periphery of residences in upper Soda Canyon neighborhood, east of Rector Reservoir and the Silverado Trail, north of Napa, CA. The reduction in ladder fuels and brush continuity in the approximately 100-ft wide fuelbreak will reduce fire intensity and improve the effectiveness of surface fire containment and air tanker drops in the event of a wildfire. The 1.7-mile project will treat areas between those already in a low-fuel-volume condition in order to minimize work and impact. The treatments, encompassing .75 miles of treatment will create a 1.8 mile fuelbreak roughly running parallel to Soda Canyon Road W and up the ridgeline to Antica Winery from the location where Soda Canyon Road splits. Approximately 80% of the treatment area is within 30-ft of a road. The area surrounding the project is semi-rural; approximately 45 homes are enclosed within the fuelbreak.

Vegetation type is classified as shrubland and vineyards in the majority of the project area. Oaks and other hardwoods are emerging through the canopy of the shrubs. Where these short trees are present, shrubs will be removed and the lower limbs of the trees will be pruned. The smallest of hardwood stems will be cut only when stem density must be reduced for healthy tree growth. All stems cut will be smaller than 6 inches in diameter. Canopy cover will be maximized to inhibit shrub growth. Where no trees are present shrub density will be reduced by cutting them at ground level. All chamise, baccharis, and poison oak will be cut. No ceanothus or other obligate seeding shrubs will be removed. Shrubs within the fuelbreak area will be cut and chipped, with chips distributed in the project area. All dead and dying vegetation will be removed.

The project is expected to begin after the August 2016, after the breeding season of most bird species. There will be no mastication, burning, or other ground disturbance associated with this project.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption** Type/Section:
Class 4, 15304 &
Class 8, 15308 **Minor Alterations to Land
Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment**
- 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))**

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT This project fits under the description for a Class 4 and Class 8 Categorical Exemption to CEQA. The Napa FireWise Consultant conducted an environmental review to confirm that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. This review included on-the-ground field inspection. A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) for the project area resulted in the known presence of one special status (1B.2) herbaceous plant and no animal species within the project area. The plant is *Ceanothus purpureus*. The appropriate technique that is designed into the project is to avoid trimming the plants. A botanist that can identify the plant will flag specimens in the treatment area. Plant removal will focus on plants other than this species. Crews will also be provided pictures of the plant to aid in identification of any specimen that might be missed by pre-work survey. The consultant 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. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the consultant is kept on file at Napa FireWise and the Soda Canyon FireSafe Council.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

APR 29 2016

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE


Helge Eng, Deputy Director
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Date

4/28/16