

PROJECT TITLE	Rancho Calaveras Fuelbreak		
PROJECT LOCATION	T5N, R15E, Portion of Sections 2, 3, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, MDBM	COUNTY	Calaveras
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area (3850 acres) is located in southwestern Calaveras County north of Jenny Lind. Highway 26 and Jenny Lind Road (J14) serve as the west boundary with the Calaveras Rivers as roughly the eastern boundary. The area is known as Rancho Calaveras and consists of a subdivision of 1 acre to 10 acre parcels. Larger parcels up to 80 acres are found adjacent to the Calaveras River. Project work will focus on the ridge above the Calaveras River although dense brushfields throughout the area will be targeted in order to provide additional protection for the subdivision and surrounding areas. It is expected that 20% to 30% of the total project area will be treated for fuel hazard reduction. Elevation ranges from 250' to 750'. The project area is in a Blue Oak - Gray Pine vegetation type. Major tree species include native oaks, Blue Oak (*Quercus douglasii*), Canyon and Interior Live Oak (*Quercus chrysolepis* and *wislizenii*), along with Gray Pine (*Pinus sabiniana*). Brush species include manzanita, toyon, ceanothus, poison oak, and coffeeberry. The project consists of fuel break construction and improvement of existing fuel breaks. Construction will consist of mastication of understory brush species and thinning of overstory trees to reduce crown densities to a level that will not carry a crown fire. Trees will be selected to create an open canopy and improve stand health and vigor. Trees with cavities will be left to maintain wildlife structure. Understory treatments will consist of removal of ground and ladder fuel. Vegetation removal will consist primarily of mastication with low ground pressure equipment. Hand cutting and piling for burning may be done in some of the steeper areas. Low ground pressure heavy equipment will be confined to slopes that do not exceed 50%. Trees up to 12 inches DBH may be removed to achieve the necessary spacing needed for achieving a functional fuel break. Any tree posing a threat to life and safety shall be removed. Grass, forbs and other low-lying ground vegetation will not be targeted for removal. The primary goal is to disrupt the horizontal and vertical continuity of fuels in order to provide a safe and feasible means of defense against the high probability of vegetation fire within the wildland urban interface.

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))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under portions of 15304- Minor Alterations to Land.

The Class of Exemption to be used is 14 CCR 15304- Minor Alterations to Land. Field confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. 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.

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE


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

3/1/16
Date