



State of California
 The Natural Resources Agency
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE Aptos - Nisene Roadside Fuel Break

PROJECT LOCATION Portions T10S, R1E, Sec 14, 15, 22, 23, 26, 27, 34 – 36 and Shoquel Augmentation, MDBM **COUNTY** Santa Cruz

LEAD AGENCY California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

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 Felton, CA 95018

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project will utilize hand crews to create a shaded fuel break in forest dominated areas and a residual mosaic in shrub dominated area on up to 150 acres along portions of Aptos Creek Fire Road, Buzzard Lagoon Road and Rider Road in the Aptos/Nisene area of Santa Cruz County. The project width will vary depending on terrain and fuel loads, extending up to approximately 50 feet from the edge of both sides of the aforementioned roads. Several roadside areas will not be treated due to road failures, steep slopes, cut banks, light fuels or landowner requirements. The objectives will be to disrupt the horizontal continuity of surface fuels, vertical continuity resulting from ladder fuels, and increase shrub and understory crown spacing. Forested areas will be treated with a "thin from below" approach reducing surface and ladder fuels and increasing understory crown spacing by removing a majority of tree species up to 10 inches DBH. The lower limbs of "leave" trees will be pruned to a height of 6 – 8 feet. Shrub dominated areas will be treated with a residual mosaic approach, leaving scattered shrubs and islands of intact formation comprising approximately 30% of the original cover, with an average spacing of 10 – 15 feet apart. Cut material will generally be chipped and spread uniformly on-site, lopped – and - scattered or piled in keyholes. Invasive species treated having mature seed will not be scattered or chipped and spread on-site; instead it will be hauled off-site and disposed of properly or cut and laid within exiting areas of infestation, lopped to a height of 12 inches or less. It is anticipated this project will be conducted periodically over several years, beginning in the spring of 2014.

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

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f).

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 Department 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. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Headquarters, 6059 Highway 9, Felton, CA 95018.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING



Duane Shintaku 5/8/14
 Duane Shintaku, Deputy Director Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection