NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE	RRU Fire Preparedness Exercise		
PROJECT LOCATION	Morongo Indian Reservation	**COUNTY**	Riverside
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Gregg Bratcher, Unit Forester		
ADDRESS	210 W. San Jacinto Ave. Perris, CA 92570	**PHONE**	(951) 940-6902

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Fire Preparedness Exercise (FPE) requires CAL FIRE Riverside Unit personnel to demonstrate the safe and effective use of fire suppression tactics in preparation for the fire season. The FPE is located at the Morongo Indian Reservation, on land owned by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. The project area is located in Riverside County, northeast of Banning, CA and northwest of Cabazon, CA. The total project area is 85 acres; however, not all this area will be impacted by project activities. Less than 5 acres of brush will be cut in any year. The FPE will consist of approximately 20 handlines being constructed by CAL FIRE Type I hand crews. The crews will utilize chainsaws to cut the brush (6 feet wide and 200 feet long), and hand tools to remove surface vegetation exposing bare mineral soil (4 feet wide and 200 feet long). No burning of the slash will occur, and all slash will be chipped back on site. Camp crews will also conduct a tool out exercise which will not involve the cutting of vegetation. Fire apparatus will be operated from existing roads and road shoulders. No heavy equipment will be operated off existing road surfaces and already disturbed road shoulders.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- [x] Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 4
- [ ] 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 the Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) Categorical Exemption to CEQA. A Minor Alteration to Land is described as a "minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes." This project as proposed constructs handlines and does not remove healthy, mature, or scenic trees. 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 CAL FIRE's RRU Headquarters in Perris.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research
MAY 06 2019
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

4/22/19

Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

Note: This report form is intended for use by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a notice of exemption document for a proposed CAL FIRE project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable categorical exemptions, this report presents CAL FIRE'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 CAL FIRE.

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Project Name: Fire Preparedness Exercise
Project Number:
Program Type: Training
CAL FIRE Unit: RRU
County: Riverside
Acres: 85
Legal Location: Portions of Sections 15 and 22, T2S, R1E, SBB&M
Name of USGS 7.5'Quad Map(s): Cabazon
☒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): The Fire Preparedness Exercise (FPE) requires CAL FIRE Riverside Unit personnel to demonstrate the safe and effective use of fire suppression tactics in preparation for the fire season. The FPE is located at the Morongo Indian Reservation (herein referred to as Morongo), on land owned by the Morongo Band of Mission Indians. The project area is located in Riverside County, northwest of Cabazon, CA and northeast of Banning, CA (see attached map for location). The project is 6+ "air" miles from either city, and is at an elevation of 3,500' to 3,800'. The total project area is 85 acres; however, not all this area will be impacted by project activities. Less than 5 acres of brush will be cut in any year. The FPE will consist of approximately 20 handlines being constructed by CAL FIRE Type I hand crews. The crews will utilize chainsaws to cut the brush (6 feet wide and 200 feet long), and hand tools to remove surface vegetation exposing bare mineral soil (4 feet wide and 200 feet long). No burning of the slash will occur. All slash will either be chipped back on site or used to cover the cut areas. Camp crews will also conduct a tool out exercise which will not involve the cutting of vegetation. Fire apparatus will be operated from existing roads and road shoulders to pump water for the progressive hose lay. No heavy equipment will be operated off existing road surfaces and already disturbed road shoulders.

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:
This project is not visible by any scenic byway or proposed scenic byway. Approximately twenty lines are to be constructed with the removal of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a four feet wide scalp to mineral soil. This project will not have significant impacts on the aesthetics.

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:

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:
Travel to and from the project area will increase vehicle traffic, which will create a short-term increase of combustible engine emissions into the atmosphere. The trainee's will carpool to the project area to reduce the number of vehicles, and in doing so reduce the emissions. During handline construction, the trainees will utilize gas powered chainsaws in short durations and shut off the engine during breaks and as the line advances. The short duration of chainsaw usage will not create negative impacts to air quality. After training has commenced all material will be chipped back on the project site. The short duration of chipper usage will not create negative impacts to air quality. This project will not have significant impacts on air quality.

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 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:
A 1 mile search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) was conducted on March 12, 2019, with a special focus on species that are on the Federal or State Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate lists, California Rare Plant Rank of 3.2 or less, or CDFW Species of Special Concern (SSC) and Fully Protected (FP). The list was evaluated for likelihood of sensitive species occurring within the project area. The results of this search and the biological assessment for any of these species to be potentially impacted by this project are listed below. None of these species were observed during the site visit. CAL FIRE proctors and Morongo staff environmental coordinators will be on site during the exercise to monitor for any potential species discovery, and will flag for avoidance and reroute any cut lines. Site specific assessments were made to determine the potential impacts of the project on the species listed. The treatment specifications are low impact, and will not cause significant negative impacts to wildlife habitat or any rare, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species.

Species and Listing Status	Habitat	Analysis
Vireo bellii pusillus, least Bell's vireo State: Endangered Federal: Endangered	Riparian forest Riparian scrub Riparian woodland	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the least Bell's vireo within 1 mile of the project area which inhabits riparian forest, scrub, and woodlands. Riparian areas will be protected and avoided during project operations which will minimize the threat of impacting the species. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Astragalus lentiginosus var. coachellae, Coachella Valley milk-vetch State: None Federal: Endangered Rare Plant Rank: 1B.2	Desert dunes Sonoran desert scrub	Coachella Valley milk-vetch is an annual/perennial herb that blooms between February and May in desert dunes and Sonoran desert scrub, typically at elevations below 2,280 feet. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.

Rana muscosa, Southern mountain yellow-legged frog State: Endangered Federal: Endangered	Aquatic: Wet meadow, meadow streams, lakes, rocky streams, riparian woodland	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the southern mountain yellow-legged frog within 1 mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Riparian areas will be protected and avoided during project operations which will minimize the threat of impacting the species. No watercourses or riparian areas will be impacted therefore no negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Deinandra mohavensis, Mojave tarplant State: Endangered Federal: None Rare Plant Rank: 1B.3	Chaparral Coastal scrub Riparian scrub	Mojave tarplant is an annual herb that typically blooms between June and October (in rare cases May-January). This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Progne subis, purple martin State: None Federal: None Other: Species of Special Concern	Broadleaved upland forest Lower montane coniferous forest	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the purple martin within 1 mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The purple martin inhabits woodlands, low elevation coniferous forest of Douglas-fir, ponderosa pine, and Monterey pine. They nest in old woodpecker cavities, often located in tall, isolated tree/snag. No snags or trees will be removed during project operations. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Setophaga petechia, yellow warbler State: None Federal: None Other: Species of Special Concern	Riparian forest Riparian scrub Riparian woodland	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the yellow warbler within 1 mile of the project area which inhabits riparian forest, scrub, and woodlands. Riparian areas will be protected and avoided during project operations which will minimize the threat of impacting the species. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Antrozous pallidus, pallid bat State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Chaparral Coastal scrub Desert wash Great Basin grassland Great Basin scrub Mojavean desert scrub Riparian woodland Sonoran desert scrub Upper montane coniferous forest Valley & foothill grassland	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the pallid bat within 1 mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits, rock out-crops will be avoided during project operations, and no alteration to roosting habitat will occur. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Arizona elegans occidentalis, California glossy snake State: None Federal: No Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Generalist reported from a range of scrub and grassland habitats, often with loose or sandy soils.	The CNDDB indicates the potential for the California glossy snake to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.

Perognathus longimembris brevinasus, Los Angeles pocket mouse State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Coastal scrub	The CNDDB indicates the potential for the Los Angeles pocket mouse to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Polioptila californica californica, coastal California gnatcatcher State: None Federal: Threatened Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Coastal bluff scrub Coastal scrub	The CNDDB indicates the potential for the coastal California gnat catcher to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The required habitat types are not present in the project area. Due to this factor, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Toxostoma lecontei, Le Conte's thrasher State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Desert wash Mojavean desert scrub Sonoran desert scrub	The CNDDB indicates the potential for the Le Conte's Thrasher to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. Le Conte's thrasher Commonly nests in a dense, spiny shrub or densely branched cactus in desert wash habitat, usually 2-8 feet above ground. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No cactus will be removed. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Chorizanthe xanti var. leucotheca, white-bracted spineflower State: None Federal: None Rare Plant Rank: 1B.2	Coastal scrub Mojavean desert scrub Pinon & juniper woodlands	White-bracted spineflower is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and June. The CNDDB indicates the potential for the white-bracted spineflower to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Crotalus ruber, red-diamond rattlesnake State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Chaparral Mojavean desert scrub Sonoran desert scrub	The CNDDB indicates the potential for the red-diamond rattlesnake to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Symphyotrichum defoliatum, San Bernardino aster State: None Federal: None Rare Plant Rank: 1B.2	Cismontane woodland Coastal scrub Lower montane coniferous forest Marsh & swamp Meadow & seep Valley & foothill grassland	San Bernardino aster is a perennial herb that typically blooms between July and November. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Xerospermophilus tereticaudus chlorus, Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Chenopod scrub Sonoran desert scrub	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel in proximity to the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The required habitat is not present in the project area. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations

Chaetodipus fallax pallidus, pallid San Diego pocket mouse State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Desert wash Pinon & juniper woodlands Sonoran desert scrub	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the pallid San Diego pocket mouse within 1 mile of the project area which primarily inhabits Desert border areas in eastern San Diego County in desert wash, desert scrub, desert succulent scrub, and pinyon-juniper. They prefer sandy, herbaceous areas, usually in association with rocks or coarse gravel, areas of which are limited within the project area. Project operations will cause minimal ground disturbance, and no negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Taxidea taxus, American badger State: None Federal: None Other: Species of Special Concern	Variable	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the American badger within 1 mile of the project area which inhabits a broad range of habitats. They are most abundant in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats, with friable soils. They need sufficient food, friable soils and open, uncultivated ground. Limited amounts of open ground exist within the project area, and where present no operations will occur due to lack of vegetation removal need. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Chaetodipus fallax fallax, northwestern San Diego pocket mouse State: None Federal: None Other: Species of Special Concern	Chaparral Coastal scrub	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the northwestern San Diego pocket mouse within 1 mile of the project area which primarily inhabits coastal scrub, chaparral, grasslands, and sagebrush in western San Diego County. They prefer sandy, herbaceous areas, usually in association with rocks or coarse gravel, areas of which are limited within the project area. Project operations will cause minimal ground disturbance, and no negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Phrynosoma blainvillii, coast horned lizard State: None Federal: None Other: Species of Special Concern	Chaparral Cismontane woodland Coastal bluff scrub Coastal scrub Desert wash Pinon & juniper woodlands Riparian scrub Riparian woodland Valley & foothill grassland	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the coast horned lizard in proximity to the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The coast horned lizard frequents a variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes. Despite some of the habitat features being present in the project area, the operations will not alter the habitat types or pose any threat to the lizard survival. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri, coastal whiptail State: None Federal: None Other: Species of Special Concern	Desert Riparian woodland	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the coastal whiptail in proximity to the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The coastal whiptail is found in deserts and semi-arid areas with sparse vegetation and open areas, as well as woodland & riparian areas. Riparian areas will be avoided during project operations. Limited amounts of open ground exist within the project area, and where present no operations will occur due to lack of vegetation removal need. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.
Anniella stebbinsi, southern California legless lizard State: None Federal: None Other: Species of Special Concern	Broadleaved upland forest Chaparral Coastal dunes Coastal scrub	The CNDDB indicates the presence of the southern California legless lizard in proximity to the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The southern California legless lizard occurs in sandy or loose loamy soils under sparse vegetation, generally in moist, loose soil. They prefer soils with a high moisture content. Soil disturbance will be minimal during project operations, and no heavy equipment will be utilized. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.

Abronia villosa var. aurita, chaparral sand-verbena State: None Federal: None CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1	Chaparral Coastal scrub Desert dunes	Chaparral sand-verbena is an annual herb that typically blooms between January and September. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Astragalus pachypus var. jaegeri, Jaeger's milk-vetch State: None. Federal: None CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1	Chaparral Cismontane woodland Coastal scrub Valley & foothill grassland	Jaeger's milk-vetch is a shrub that typically blooms between December and June. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Horkelia cuneata var. puberula, mesa horkelia State: None Federal: None CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1	Chaparral Cismontane woodland Coastal scrub	Mesa horkelia is a perennial herb that typically blooms between February and July. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Chorizanthe parryi var. parryi, Parry's spineflower State: None Federal: None CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1	Chaparral Cismontane woodland Coastal scrub Valley & foothill grassland	Parry's spineflower is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and June. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
Allium marvinii, Yucaipa onion State: None Federal: None CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.2	Chaparral	Yucaipa onion is a perennial herb (bulb) that typically blooms between April and May. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The removing of brush six feet wide by two hundred feet long and a light four feet wide scalp to mineral soil will occur. No heavy equipment will be utilized. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.

If any "listed" species are found during operations, an exclusion zone will be flagged by the individual that was present at the time of discovery with the highest level of training in natural resource management. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) will be notified of the discovery and project operations will not begin within the exclusion zone until DFW develops mitigations and approves the operations.

Nesting Birds

To comply with Fish and Game Code §3503 and §3503.5 If any nesting species are discovered during project implementation, work shall cease near the nest. If the nest is determined by a CAL FIRE biologist to be used by a listed species then a species appropriate no operations buffer will be applied and CDFW will be contacted for a species consultation. If the nest is not that of a listed species, then the nest shall be protected to the extent that avoids destruction and work shall proceed around the nest site.

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:
CAL FIRE Forester II Gregg Bratcher accompanied Morongo Band of Cahuilla Indians (Morongo) staff on a project scoping and field visit March 19, 2019. Because the proposed project is located on Morongo Land, the project's Archaeological Review defers to their Heritage Program's review guidelines. Archaeological survey requirements are being fulfilled by Morongo Heritage Program. Morongo's Heritage Program Staff maintains its own archaeological records; these records were checked to identify presence of known archaeological sites within the proposed project area. The field survey and these review sources did not identify the existence of current or previously recorded cultural resources within the proposed project area. The project will have no effect on known cultural resources. If any cultural resources are encountered during project work, all work will be halted within ten meters of the discovery until a qualified archaeologist can evaluate the find and implement protection measures. Should human remains be uncovered, all work will cease in the area of the discovery and the coroner contacted.

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:
This project will only minimally affect the soil within the project boundaries. Approximately four feet by two hundred feet light scraping, down to bare mineral soil will take place in the same areas brush will be removed. After the exercise is completed handlines will be covered by chipping the cut brush back on site or used to cover the cut areas and water-barred where appropriate, as to not allow any erosion. Due to the nature of the activity no significant effects will occur.

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:
The proposed project will not generate significant Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions because of the small size and limited scope of the area to be affected. GHG emissions will occur from the decomposition of the material cut on the project site. The emissions will be spread out over several years as the material decomposes. The GHG released from the decomposition is expected to be re-sequestered by the remaining vegetation and the regrowth of vegetation in the project area. GHG emissions are expected from the chainsaws, chipper and fire apparatus operating during the training. However, operations will be limited to a short time frame and will not lead to long term increases in greenhouse gas emissions. Due to the limited nature of the project no significant effects will occur.

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:
Crews will be working with gas powered chainsaws and hand tools to remove brush within the project area. All crews shall be properly supervised, wear the proper PPE and insure refueling of the chainsaws and will be conducted in accordance with CAL FIRE refueling protocols to prevent release of hazardous materials.

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:
During the site inspection, any perceived watercourses are considered a "wash" that was dry. All cut areas over 30% slope will be water-barred and slash packed with the cut material. The cut areas will be chipped where appropriate, so no bare soil will be exposed and not to create a situation for water to channelize and impact the area.

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:
There will be a temporary increase in noise in the project area during the exercise, but there are no residences located near the project area. Due to the remote location, the temporary increase in noise will result in only a negligible and temporary noise impact.

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:
The project coordinators will coordinate with the Morongo staff to ensure that no persons will be utilizing the area for recreation during the exercise. This area closure will be for an intermittent 10 working day period. Significant negative impacts to recreation are not anticipated from this project.

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:
There may be a slight and temporary increase in traffic along the access roads, but the road is in a rural area where background traffic levels are very low. This would be not more than a negligible impact and still within the framework to fit as an exempt project.

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:
The line construction activities will take place away from any culturally sensitive areas through avoidance and monitoring.

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):
This project fits under the Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) Categorical Exemption to CEQA. This project as proposed constructs handlines and does not remove healthy, mature, or scenic trees. The Fire Preparedness Exercise activities are best described as minor in scope. CAL FIRE has determined this project would not impact the environment. The project is small in size, will increase firefighting skills, will result in minimal ground disturbance and will not result in significant impacts to biological or archeological resources. 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.

Conclusion:

☒ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE 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. CAL FIRE 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, CAL FIRE has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site that precludes the use of a categorical exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a negative declaration or a mitigated negative declaration.

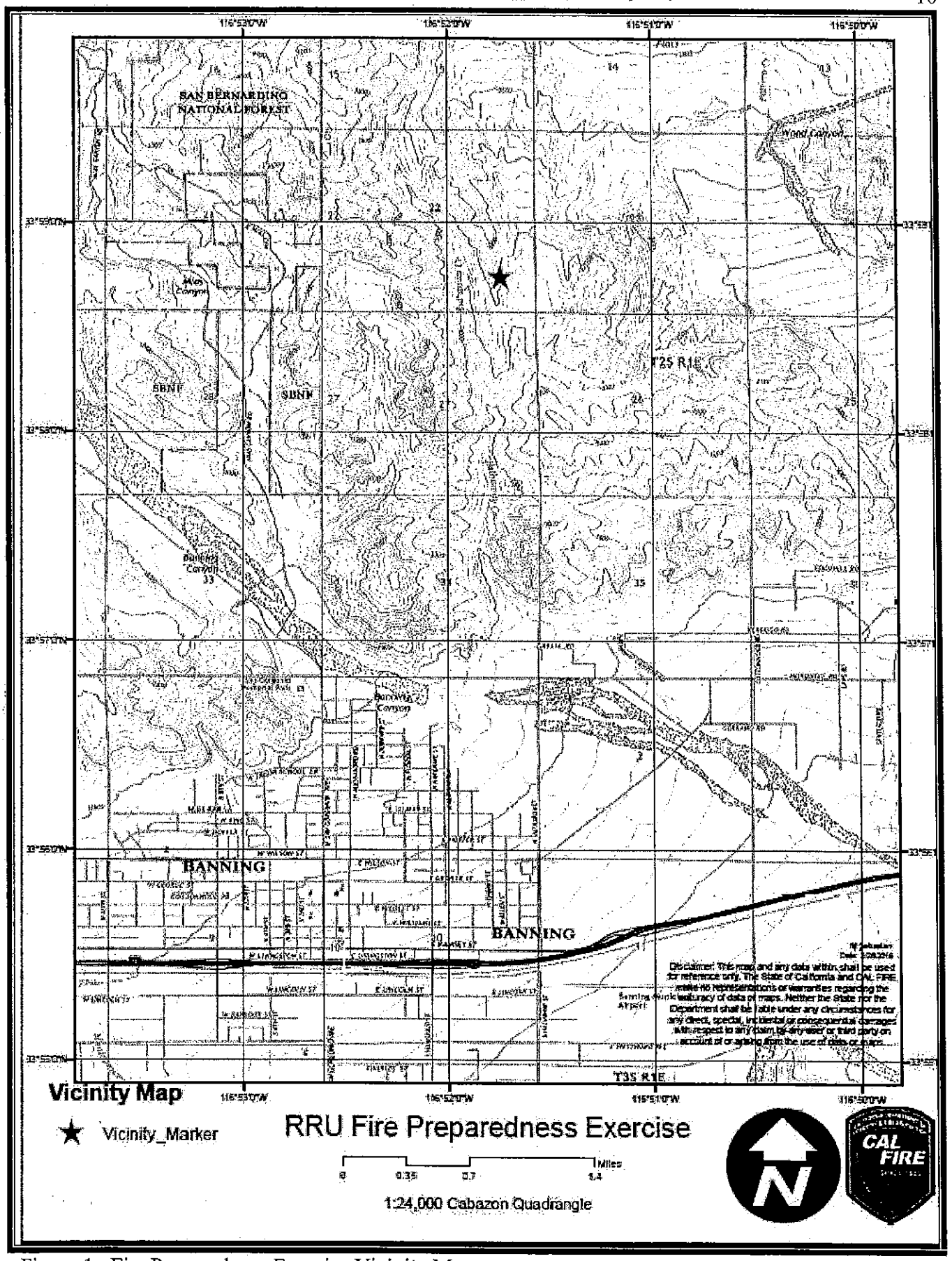

Figure 1. Fire Preparedness Exercise Vicinity Map

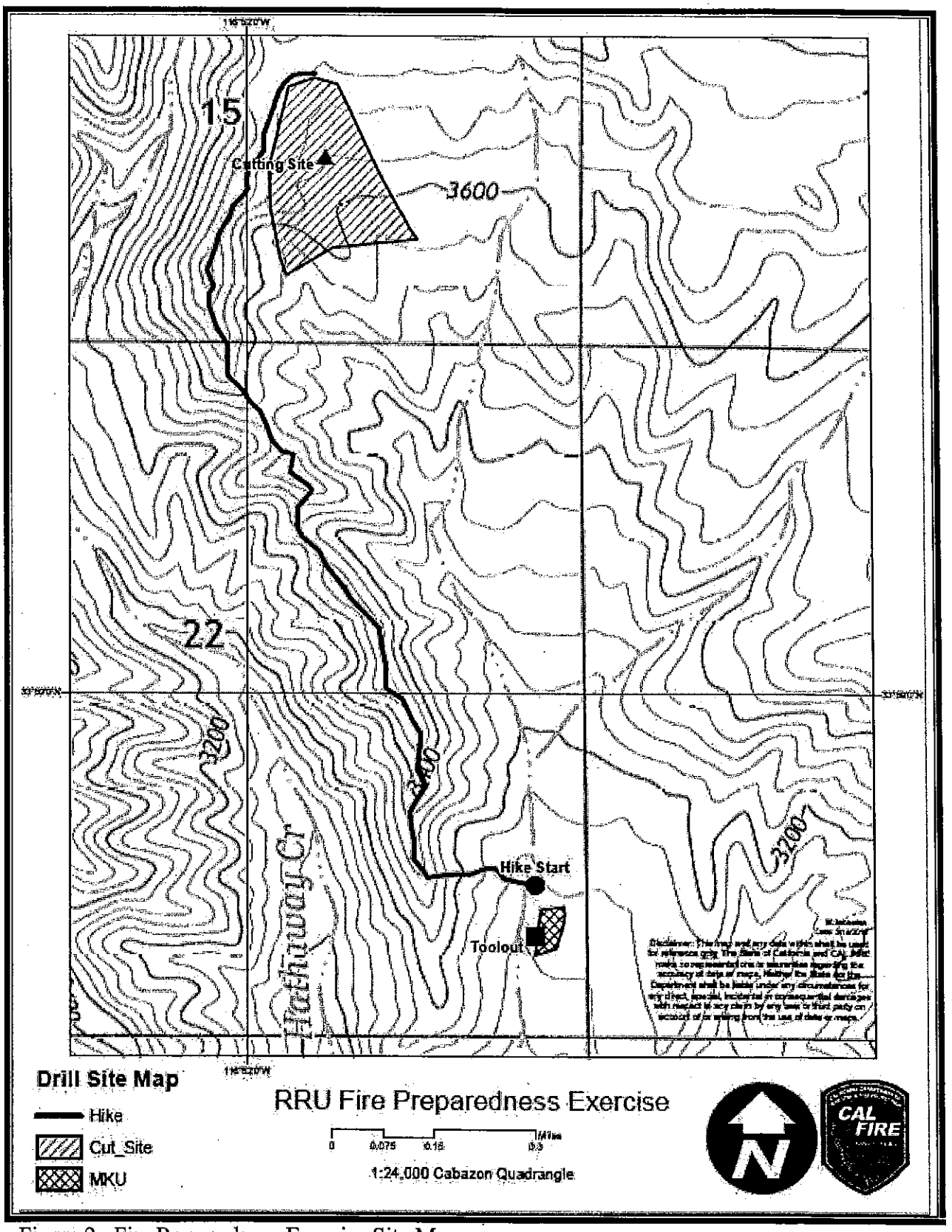

Figure 2. Fire Preparedness Exercise Site Map

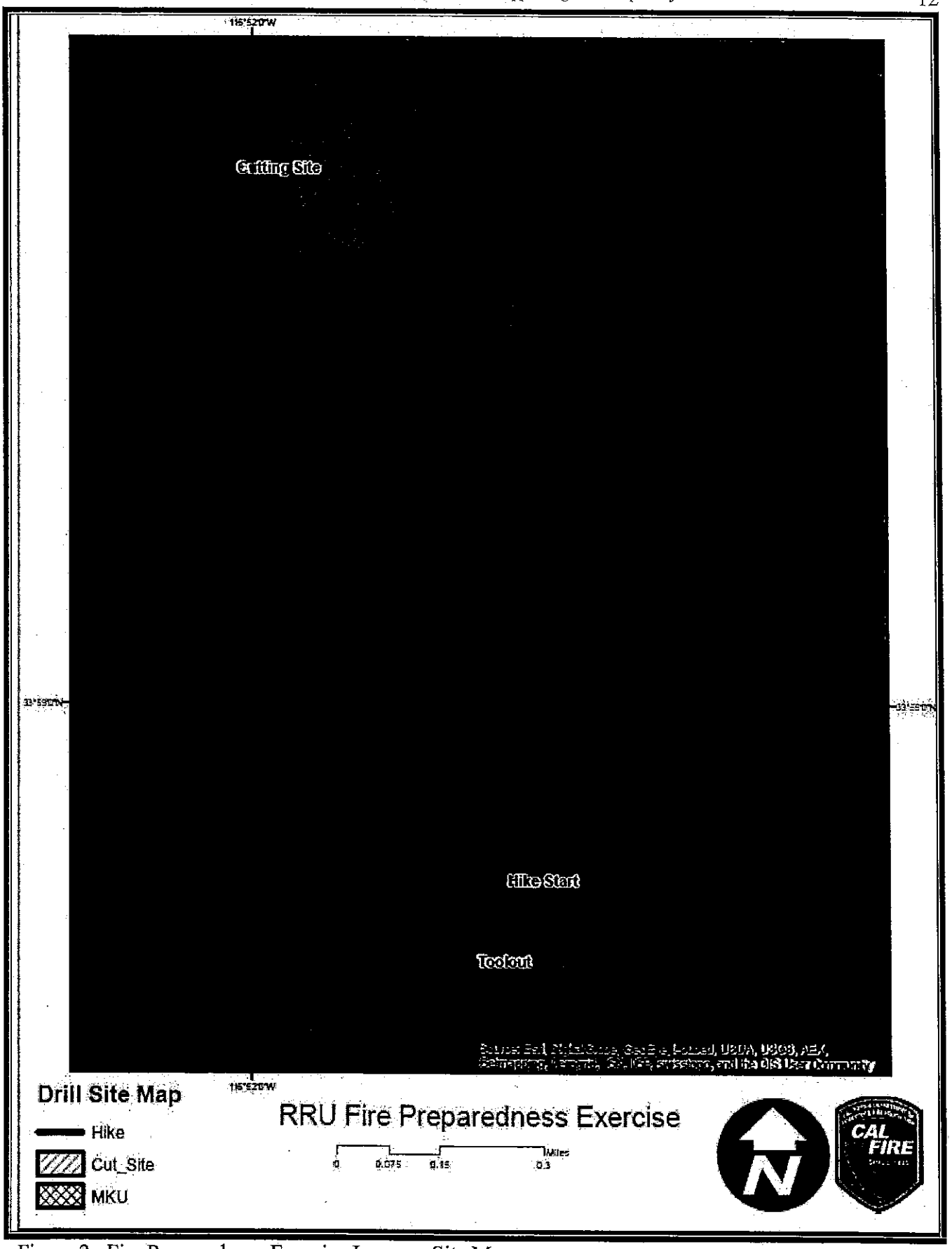

Figure 2. Fire Preparedness Exercise Imagery Site Map