NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE	Rim Contingency Fuel Break Maintenance		
PROJECT LOCATION	T 1N; R 16E; Secs 17, 19, 20, 29, 30 MDBM	**COUNTY**	Tuolumne
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Roger Petersen		
ADDRESS	18464 Striker Court Sonora, CA 95370	**PHONE**	(209) 532-7424 x 109

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area is located in northern Tuolumne County, approximately 1.5 miles south of the city of Tuolumne. The project area ranges from approximately 2,150 feet to 2,860 feet in elevation above sea level. Vegetation type is at the transition zone with lower portions of the project in the chaparral belt and the upper portion entering the ponderosa pine zone. Native oaks such as black oak and live oak along with ponderosa pine, sugar pine, and gray pine are the dominant tree species found. Brush species include manzanita, toyon, ceanothus, and poison oak. The project consists of maintenance and improvement of an existing fire break. Maintenance consists of removal of ground and ladder fuels that have regrown since the fuel break was re-opened during the Rim Fire of 2013 along with widening of the fuel break up to 400 feet in total width for better defense against vegetation fires. The project area is approximately 3.5 miles in length and 200 acres in size. During the Rim Fire of 2013, a fire break was constructed approximately 100 feet wide. Vegetation removal will consist of hand cutting and piling for burning during a safe burn window along with mechanical mastication with light and/or heavy equipment. Heavy equipment will be confined to slopes that do not exceed 40%. Trees up to 12 inches DBH may be removed to gain the necessary spacing needed for achieving a functional fuel break. Larger trees shall not be cut unless deemed to be a safety hazard. Grass, forbs and other low-lying ground vegetation will not be targeted for removal.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- [x] Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class *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 project consists of maintaining and improving existing fuel breaks. Operations have been designed to avoid heavy equipment operations on limestone formations which are habitat for two rare mollusks found near the project area. A query of the CNDDB did not reveal the presence of any other sensitive species. DFW was consulted with during the preparation process of this project. Protection measures for watercourses are consistent with The California Forest Practice Rules. The Regional Water Quality Control Board was consulted and did not recommend addition protection measures. Protection measures for archaeological sites are consistent with the original project and impacts are not expected. Archeological sites within the project area will be protected. All burning will be done in accordance with a permit for the Tuolumne County Air Pollution Control District.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

RECEIVED
NOV 20 2015
STATE CLEARING HOUSE

for 11/20/15

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