



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE Blue Lake Springs Fuel Hazard Reduction

PROJECT LOCATION T4N, R15E, Portion of Sections 4, 5, 6, MDBM
T5N, R15E, Portion of Sections 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, MDBM

COUNTY Calaveras

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

CONTACT Gary Whitson
ADDRESS 785 Mountain Ranch Rd
San Andreas, CA 95249

PHONE (209) 754-2708

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project area (2790 acres) is located in northeastern Calaveras County south and east of Arnold. Highway 4 and serves as the western boundary with Upper Moran Road as the northern boundary. The east and southern boundaries are a combination of U.S. Forest Service and Sierra Pacific Industries forest lands. The area is known as Blue Lake Springs and consists of a subdivision of lots sized to 45 acre parcels. Project work will focus on fuels treatment throughout the subdivision to provide for additional protection for the homes and surrounding areas. It is expected that 40% to 60% of the total project area will be treated for fuel hazard reduction. Elevation ranges from 3600' to 4500'. The project area is in a Sierran Mixed Conifer vegetation type. Major tree species include ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*), white fir (*Abies concolor*), sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*), incense cedar (*Libocedrus decurrens*) and black oak (*Quercus kelloggi*). Brush species include manzanita, toyon, ceanothus, and poison oak. The project will reduce fuel loading by means of brush removal, thinning of excess conifers and hardwoods, pruning of residual trees and removal of dead trees. Both hand work and mastication will be used to accomplish this. Work will consist of mastication of understory brush species and thinning of intermediate and suppressed 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. Chipping will be preferred for debris removal however, 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 fuels reduction project. 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.

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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Governor's Office of Planning & Research

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STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

 9/20/16
 Helge Eng, Deputy Director Date
 California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection