



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|----------------|
| PROJECT TITLE | 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) 940-6900 |

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 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. 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

- 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 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

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APR 15 2013

STATE CLEARING HOUSE

 William E. Snyder, Deputy Director Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection,