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|-------------------------|--|---------------|----------------------|
| <b>PROJECT TITLE</b>    | Lyons-Phoenix Lake Shaded Fuel Break                             |               |                      |
| <b>PROJECT LOCATION</b> | Portion of Sections 20, 29, and 32; T2N; R15E; MDBM              | <b>COUNTY</b> | Tuolumne             |
| <b>LEAD AGENCY</b>      | California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) |               |                      |
| <b>CONTACT</b>          | Roger Petersen   |               |                      |
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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project area is located in central Tuolumne County, running along a north/south ridge between the City of Sonora and Highway 108. The project connects to Lyons-Bald Mountain Road at the north termini and Ivy Lane in the south, with a length of approximately 1.75 miles, covering approximately 99 acres. Project area is defined as 150 feet either side of the designated centerline. The project area ranges from approximately 2,050 feet to 2,800 feet in elevation, above sea level. The project lies between the city of Sonora and the residential areas of Meadowbrook, Phoenix Lake, Sonora Meadows, Crystal Falls, and other smaller subdivisions. The potential for fire in the area is high. Fuel loading over the non-developed lands, in this area, is high and potential ignition sources are plentiful. The construction of this shaded fuel break will provide the opportunity for suppression efforts to stop a major fire from burning into or out of Sonora. The central portion of the project consists of 5-10 acre lots with homes. These are part of the Cabezut Road development. The remainder of the project, excluding a 5 acre parcel at Lyons-Bald Mountain Road, consists of larger parcels. The central portion of the project consists of three parcels totaling 440 acres. These parcels have had a subdivision map and zoning change prepared in 1996. To date, the subdivision has not been completed and parcels have not yet been split by the county. These parcels were grazed in the past but currently no active grazing is occurring. Vegetation type is in the oak-woodland belt consistent with the Blue Oak-Digger Pine WHR. The major tree species include native oaks and conifers. Blue Oak (*Quercus douglasii*), Valley Oak, (*Quercus lobata*), Canyon and Interior Live Oak (*Quercus chrysolepis* and *wislizenii*), and Gray Pine (*Pinus Sabatini*). Brush species include manzanita, toyon, ceanothus, poison oak, yerba santa, California Buckeye, and oaks. Stocking of vegetation ranges from open to dense. Portions of the Blue Oak/grass areas have open understories with 40 to 80 percent canopy closure. Other areas have moderately stocked understories with over story trees 40 to 60 percent crown closure. The conifer component consists of scattered Gray Pine throughout the unit. So far these trees have not experienced bark beetle mortality. The project consists of fuel break construction. Construction will consist of thinning over story tree, less than 12" DBH, to reduce crown densities to a level that will not carry a crown fire. Trees will be selected to create an open canopy, with a goal of 40% crown cover, and improve forest health and vigor. Trees with cavities will be left to maintain wildlife structure. Understory treatments will consist of removal of ground and ladder fuels. Vegetation will be left in open areas so that the distance between shrubs or trees is at least twice the height of the plants. Understory trees to be left will be pruned to 10 feet or 1/2 the live crown, whichever, is less. The project area is approximately 99 acres in size. Vegetation removal will consist of hand cutting and chipping or removal. Chipping operations will broadcast chips within the ROW. Chip depths will be managed to insure depth does not exceed 6 inches. Vegetation throughout most of the area is light making these treatments feasible. Chipping may be done with a track chipper to facilitate crew. Hand crews may be supported with a Skid steer type tractor, with rubber tracks, to help move slash for chipping or removal. No mastication or mechanical clearing will be done. No burning will be done. Trees up to 12 inches DBH may be removed to achieve the necessary spacing needed for achieving a functional fuel break. 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, to provide a safe and feasible means of defense, against the high probability of a vegetation fire within the wildland urban interface.

**EXEMPTION STATUS**

- 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**

This project fits under portions of 15304- Minor Alterations to Land.

The Class of Exemption to be used is 14 CCR 15304- Minor Alterations to Land. The project consists of constructing fuel breaks. A query of the CNDDDB did not reveal the presence of any sensitive species. There are no watercourses on the project area. Protection measures for archaeological sites are consistent with Best Management Practices implemented in the area and project impacts are not expected. No burning will be done.

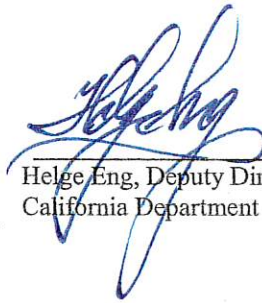
Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, 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 Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit Headquarters.

**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

OCT 04 2017

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE



10/2/17

Helge Eng, Deputy Director      Date  
California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection