NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

PROJECT TITLE	South Lake Fuel Reduction Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Mountain View Estates, Southwest of Bishop W1/2, Section 22, T8S, R31E, MDBM; Mount Thompson	**COUNTY**	Inyo
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Glenn Barley, Unit Forester		
ADDRESS	3800 N. Sierra Way, San Bernardino, CA 92405	**PHONE**	(909) 881-6900

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project consists of the cutting, removal, and treatment (chipping) of living and dead vegetation within, and surrounding the community of Mountain View Estates, located southwest of Bishop, CA. The community of Mountain View Estates is located at 8200'- 8600' elevation and covers approximately 95 acres of total land area. Of that 95 acres, there are many acres that will not be treated (i.e. roads, camp grounds, residential yards, previously treated areas, low fuel loads, etc.). An estimation of net acres to be treated was determined based upon vegetation types using aerial photographs. The results of this evaluation found an estimated 37 acres would be treated. The site is characterized by approximately 30 structures situated on the valley floor, with the south fork of Bishop Creek flowing through the community. The vegetation within and adjacent to the community is characterized by dense riparian species, primarily willow with areas of dense aspen trees. This accumulation of fuel within and adjacent to the community poses a significant threat to life and property. The community sits in the valley bottom and has a slight slope of about 5-10%. The valley walls "above" the community are very steep and exceed 60% in some areas. All fuel reduction activities will occur on the valley floor where the slopes average 5-10%. CAL FIRE conservation camp crews will conduct the work. The crews will cut and prune vegetation under the supervision of a CAL FIRE captain. The slash will be manually dragged to the nearest road where it will be chipped and "broadcast" onto the ground. No treatment of grass or small herbaceous perennials is planned for this project.

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

This project meets the requirements of a Class 4 Categorical Exemption, "15304. Minor Alterations to Land." "Class 4 consists of 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." The community has been identified by CAL FIRE and the Fire Safe Council as being at risk to wildfire due to it's proximity to high fuel loads. Vegetation will be removed by hand crews using chainsaws. No mechanical treatment (i.e. mastication) or prescribed fire is planned. All slash generated by this project will be chipped on-site from existing road surfaces, stacked on site, or hauled off site. No new roads will be constructed. Healthy, scenic, mature trees will be retained. The only trees to be removed during this project are those that are dead, dying, or diseased and will be dead within 1 year from the date of inspection, as determined by a Registered Professional Forester (RPF), and those thinned from an overstock stand for the purpose of improving tree/stand health and reducing the stands susceptibility to wildfire. 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 the San Bernardino Unit Head Quarters, 3800 N. Sierra Way San Bernardino, CA 92405.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

RECEIVED
AUG 25 2010
STATE CLEARING

William E. Snyder 8/24/10

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