



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

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Upper Empire Grade Road Fuel Break		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Portions of T9S, R3W, Sections 25, 26, 36 & Rancho San Vicente, MDBM	<b>COUNTY</b>	Santa Cruz
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project will utilize hand crews to create a shaded fuel break on up to 27 acres within 100 feet of Empire Grade Road and the community of Braemoor. The objectives will be to disrupt the horizontal continuity of surface fuels, vertical continuity resulting from ladder fuels, and increase shrub and understory crown spacing. The fuel break will be created with a "thin from below" approach reducing surface and ladder fuels and increasing understory crown spacing by removing a majority of tree and shrub species up to 8 inches DBH. The lower limbs of "leave" trees will be pruned to a height of 6 – 10 feet. Cut material will generally be piled and burned, although some chipping may also occur. Chipped material will be spread uniformly on-site. Invasive species that are to be treated that have mature seed will be burned or cut and laid within existing areas of infestation, and lopped to a height of 12 inches or less. It is anticipated this project will be conducted during the winter and early spring months of 2013, however pile burning may not be completed until the following rainy season.

**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**

The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with Categorical Exemption Class 4 - Minor Alterations to Land. No activity is proposed that is listed as a limitation under CCR 15300.2 (a-f).

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 San Mateo-Santa Cruz Unit Headquarters, 6059 Highway 9, Felton, CA 95018.

**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

RECEIVED

FEB 06 2013

STATE CLEARING HOUSE

William E. Snyder, Deputy Director      1/31/13  
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection      Date