



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Usal Redwood Forest Conservation Easement		
PROJECT LOCATION	North end of Mendocino County, encompassing the Usal Creek watershed and several tributaries to the South Fork of the Eel River. Approximately 15 miles due north of the city of Fort Bragg.	COUNTY	Mendocino
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Jeff Calvert, Forest Legacy Coordinator, For III		
ADDRESS	Resource Management, CAL FIRE	PHONE	916.653.8286
	PO Box 944246, Sacramento, CA 94244-2460		

Project Description The Usal Redwood Forest Conservation Easement acquisition includes approximately 49,576 acres of privately owned forestlands. CAL FIRE is acquiring the property as a conservation easement for the purpose of protecting typical forestland uses including wildlife habitat, watershed stabilization and the continued production of forest products. The federal Forest Legacy program was created with clearly delineated open-space conservation goals and objectives to protect environmentally important private forest lands threatened with conversion to non-forest uses pursuant to Section 1217 of Title XII of the Food, Agriculture, Conservation and Trade Act of 1990 (16 U.S.C. Section 2103C). Congress has awarded a Forest Legacy Program grant to CAL FIRE in order to aid in the purchase of the Easement conveyed for conservation of forested, agricultural and open-space land.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption** Type/Section: Class 17 §157317 Open Space Contracts or Easements
Class 25 §15325 Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources
- 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

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 1416 9th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814. This project fits under two classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA: Class 17 (Open Space Contracts or Easements) and Class 25 (Transfers of Ownership of Interest in Land to Preserve Existing Natural Conditions and Historical Resources). Acquisition as a Conservation Easement through the State and Federal Forest Legacy Programs will protect the area from the encroachment of residential development pressure facing Mendocino County today. The Usal Redwood Forest provides significant wildlife habitat for several threatened and special concern species. This protection will allow continued traditional forestry activities while affording some limited public recreational and educational opportunities.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

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SEP 02 2014

STATE CLEARING HOUSE

Duane Shintaku 8/29/14

Duane Shintaku, Deputy Director Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection