



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

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	West Atascadero Fuel Break		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of T 28 S, R 11 E, Rancho Asuncion, MDBM	COUNTY	San Luis Obispo
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project will create an approximate 150' wide ridgeline fuel break extending about 2 1/2 miles from the Devils Gap area near Highway 41, north and west into the Toro Creek drainage. A masticator will construct most of the initial fuel break, while hand crews will be utilized in areas not suitable for mastication. Dozer lines of varying widths have been constructed intermittently since 1994 over portions of the south half of the project area. The proposed project seeks to improve and expand on these areas of reduced fuels. Except within existing dozer lines, scattered shrubs will be retained, spaced about 15-20' apart. No trees are proposed for removal. The proposed project, involving six landowners, is located entirely on private property. Project size is estimated at 61 acres, but may be less based on equipment and crew capability in difficult terrain. It is anticipated the fuel break will be constructed during the summer or early fall of 2011.

Reoccurring maintenance activities are planned for the proposed project, however the preparation of additional environmental documents will occur at least every five years; while consultation with DFG will occur annually for any required maintenance work. Periodically, as conditions and funding warrant, dozers may be utilized to maintain existing dozer lines, while hand crews will treat any other areas in need of maintenance. The amount of existing dozer line is estimated to be less than 6 acres. The maintenance activities will serve a dual purpose, by also providing valuable training opportunities for dozer operators and for hand crews to practice line construction. Brush disposal from these activities will occur in the form of pile burning. Vegetation removal and ground disturbing activities during both the installation and maintenance periods of the fuel break will occur only when soil conditions are dry during the summer and fall months.

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 portions of Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land). The proposed project would remove enough brush to break up the horizontal continuity of fuels and reduce ladder fuels. Scattered brush would remain over most of the project area and no trees are proposed for removal.

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 635 N. Santa Rosa Street, San Luis Obispo, Ca.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING



William E. Snyder, Deputy Director Date 6/6/11
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection