

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Blue River 3 Consolidated Fuel Breaks		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Blue River: T7S, R20E, Por. of Sections 26, 27, 28, & 35 MDBM; Ward Mtn.; T8S, R21E. Por. Sections 34 & 35, T9S R21E Por. Sec 2 MDBM; Gold Ck.: T8S, R22E Por. Sections 27, 28, 32, 33, & 34 MDBM	<b>COUNTY</b>	Madera
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Bob Buckles		
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**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project area is located in eastern Madera County and consists of three segments. The Blue River Segment is approximately 4 miles North east of Coarsegold, CA. This segment follows Motherlode Trail from the intersection of Road 600 southeast to the intersection of Franklin Road. The fuel break will lie 150' on either side of the road. Elevation ranges between 2000ft in the northeast to 2,200 feet in the southeast termini. Acreage of this segment is approximately 400 acres. The Ward Mountain Segment is approximately 5.25 miles southeast of Coarsegold, CA. This segment starts at the Willow Pond Lane/Flying O Road intersection in the east. It follows the ridge to the east for approximately 1 mile and then turns south following the ridge to Ward Mountain. From the top of Ward Mountain the fuel break goes south to Jeer Trail. This fuel break will be approximately 300 feet wide consisting of approximately 150 acres. Elevations range from 2,400 feet at the northwest termini, 2,788 at the top of Ward Mountain to 2,300 at the southeastern termini. The Gold Creek Segment is approximately 8.75 miles southeast of Coarsegold, CA and 4 miles southwest of Northfork, CA. The fuel break starts near the intersection of Walker Summit Court and Road 200, travels south along the ridge to Pine Tree Lane and then runs south and west following the ridge back to Road 200. Elevation at the north termini is 2,550, at the end of Pine Tree Lane 2,800 ft and 2,000 feet at the west termini on Road 200. The fuel break will be approximately 300 feet wide and consist of approximately 140 acres. Vegetation type is a combination of Blue Oak Woodland and Montane Chaparral habitat types. Live Oak, Blue Oak, and Gray Pine are the dominate tree species with an occasional Ponderosa Pine. Brush species include several ceanothus species, manzanita, toyon, poison oak, redbud, and buckeye. These habitats are fire adapted. Mature plants sprout back from the root crown and some species need fire scarification to germinate. Vegetation densities vary with portions of the oak woodland having open grassland and other areas consisting of dense chaparral 15 ft. tall. Residences are scattered throughout and around the project areas. Parcels range in size from 0.25ac lots to 100+ acre ranches. The project consists of constructing shaded fuel breaks approximately 300 feet wide. Understory brush and chaparral densities will be reduced to a level that will reduce the rate of wildfire spread and provide for potential fire suppression efforts. Over story trees will be left providing shade and habitat. Leave trees will be pruned to remove fuel ladders. Vegetation removal will consist of hand cutting and piling for burning during a safe burn window, hand chipping and broadcasting of chips, along with mechanical mastication with light and/or heavy equipment. Heavy equipment will be confined to slopes that do not exceed 40%. Trees up to 12 inches DBH may be removed to achieve the necessary spacing needed for achieving a functional fuel break. Larger trees shall not be cut unless deemed to be a safety hazard. 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 in order to provide a safe and feasible means of defense against the high probability of 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))

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**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 shaded fuel breaks. A query of the CNDDDB did not reveal the presence of any sensitive species. Protection measures for watercourses are consistent with The California Forest Practice Rules. Protection measures for archaeological sites are consistent with the Best Management Practices and impacts are not expected. All burning will be done in accordance with a permit for the San Joaquin Air Pollution Control District.

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**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

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7/12/16

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