

# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Loma Vista Community Perimeter Shaded Fuel Break		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of sections 10 and 3, Township 4 North, Range 4 West, MDB&M	COUNTY	Napa
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this shaded fuel break project is to reduce the volume of fuels on the periphery of residences in the Loma Vista neighborhood, located at the lower stretch of Soda Canyon Rd., north of Napa, CA. The reduction in ladder fuels and brush continuity in the approximately 100-ft wide fuelbreak will reduce fire intensity and improve the effectiveness of surface fire containment and air tanker drops in the event of a wildfire. The 3.7 mile project will encircle an unnamed ridge west of Soda Creek spanning both sides of Loma Vista Drive. The western side of the project is located on slopes facing Silverado Trail. The location of the fuelbreak was selected to connect lands that are already low in fuel volume in order to minimize work and impact. The area surrounding the project is semi-rural, with approximately 35 homes enclosed within the fuelbreak.

Vegetation type is classified as grasslands and vineyards in the majority of the project area. Oak woodlands are located within the project but are largely bypassed. Where the work is located within oak woodlands, the treatment consists of removing lower branches of mature trees. Fewer than 10 trees, all smaller than 6 inches in diameter are expected to be cut. Larger diameter material (larger than 6 inches) will remain as refugia for wildlife. Shrubs within the fuelbreak area will be cut and either chipped or cut further into small pieces and packed into topographic depressions outside the fuelbreak. All dead and dying vegetation will be removed.

The project is expected to begin before the end of March 2016, before the breeding season of most bird species. There will be no mastication, burning, or other ground disturbance associated with this phase of this project.

## EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption** Type/Section:  
Class 4, 15304 &  
Class 8, 15308 **Minor Alterations to Land  
Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of the Environment**
- 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 the description for a Class 4 and Class 8 Categorical Exemption to CEQA. The Napa FireWise Consultant conducted an environmental review to confirm that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. This review included on-the-ground field inspection. A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) for the project area resulted in the known presence of three special status herbaceous plant and several animal species within the project area. These are *Castilleja ambigua* var. *meadii*, *Trichostema ruygtii*, and *Erigeron greenei*. However, the treatment is confined to removal of shrubs and lower branches of trees and thereby would avoid impact to the herbaceous plants. All three species occur in grassy habitats, whereas treatments will be confined to shrubby and treed locations. No special status animals were found within the project area. No special status species were observed in the field during project planning efforts. The consultant 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 consultant is kept on file at Napa FireWise and the Soda Canton FireSafe Council.

## DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

MAR 15 2016

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

 3/10/16  
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Helge Eng, Deputy Director Date  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection