

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PROJECT TITLE	Oak Hill Lane Chipping and Tree Limbing Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Section 32 Township 1N Range 1E, and S33 T1N R13 Antioch South and Clayton Quads	COUNTY	Contra Costa
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Edgar Orre		
ADDRESS	Division Chief; Santa Clara Unit, CAL FIRE 15670 S. Monterey Street Morgan Hill CA 95037	PHONE	(408) 779-2121

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this joint project of Diablo FireSafe Council (DFSC) and homeowners is to reduce the volume of fuels around residences along Oak Hill Lane, located off of Marsh Creek Road in the unincorporated area of Contra Costa County south of Clayton, CA. The project starts at the intersection of Oak Hill Lane and Fox Creek Lane and continues to the end of the paved road approximately 0.8 miles to the west. The homeowners will reduce ladder fuels using hand tools from immediately around their homes to create defensible space. DFSC Grant funds will be used to hire a contractor to chip homeowner-cut brush and fallen trees. The contractor will also cut understory vegetation, limb-up and thin trees that are hazardous, dead, diseased or dying along the access/ egress road and driveways.

All work will be done by hand tools. Chipping equipment will stay on existing roads and driveways. No mastication, burning or other ground disturbance will occur on this project. Project work is expected during April-June during bird-nesting season. The project area will be reviewed by a biologist to identify any active nests and the work boundaries adjusted to avoid active nests. The contractor's work crew will also be instructed to stop work and inform the project manager should their activities uncover any active nests.

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 the description for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption to CEQA. An environmental review has confirmed 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 five special status plant and several animal species within the project area. However, the treatment is confined to removal of understory shrubs, lower branches of trees and dead and dying trees; thereby avoiding impact to the herbaceous plants. These five species occur in grasslands, on serpentine soils, vernal pools, specific sand dunes, and rocky chaparral slope; whereas treatments will be confined to previous disturbed locations in oak woodlands. No special status animals were found within the project area. No special status species were observed in the field during project planning efforts. Project work is located in previously disturbed areas around existing homes and roads; no special status species are anticipated in the project area. The review 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 is kept on file at Santa Clara Unit Morgan Hill.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

APR 21 2016

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

 4/18/16

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