



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

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Soda Springs Crew Training		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	T6N, R4W, Sections 11 and 12, Mt. Diablo Base & Meridian (38° 22.837, -122° 15.761)	<b>COUNTY</b>	Napa
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT ADDRESS</b>	Megan Scheeline, Forester I CAL FIRE Sonoma-Lake-Napa Unit HQ 1199 Big Tree Road, St. Helena CA 94574	<b>PHONE</b>	707-967-1428

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is planning inmate hand crew training exercises on private property to the northeast of the town of Napa, CA. Hand crews will be trained in proper brush cutting, piling, and burning techniques, as well as creating fire line using hand tools. The continuous training of these crews furthers the mission of CAL FIRE, as the crews are a major contributor to fire suppression efforts in the state. This project will allow years of training for Delta Conservation Camp hand crews. The project area is 89 acres and consists of a brush-covered hilltop and oak woodland on private property that is easily accessed using existing dirt roads. Vegetation on the hilltop is dominated by chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) with scattered manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), interior live oak (*Quercus wislizenii*) and California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*). The hilltop is undulating in nature, with moderate slopes (average 25%) and valleys throughout. The oak forest is situated south of the chamise-covered hilltop and is dominated by interior live oak with native grasses and scattered brush in the understory. Crew training exercises will mainly occur in the chamise-dominated brush field. Brush will be cut and piled for disposal by burning. Chamise will be the targeted species for removal, and scattered manzanitas and interior live oaks will be retained where possible for aesthetics and to reduce erosion potential. Although much of the project area is shielded from view from the valley below, care will be taken to cut and pile brush in a mosaic pattern rather than straight strips in order to minimize the visual effect of the treatment. Within the oak woodland portion of the project area, isolated areas of dense brush and ladder fuels will be cut, piled and burned. Brush will be the target vegetation for removal within the oak woodland areas; however, if it is determined that small trees should be removed for fuel reduction, only trees less than 6" diameter will be cut. If repeated use of dirt roads within the project area by crew buses degrades the roads, they will be repaired using a bulldozer or grader as determined to be necessary. Road maintenance will be confined to existing roads within the project area.

**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 the description for a Class 4, §15304 – Minor Alterations to Land Categorical Exemption to CEQA. 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 project consists of minor treatments to land and vegetation in the form of brush removal using chainsaws, pile burning, grading of existing dirt roads, and fire line creation using hand tools. The activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, or sedimentation to surface waters. CAL FIRE staff 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.

**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

FEB 02 2016

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

1/27/16  
 Helge Eng, Deputy Director  
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Date