

State of California
Department of Parks and Recreation

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

FROM: Department of Parks and Recreation
1416 Ninth Street
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

PROJECT TITLE: Empire Mine Fuelbreak Project

LOCATION: Empire Mine State Historic Park - Empire Street and Highway 174 **COUNTY:** Nevada

DESCRIPTION OF THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PROJECT:

Phase 1: Conduct pre-construction archaeological field survey and resource inventory in fuelbreak project location at Empire Mine State Historic Park to identify archaeological resources that require protection from ground disturbance activity.

Phase 2: If the systematic survey results in the positive identification of archaeological sites/or significant isolates, protective measures will be implemented to avoid impacts from the proposed actions of Phase 4. Measures will consist of delineation of the cultural resources with flagging, identification of the resources on a topographic map, and communication of the resource locations to the project manager. Any fuel reduction in areas within and adjacent to recorded archaeological sites and cultural resource features will be limited to hand clearing. Vehicles shall be prohibited within these exclusion zones. Pile burning and chipping within site boundaries is prohibited. Staging areas or haul routes outside of the previously established road system will be surveyed prior to use.

Phase 3: Field crew training by the Sierra District Archaeologist prior to commencement of the fuelbreak project to ensure protection, avoidance, and reporting of cultural resources.

Phase 4: Create a Defensible Fuel Profile Zone (DFPZ) on 653 acres at Empire Mine State Historic Park to reduce the threat of a catastrophic wildfire and improve native forest composition and structure. Project specifics include:

- Hand crews will perform work.
- Trees to be removed will be marked with paint by or under the supervision of a California Registered Professional Forester.
- Islands of dense vegetation will remain to provide for a complex patch habitat for animal species.
- Riparian buffer zones of 100 feet will be enforced with the exception of certain blackberry and prunus species classified as exotic.
- Debris piles will be burned in accordance with county and state regulations.

If evidence of potentially significant historical/archaeological resources is discovered at any point during the project, work will be suspended until the find can be assessed by either the District or Service Center archaeologist. Project protects park resources.

PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING THE PROJECT: California Department of Parks and Recreation

NAME OF DIVISION OR DISTRICT CARRYING OUT THE PROJECT: Sierra District

EXEMPT STATUS:

- Declared Emergency (Section 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (Section 15269(b) and (c))
- Statutory Exemption (Section:)
- Categorical Exemption

Class: 4 & 6 Section: 15304, 15306

REASONS WHY PROJECT IS EXEMPT:

Project consists of basic data collection activities that will not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource, and minor alteration in the condition of land and vegetation that does not involve the removal of healthy, mature scenic trees except for forestry purposes and is included as "archaeological investigations by department staff" and "resource management projects" in the Department of Parks and Recreation's list of exempt activities, in accordance with CCRS 15300.4.

CONTACT: Diane Cassano
Sierra District

TELEPHONE: (530) 525-3342
EMAIL: dcassano@parks.ca.gov

Hayden Sohm, District Superintendent

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