



State of California  
The Natural Resources Agency  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

2019090292

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Sawmill Fuel Reduction Project		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Twin Peaks, CA-Section 24, T02N, R04W, SBBM; Section 18, 19, T02N, R03W, SBBM	<b>COUNTY</b>	San Bernardino County
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	David Haas, Forester I		
<b>ADDRESS</b>	3800 N. Sierra Way San Bernardino, CA 92405	<b>PHONE</b>	(909)881-6955

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Sawmill Fuel Reduction Project is located on California Department of Fish and Wildlife property in Twin Peaks, California. The legal location description is T2N, R4W, Section 24, SBBM; T2N, R3W, Sections 18 & 19, SBBM. This project is in a mixed conifer-oak forest, with intermixed brush, in the San Bernardino mountains. Ponderosa pine, Jeffrey pine, white fir, incense cedar, sugar pine, black oak, and live oak species dominate the stand. Understory shrub species include a variety of ceanothus, manzanita, and other shrub species. Elevation is approximately 5,600 feet. The project goal is to reduce wildfire risk to nearby homes on State Responsibility Area (SRA) by reducing vertical and horizontal fuel continuity and improving road conditions for emergency vehicle access during wildfires and for project access. Since the project area was previously treated for fuel reduction this will be a maintenance re-entry.

The project area consists of the maintenance of a hazardous fuel reduction project and improvements to existing roads. The total project area is approximately 120 acres. Fuel reduction is currently taking place in the project area under a previous CEQA document (Sawmill Fuel Reduction Project). Fuel reduction treatments will consist primarily of thinning saplings and brush that has grown since the last project entry utilizing a masticator and hand treatments. Thinning of trees under 12 inches (diameter at breast height-DBH) to an average spacing of 20 feet between tree trunks will occur. Residual trees will be pruned to a height of eight feet or no more than  $\frac{1}{2}$  the tree height, whichever is less. Dead/dying trees will be removed regardless of size except to meet wildlife habitat needs. All vegetation within the drip-line of residual trees will be removed. Brush will be thinned to create a mosaic of islands of vegetation of various shapes and sizes. A minimum distance of two and half times the brush height will be cleared between the islands of vegetation. Hand treated material will be chipped and deposited onsite or piled (up to 10' diameter x 6' height piles) and burned. Chips will be scattered to a depth of no more than two-four inches, will not cover more than 75% of the ground, and will be kept at least three feet from the base of residual trees. Cut material may also be cut into firewood size lengths and stacked next to the side of the road. Large diameter hazardous trees that are cut may have their main stem left intact on the ground to meet down and woody wildlife requirements. If trees that are cut are found to be infested with bark beetles, the main stem will be left on the ground or cut into firewood size length and stacked. The stems and the wood stacks will be covered with six mil clear plastic to control the spread of the beetles.

There are several piles of slash and small logs that are located within the project area adjacent to the main access road in the southwestern portion of the property. These piles are remnants of past hazardous tree removal projects. The piles will be improved and burned in order to dispose of this fuel. One log will be left at this location for wildlife habitat.

Road maintenance will occur at two different levels of complexity. The main access road improvements will consist of out sloping, grading, installing rolling dips and water bars to address road drainage and erosion. Roadside brushing will occur as necessary along the edge of the roads. Total length of main access roads is approximately 1.3 miles.

The limited access road improvements will consist of spot maintenance as needed to make the road passable in case of a wildfire emergency. Spot maintenance may consist of grading, installation of rolling dips or waterbars, and roadside brushing. Total length of limited access roads is approximately one miles.

There are several old roads or skid trails that have not been maintained and would require a much heavier workload (i.e. reconstruction of the road bed) to return them to functioning conditions. These roads will not be maintained as part of this project due to the complexity of work that it would involve or due to their unnecessary use. The total length of the unmaintained roads is approximately 1.3 miles.

A Notice of Exemption (NOE) for this project was executed on January 19, 2018. The project description for the 2018 NOE limited ground based equipment to operating from existing roads or disturbed areas (i.e. landings). The Sawmill Fuel Reduction Project is being revised to allow for the operation of ground based equipment, including but not limited to a rubber-tracked skid steer with a masticator head and a rubber-tracked chipper, throughout the entire project area. No new roads will be constructed. Work will be accomplished using CAL FIRE crews, hand tools, skid steer, chipper, dozer and/or grader.



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### 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))

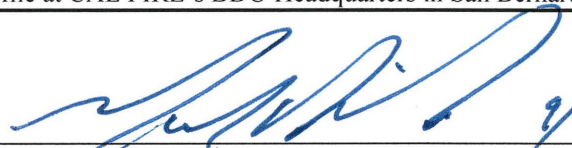
### REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under the Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) Categorical Exemption to CEQA. Class 4 is described as a "minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes." This project as proposed is to reduce hazardous fuels and improve roads for emergency access. The project does not remove healthy, mature, or scenic trees.

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 Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact will 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, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE's BDU Headquarters in San Bernardino.

### DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

  
Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 9/11/19

SEP 11 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE



## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

**Note:** This report form is intended for use by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a Notice of Exemption (NOE) document for a proposed CAL FIRE project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable Categorical Exemptions, this report presents CAL FIRE's review for possible "Exceptions" that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by the Department.

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Project Name: Sawmill Fuel Reduction Project  
Project Number: N/A  
Program Type: Fuel reduction  
CAL FIRE Unit: San Bernardino  
County: San Bernardino  
Acres: Approximately 120  
Legal Location: Section 24, T02N, R04W, SBBM; Section 18, 19, T02N, R03W, SBBM  
Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s): Lake Arrowhead, Harrison Mountain  
☒ Project Vicinity Map Attached ☒ Project Location Map Attached ☒ Photos Attached

### Other Public Agency Review/Permit Required:

Would the project result in:

- alterations to a watercourse (DFG - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)
- conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)
- demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)
- soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)
- fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)
- other:

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:

### Project Description and Environmental Setting (Describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting):

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The limited access road improvements will consist of spot maintenance as needed to make the road passable in case of a wildfire emergency. Spot maintenance may consist of grading, installation of rolling dips or waterbars, and roadside brushing. Total length of limited access roads is approximately one miles.

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A Notice of Exemption (NOE) for this project was executed on January 19, 2018. The project description for the 2018 NOE limited ground based equipment to operating from existing roads or disturbed areas (i.e. landings). The Sawmill Fuel Reduction Project is being revised to allow for the operation of ground based equipment, including but not limited to a rubber-tracked skid steer with a masticator head and a rubber-tracked chipper, throughout the entire project area. No new roads will be constructed. Work will be accomplished using CAL FIRE crews, hand tools, skid steer, chipper, dozer and/or grader.

## Environmental Impact Analysis

### Aesthetics

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project site will result in a more natural open forest-like setting with a reduced fire risk. Vegetation will be chipped and chips will be deposited onsite or the material will be piled and burned. The project area is not visible from any major highway corridors and it is behind a closed gate. The property is only partially visible from adjacent properties and people who enter the property by foot, bike, or in another non-motorized manner. The loss of the project area to an uncontrolled fire would result in a severe change in the aesthetics. The appearance is generally favored by most people. As a result aesthetics will be improved.

### Agriculture and Forest Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ Yes ☐ No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds and compliance with FPRs.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?  
☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land/timberland to non-forest use?

- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Trees that will be cut will be small diameter understory trees (<12") which are usually not associated with nesting birds. Project will not occur between March 15-September 15 when birds are nesting unless the project area is surveyed and it is determined that nesting birds are not present within the project area. No conversion of prime or unique farmland and/or timberland will occur. All vehicles will stay within existing roadways. It is CAL FIRE'S determination that impacts to agriculture and forest resources will not be significant.

### Air Quality

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ Yes ☐ No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Travel to and from the project site will slightly increase vehicular traffic. Project implementation will include use of gas powered skid steer and chipper. The vehicle and equipment usage associated with the project will create a short term increase of combustible engine emissions into the atmosphere. The number of vehicles will be limited to only those required to transport materials or crews. All vehicles and equipment will meet current Air Quality Management District standards for

emissions.

Pile burning will take place under this project. Smoke management considerations will be reviewed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD). An approved smoke management plan (SMP) will be submitted to the AQMD. Prescribed burning will only occur on days permitted by the Air Resources Board (ARB) in accordance with Section 41855 of the California Health and Safety Code, and request for approval for ignition from the District will occur on the day prior to burning. All signage, notification, communication and smoke behavior observation procedures described in the smoke management plan will be followed. All contingency actions and smoke mitigation strategies described in the smoke management plan will be followed. Ignitions will be suspended if smoke impacts smoke-sensitive locations. The District will be notified of any complaints from the public about the smoke within 24 hours of receipt. Burned acres will be reported.

The project design which only removes some vegetation to meet project objectives and the way in which it will occur make project activities consistent with the South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 403, which states "The purpose of this Rule is to reduce the amount of particular matter entrained in the ambient air as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) fugitive dust sources by requiring actions to prevent or reduce dust emissions." This should ensure impacts to air quality will not be significant.

#### Biological Resources

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially affect biological resources?  
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a current NDDDB review completed? Results discussed below:  
☐ Yes ☒ No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A query of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) was conducted utilizing the following criteria to identify species that might be present in the project area: federally listed Threatened, Endangered, Proposed Threatened, Proposed Endangered, and Candidate species; state listed Threatened, Endangered, Candidate Threatened, Candidate Endangered, and Rare species; Rare Plant List 1A, 1B.1, 1B.2, 2A, 2B.1, 2B.2, 3, 3.1, and 3.2 species; and CDFW Species of Special Concern and Fully Protected species. The search yielded twenty six (26) species. Of the twenty six species identified, three may be present in the project area. The project is designed to minimize or eliminate possible impacts to these species. Species evaluations are documented below.

#### American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*) – CDFW Species of Special Concern

Preferred habitat consists of drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats, with drier soils. Presence of this species are listed as generally around the community of Lake Arrowhead, but there are no known occurrences in the San Bernardino Mountains. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

#### Baja navarretia (*Navarretia peninsularis*) – Rare Plant List 1B.2

Preferred habitat consists of wet areas in open forest. Known occurrences are located at Holcomb Creek near the Pacific Crest Trail, south of 3N16. Occurrences of this species are not found in the project area. A seasonal wet area is present within the project area, but the presence of moisture is dependent on weather conditions and varies on an annual basis, thus making it unsuitable habitat for a species requiring wet areas.

#### Bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) – State Listed Endangered, CDFW Fully Protected

Preferred habitat is along lake margins and near rivers for both nesting and wintering. Species is found in large, old-growth, or dominant live trees with open branches, especially in ponderosa pines. Most nests are generally located within one mile of water. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

#### Big Bear Valley Woollypod (*Astragalus luecolobus*) – Rare Plant List 1B.2

Preferred habitat includes dry pine woods, gravelly knolls among sagebrush, or stony lake shores in the pine belt. Known occurrences are located in the vicinity of Hawes Ranch along Cox Creek, west of Redonda Ridge. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

#### Bird-foot Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea pedata*) – Federal Endangered, State Endangered, Rare Plant List 1B.2

Preferred habitat is vernal mesic sites in meadows or pebble plains. No known occurrences in the area, location mapped by CNDDB as best guess in vicinity of Arrowbear. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

#### Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*)

Habitat for this species is generally found on steep, north facing slopes or in low grade sandy washes. It is found associated

with chaparral and on steep woodlands and in coastal scrub and riparian scrub. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

**Palmer's Mariposa-Lily (*Calochortus palmeri* var. *palmeri*) – Rare Plant List 1B.2**

Preferred habitat is vernal moist places in yellow-pine forest and chaparral. Known occurrences are located in the Upper Cox Creek drainage, 0.4 miles downstream from Jackrabbit Spring east of Little Pine Flat. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

**Parish's Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea hickmanii* ssp. *Parishii*) – Rare Plant List 1B.2**

Preferred habitat is disturbed burned or cleared areas on dry, rocky slopes, in fule breaks and fire roads long the mountain summits. Known occurrences are located northeast of Hawes Ranch, near Cox Creek, and northwest of Hawes Peak. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

**Parish's Yampah (*Perideridia parishii* ssp. *Parishii*) – Rare Plant List 2B.2**

Preferred habitat is damp meadows or along streambeds, preferring an open pine canopy. Known occurrences are located southeast of Running Springs. Just east of Deer Lick Ranger Station along Dry Creek. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

**San Bernardino Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys oregonensis californicus*) – CDFW Species of Special Concern**

Preferred habitat is black oak and white fir dominated woodlands between 5200 – 8500 feet elevation in the San Bernardino and San Jacinto ranges. The species needs cavities in trees or snags for nests and cover, adjacent to water. Known occurrences are located in the city of Lake Arrowhead, about 0.2 miles southeast of a large bend in CA-173, just west of Kuffel Canyon. The project habitat meets the described habitat for this species.

**San Bernardino Mountains Owl's-Clover (*Castilleja lasiorhyncha*) – Rare Plant List 1B.2**

Preferred habitat is mesic to drying soils in open areas of stream and meadow margins, or in vernal wet areas. Known occurrences are located in Ash Meadows, north of Lake Arrowhead. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

**Southern California Legless Lizard (*Anniella stebbinsi*) – CDFW Species of Special Concern**

Preferred habitat is sandy or loose loamy soils under sparse vegetation. It is found in a variety of habitat types south of the Transverse Range, but is generally found in loose soils with a high moisture content. This species is mapped non-specifically to the town of Lake Arrowhead, south of the lake. One specimen was collected in the 1950's. Occurrences of this species or its preferred habitat are not found in the project area.

**Southern Rubber Boa (*Charina umbratica*) – State Threatened**

Preferred habitat is near streams or wet meadows and a variety of montane forest habitats. It requires loose, moist soil for burrowing and seeks cover in rotting logs, rock outcrops, and under surface litter. The project habitat meets the described habitat for this species.

**White-eared Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus alticola alticola*) – CDFW Species of Special Concern**

Preferred habitat is yellow pine forest, mixed chaparral, and sagebrush in the San Bernardino Mountains. Burrows are constructed in loose soil. Known occurrences are located along CA-173 approximately 0.4 miles south of Lake Arrowhead. The project habitat meets the described habitat for this species.

Of the above species whose habitat is found in the project area, none were observed in the vicinity of the project area. As a result of the above assessment, it is CAL FIRE's determination that the effects of this project on biological resources will be less than significant.

**Cultural Resources**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ Yes ☐ No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:

A records search was conducted at the South Central Coastal Information Center. The records search identified numerous previous survey projects within the Fish and Wildlife property, including a property-wide survey completed in 2005. The records search identified four previously recorded historic resources. The sites include a sawmill remnant and artifacts associated with logging, a human made canal/ ditch, water storage cistern, and a concrete dam with an adjacent pond and two earthen berms. A prehistoric milling isolate was identified in 1980 but was not relocated. Original site document indicated it was heavily disturbed by dozer work.

☒ Yes ☐ No Was a CAL FIRE Staff or Contract Archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:

As part of the NOE for this project signed on 01/19/2018, the following archaeological consultation was done: CAL FIRE Archaeologist, Velasquez, received a general project scope for the project on the California Fish and Wildlife Sawmill property. Project activities were identified as tree and brush thinning, pruning, chipping, pile burning, road grading, and rolling dip/waterbar road maintenance. The CAL FIRE archaeologist determined the project would require Archaeological Review, including Native American notification, records search, survey and reporting.

As part of the update to this project to allow for the use of ground-based equipment throughout the project site, the following archaeological consultation was done: CAL FIRE Archaeologist Mike McGuirt received an updated scope of work for the project, describing the work proposed to be completed by ground-based equipment. He was also provided copies of all past archaeological survey reports completed for the property, including: 2 complete surveys completed by Applied Earthworks and Cal State Bakersfield in 2004 and 2005, respectively; an Archaeological Survey Report completed by CAL FIRE Archaeologist Stephanie Velasquez in 2012; and an Archaeological Survey Report completed by CAL FIRE Forester Henry Herrera in 2017. McGuirt concluded, "that the proposed project does not have the potential to affect cultural resources, provided that the project is implemented as proposed in the attached draft final CEQA Cultural Resources Analysis form", and that based on the proposed changes to the project description, additional Native American notification was not necessary.

☒ Yes ☐ No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:

As part of the NOE for this project signed on 01/19/2018, the following archaeological surveying was done: CAL FIRE archaeologist Velasquez and surveyor Henry Herrera surveyed the project and the survey resulted in the identification of three previously recorded historic resources, including a sawmill remnant and artifacts associated with logging, water storage cistern, and a concrete dam with an adjacent pond and two earthen berms. The following sites have been recorded and completed records were created:

**17-Site 1:** This site is comprised of an isolate. The resource is a 10" steel water pipe with a riveted seam. The isolate is located near the southeast corner of the project site.

**17-Site 2:** This site is comprised of an isolate. The resource is an 11' long choker cable. One end of the cable has a loop and the other end is torn. The isolate is located near the entrance to the property off Sawmill Road. It is about 30' south of the road.

☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project affect any historic buildings or archaeological site?

Archaeological sites will either be avoided or treated by hand. Burn piles will not be located within any identified site boundary. Vehicles and mechanized equipment may utilize existing roads within site boundaries, but may not leave road prisms; road maintenance or improvement will not occur within archaeological site boundaries.

☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Archaeological sites will be treated by hand and no burn piles will be located within their identified site boundaries. Ground based equipment will stay within existing road prisms. If the project is completed as proposed, the CAL FIRE archaeologist has determined the project will have no adverse effect to cultural resources.

This project will not impact known cultural resources. Should project activities reveal cultural or archaeological resources, CAL FIRE's standard post-review discovery procedures shall be enacted: work shall cease within 100 feet of the discovery and the unit archaeologist will be contacted; work will not resume until further contact from the archaeologist. Per California Health and Safety Code (HSC 7050.5(b)), in the event human remains or burials are encountered, all work shall cease and the San Bernardino County Coroner's office and the CAL FIRE archaeologist shall be contacted; work will not resume until clearance is granted.

#### Geology and Soils

☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A Soils Report was completed through the Natural Resource Conservation Service's Web Soil Survey. Two soil classifications were identified: Wapi-Pacifico families-Rock outcrop complex (DaG) and Morical-Wind River families



complex (MbE). The soil types consist of well/excessively drained, loamy sand to loam that formed in residuum weathered from granodiorite. Surface runoff ranges from low to very high. The erosion hazard rating ranges from moderate to very severe. Significant soil cover with vegetation will remain within the project site. Soil disturbance will be minimal. No significantly unstable land features were noted in the project area. Therefore, CAL FIRE has determined that impacts to soils or geology will be less than significant.

### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
- ☐ Yes ☒ No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

Estimates for GHG emissions were done based on total fuel consumption per day for planned motor vehicles operations to facilitate this project. The common conversion factors were obtained from the California Climate Action Registry (CCAR) General Reporting Protocol U.S. EPA. The results are listed below:

- Two CAL FIRE emergency crew transports (ECT) will be traveling on average 50 miles round trip for 50 days, using a total of 10 gallons of diesel per day.
- About two gallons of a gas mixture will be used by the crews for 50 days for the use of chainsaws.
- The dozer transport consumes about seven miles per gallon and will be traveling on average 50 miles round trip per day, using a total of 8 gallons of diesel per day. A total of approximately 5 days of dozer work will be needed to repair the roads.
- A dozer uses approximately 30 gallons of diesel per an eight hour work day worth of road repair work. A total of approximately 5 days of road work will be necessary.
- About 6 gallons of diesel and one of gasoline for the use of drip torches will be used for 10 days.
- The skid steer uses approximately 25 gallons of diesel per an eight hour work day worth of mastication. A total of approximately 20 days of mastication will be necessary.
- The track chipper uses approximately 10 gallons of diesel per an eight hour work day. A total of approximately 20 days of chipper usage will be necessary

Estimation of GHG emissions are based on total fuel consumption per day. The results are listed below:

- Net Diesel Fuel = 10 gallons:  $10 \text{ gal} * 10.15 \text{ (conversion factor)} = 101.5 \text{ KG}/1000 = .1015 \text{ metric tons CO}_2 \text{ emissions}$   
Total = 0.1015 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day X 50 days = 5.075 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Net Gasoline Fuel = 2 gallons:  $2 \text{ gal} * 8.18 \text{ (conversion factor)} = 8.18 \text{ KG}/1000 = 0.01636 \text{ metric tons CO}_2 \text{ emissions}$   
Total = 0.01636 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day X 50 days = 0.0818 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Net Diesel Fuel = 38 gallons:  $38 \text{ gal} * 10.15 \text{ (conversion factor)} = 385.7 \text{ KG}/1000 = 0.3857 \text{ metric tons CO}_2 \text{ emissions}$   
Total = 0.3857 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day X 5 days = 1.9285 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Net Diesel Fuel = 6 gallons:  $6 \text{ gal} * 10.15 \text{ (conversion factor)} = 60.9 \text{ KG}/1000 = 0.0609 \text{ metric tons CO}_2 \text{ emissions}$   
Total = 0.0609 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day X 10 days = 0.609 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Net Gasoline Fuel = 1 gallon:  $1 \text{ gal} * 8.18 \text{ (conversion factor)} = 8.18 \text{ KG}/1000 = 0.00818 \text{ metric tons CO}_2 \text{ emissions}$   
Total = 0.00818 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day X 10 days = 0.0818 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Net Diesel Fuel = 25 gallons:  $25 \text{ gal} * 10.15 \text{ (conversion factor)} = 253.75 \text{ KG}/1000 = .2538 \text{ metric tons CO}_2 \text{ emissions}$   
Total = 0.2538 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day X 20 days = 5.075 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions
- Net Diesel Fuel = 10 gallon:  $10 \text{ gal} * 10.15 \text{ (conversion factor)} = 101.5 \text{ KG}/1000 = 0.1015 \text{ metric tons CO}_2 \text{ emissions}$   
Total = 0.1015 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per day X 20 days = 2.03 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions

**Total emissions = 14.881 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub> emissions**

All vehicles and chainsaws will comply with current Air Quality Management District standards. This project will temporarily increase traffic in the area due to construction equipment. As a result, an increase in emissions will occur. The Smoke Management Plan estimates the pile burning has the potential of PM<sub>10</sub> emissions of about 24.5 tons. It is estimated that a maximum of **202.68 CO<sub>2</sub> tonnes** (120 acres x 1.689 CO<sub>2</sub> tonnes) will be released as a result of the cut vegetation from



this project. Most of the biomass will be piled and burned or chipped and left on site allowing a slow decay and release of sequestered carbon. Emission from the decomposition of treated material is expected to be re-sequestered by the remaining vegetation and planted trees in future years as the project site revegetates. The project is intended to reduce the risk of uncontrolled wildfire which would result in a rapid release of carbon and other greenhouse gasses at a higher rate. Because of the relatively low level of estimated carbon dioxide emissions and a further delay due to gradual decomposition of cut biomass, it is CAL FIRE's determination that adverse impacts to greenhouse gas emissions will be less than significant.

**Hazards and Hazardous Materials**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Hazardous materials that will be used on this project include the fuel for vehicles and drip torches. Fueling will be conducted with appropriate fueling devised in controlled areas to prevent any possible spills of hazardous materials. Fuel will be transported using appropriate containers and no other exercise activity or operational conditions will expose people to impacts with regard to hazards or hazardous materials. The project area is not located on a hazardous materials site. It is CAL FIRE's determination that this project will not have impacts to hazardous materials.

**Hydrology and Water Quality**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ Yes ☒ No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

There is a spring that feeds into an open cistern and meadow that is classified as a Class I watercourse. The spring has the potential for aquatic life since the water remains pooled in an open cistern. A seasonal pond/reservoir is classified as a Class III watercourse. Two well-defined channels are Class III, seasonal watercourses, which show evidence of being capable of sediment transport to downstream watercourses. No piling, burning or disposal of chips will occur within watercourses and lake protection zones. The project will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements, or substantially deplete groundwater supplies, alter existing drainage patterns, or contribute to runoff that would exceed storm water drainage systems. It is CAL FIRE's determination that impacts to hydrology and water quality will be less than significant.

**Land Use and Planning**

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project consists of fuel reduction. It is CAL FIRE's determination that this project will not have an impact to land use and planning resources.

**Mineral Resources**

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

It is CAL FIRE's determination that this project will not have an impact to mineral resources.

**Noise**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project will include the operation of mechanized and firefighting equipment which will produce noise beyond what is normally experienced in the area. The additional noise will be limited to the duration of the project implementation. Equipment operation is only scheduled during normal work hours (8:30 AM – 4:30 PM). Due to the remote location and short project duration, it is CAL FIRE's determination that impacts to noise will be less than significant.

**Population and Housing**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will decrease the fire risk to human population and housing. It is CAL FIRE's determination that this project will not have an adverse impact to population and housing.

**Public Services**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project is intended to reduce the risk of a wildfire to the public. It is CAL FIRE's determination that this project will not have an adverse impact to public services.

**Recreation**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The use of recreational hiking trails, wildlife viewing, and other outdoor activities take place at the property. Trails will be closed during project implementation. Due to the limited nature of the activity and project design, impacts to recreation will be less than significant.

**Transportation/Traffic**

- ☐ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☒ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No work will occur on or along public roads. CAL FIRE staff vehicles, crew buses, and fire equipment will be present during the project. Road systems in the area are more than adequate to accommodate this slight increase in traffic. As a result of the limited nature of the activity, it is CAL FIRE's determination that significant impacts to transportation/traffic will not occur.

**Utilities and Service Systems**

- ☒ This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- ☐ This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

This project will not interfere with utilities or service systems. It is CAL FIRE's determination that this project will not have an impact to utilities and service systems.

**Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:**

None.

**Mandatory Findings of Significance:**

**YES** **NO**  
☐ ☒

(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

☐ ☒

(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects)

☐ ☒

(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

**Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):**

This project meets the requirements of Class 4 Categorical Exemption (Minor Alterations to Land), 15304. Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. This project as proposed, consists of thinning small diameter trees and brush, pruning, chipping, piling and burning of vegetation, and road maintenance and does not remove healthy, mature, or scenic trees. These activities are best described as minor in scope.

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 Department has concluded that no significant environmental impacts 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, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems.

**Conclusion:**

☒ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. The Department considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A Notice of Exemption will be filed at the State Clearinghouse.

☐ After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of Categorical Exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site which precludes the use of a Categorical Exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a Negative Declaration or a Mitigated Negative Declaration.

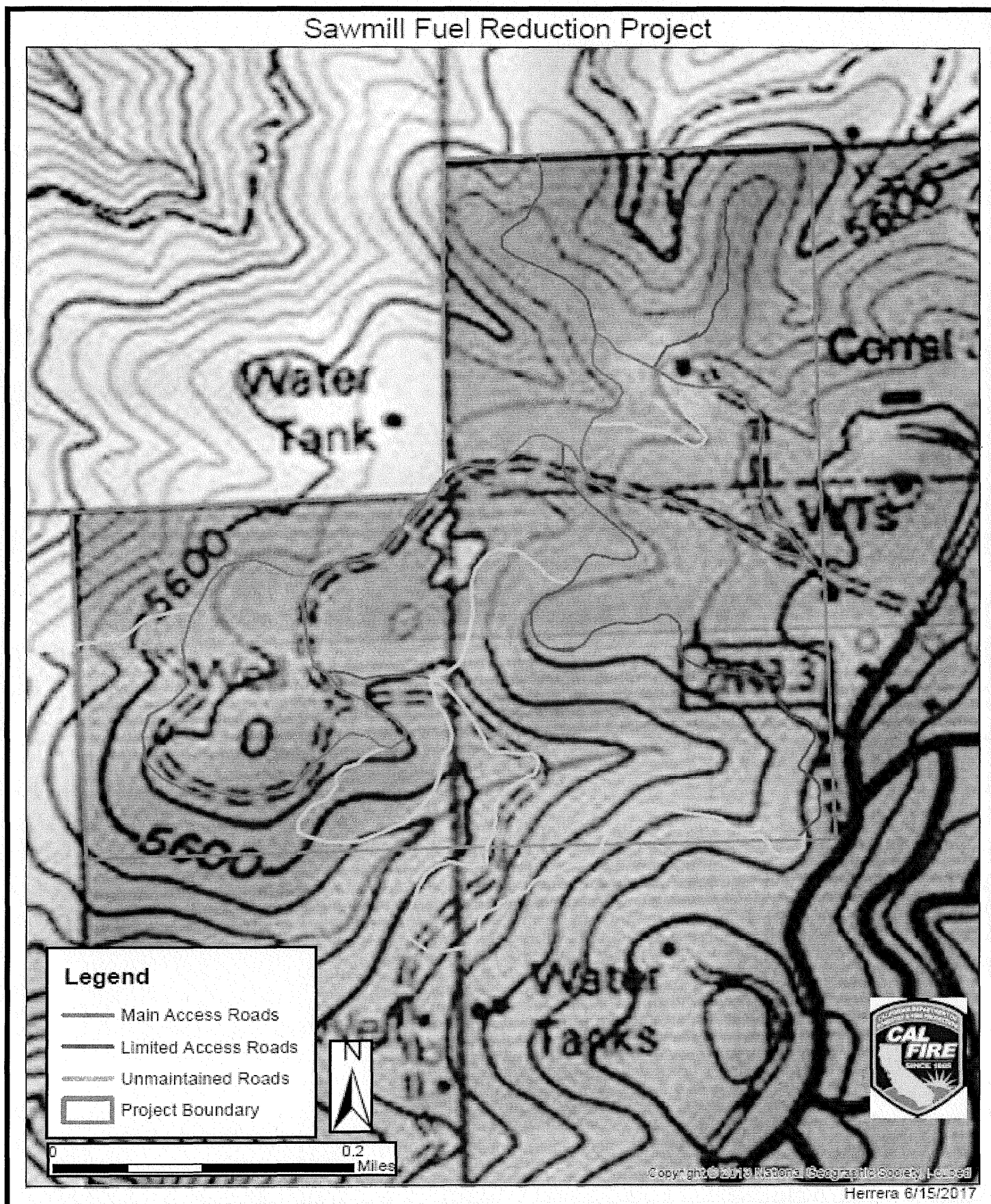


Figure 1. Topographic Project Map



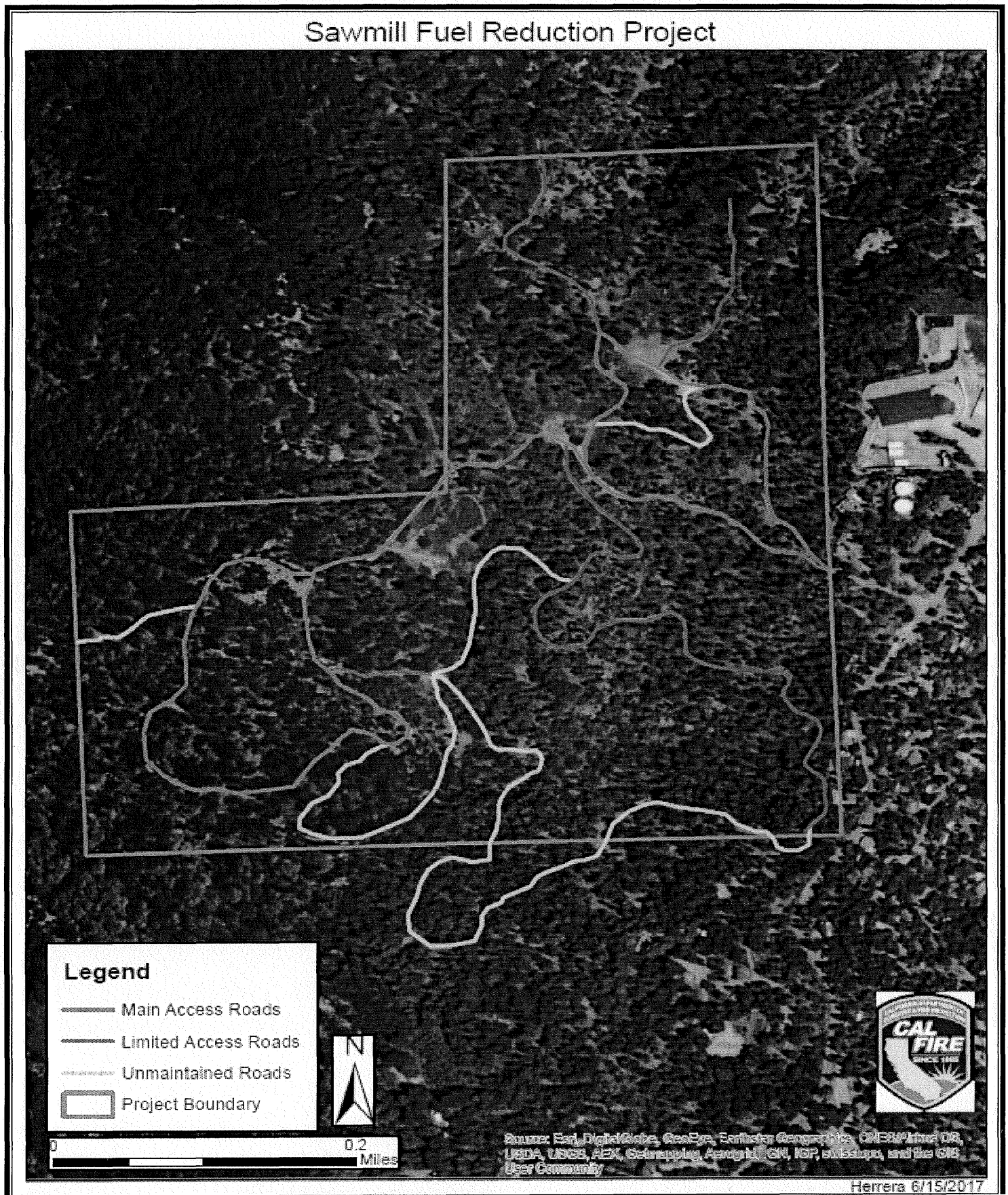


Figure 2. Aerial Imagery Project Map

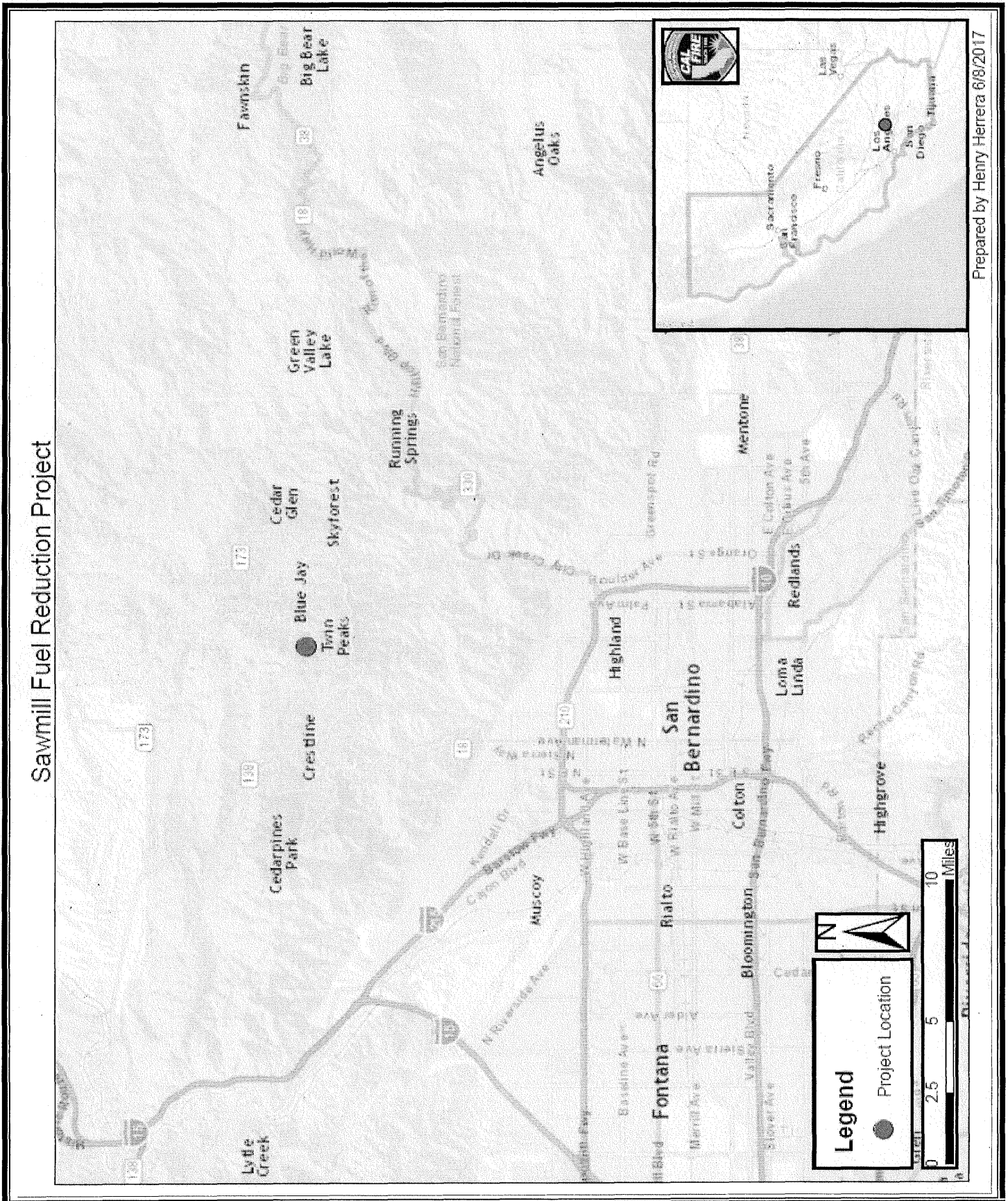


Figure 3. Vicinity Project Map





Figure 4. Road to be maintained.

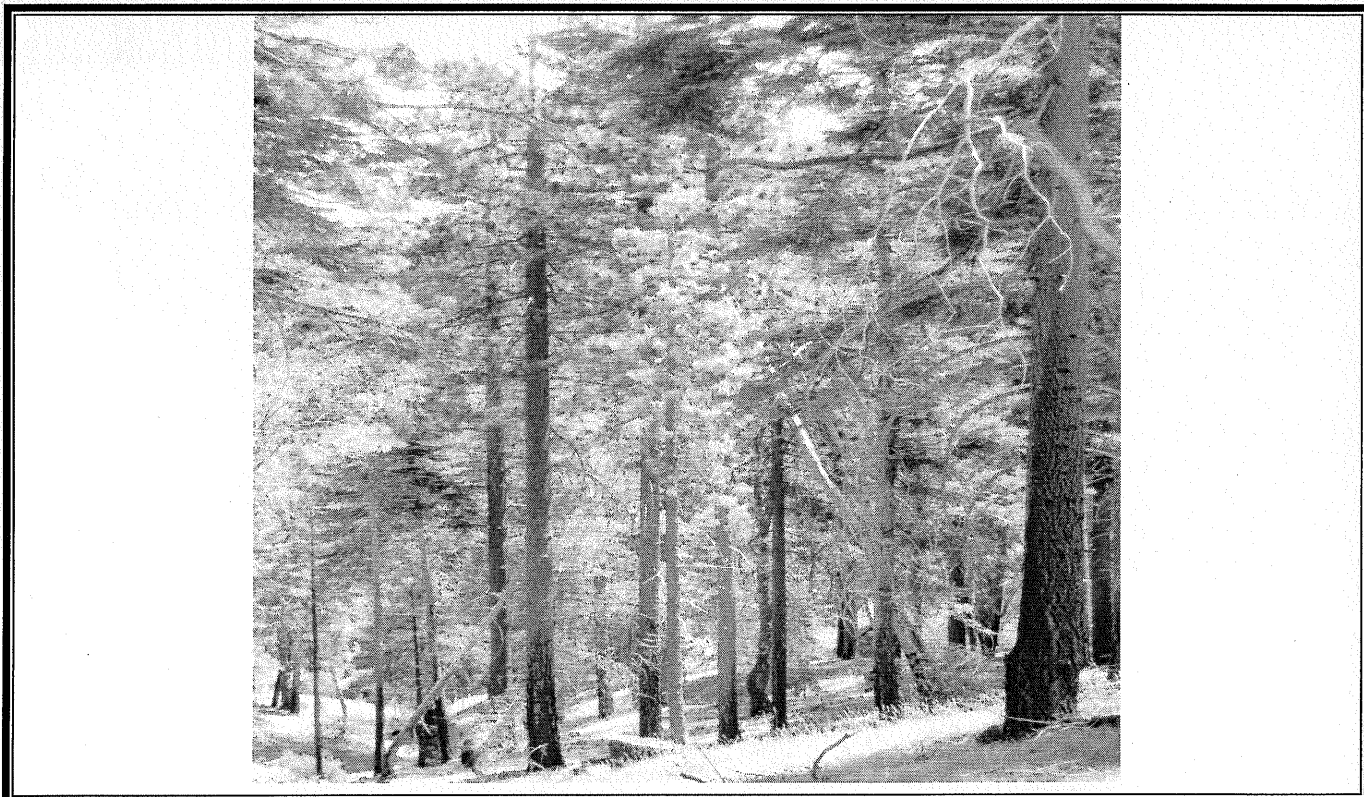


Figure 5. Dead tree that will be removed.



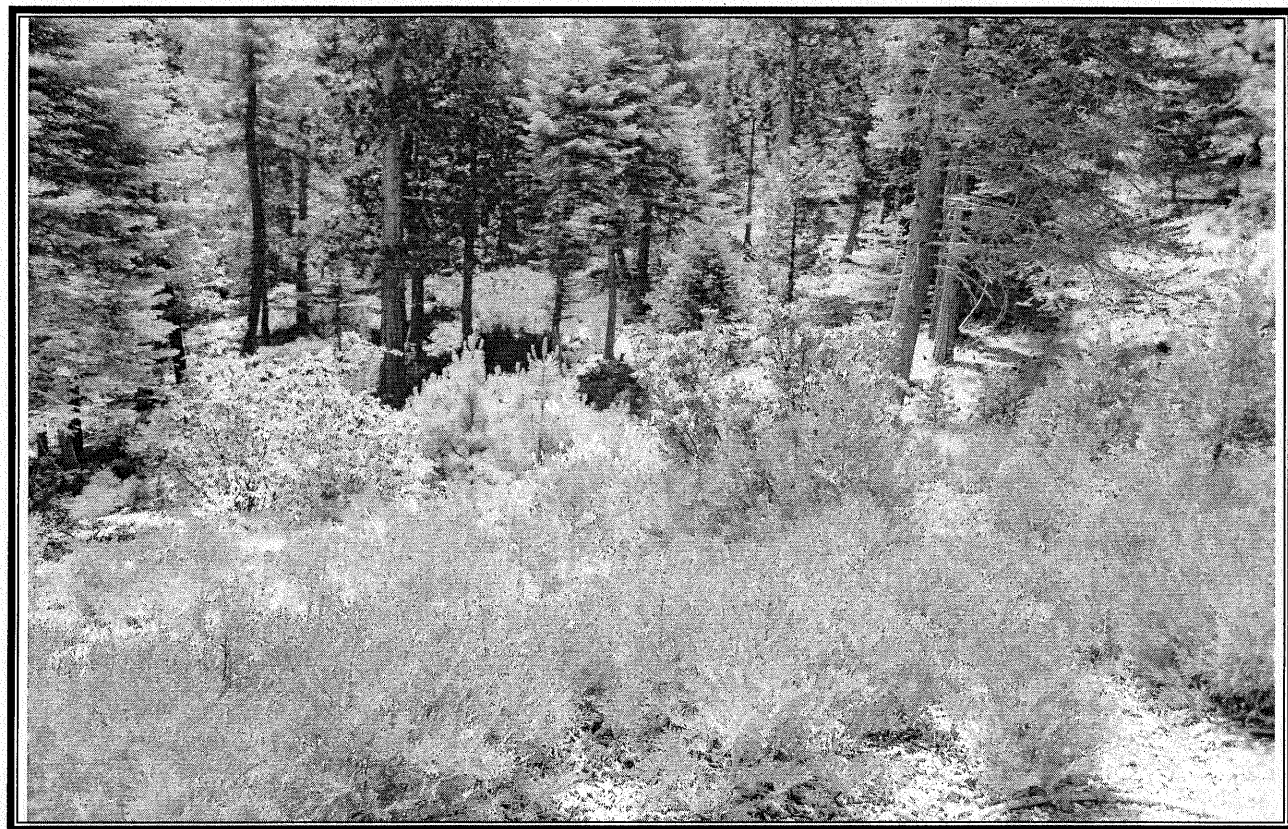


Figure 6. Tree and shrub regrowth that needs to be thinned.



Figure 7. Small diameter tree thinning needs.