Notice of Exemption

21-2026-155

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

County Clerk County of: Marin
Marin Civic Center
3501 Civic Center Dr., Suite 234,
San Rafael, CA 94903

From (Public Agency):
Novato Fire Protection District
95 Rowland Way
Novato, CA 94945

FILED
SEP 18 2026
SHELLY SCOTT
MARIN COUNTY CLERK
BY: D Lobato, Deputy

Project Title: Novato Core Direct Assistance and Novato Hazardous Vegetation Removal Programs

Project Applicant: Novato Fire Protection District

Project Location – Specific: Within 200 feet from structures within the Novato Fire Protection District jurisdiction.

Project Location – City:
City of Novato

Project Location – County:
Marin County

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:
The purposes of the proposed projects are as follows:

- provide direct assistance to homeowners in the Novato Zone to enhance defensible space and existing adjacent fuel reduction projects to increase wildfire resiliency across the communities under the Novato Core Direct Assistance Program; and
- provide direct assistance to homeowners to provide targeted removal of invasive and introduced trees and plants that pose a wildfire hazard or could impede emergency evacuation, under the Novato Hazardous Vegetation Removal Project.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Novato Fire Protection District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Novato Fire Protection District

Exempt Status (check one):

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☐ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☐ Common Sense Exemption (Sec. 15061(b)(3));
- ☐ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number:
- ☒ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: Public Resources Code (PRC) sections 21080.49(c) and 21080.49(d)

Reasons why project is exempt:
The project is statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code (PRC) sections 21080.49(c) and 21080.49(d). A project exempt in accordance with PRC section 21080.49(c) involves establishment or enhancement of residential home hardening or defensible space for wildfire

POSTED 9-18-26 TO 10-18-26

risk reduction within 200 feet of a legal structure located in a high or very high wildfire hazard zone, and under section 21080.49(d), consists of a fuel break that extends up to 200 feet from structures, including the clearance of flammable vegetation and trees less than 12 inches in diameter as measured at chest height. The proposed projects would remove hazardous accumulated ground, ladder fuels, and hazard trees within up to 200 feet of structures in the Novato Zone to enhance defensible space and reduce flammable vegetation and trees. Over half of the Novato Zone is in high or very high fire hazard severity zones. The treatments under the proposed projects could occur in targeted locations on an as-needed basis with local private landowners throughout the Novato Zone, as shown in Figure 1, which is consistent with enhanced defensible space and fuel breaks that extend up to 200 feet from structures.

Lead Agency Contact Person:	**Area Code/Telephone/Extension:**
Lynne Osgood	415.878.2693

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?
   Yes☐ No☐

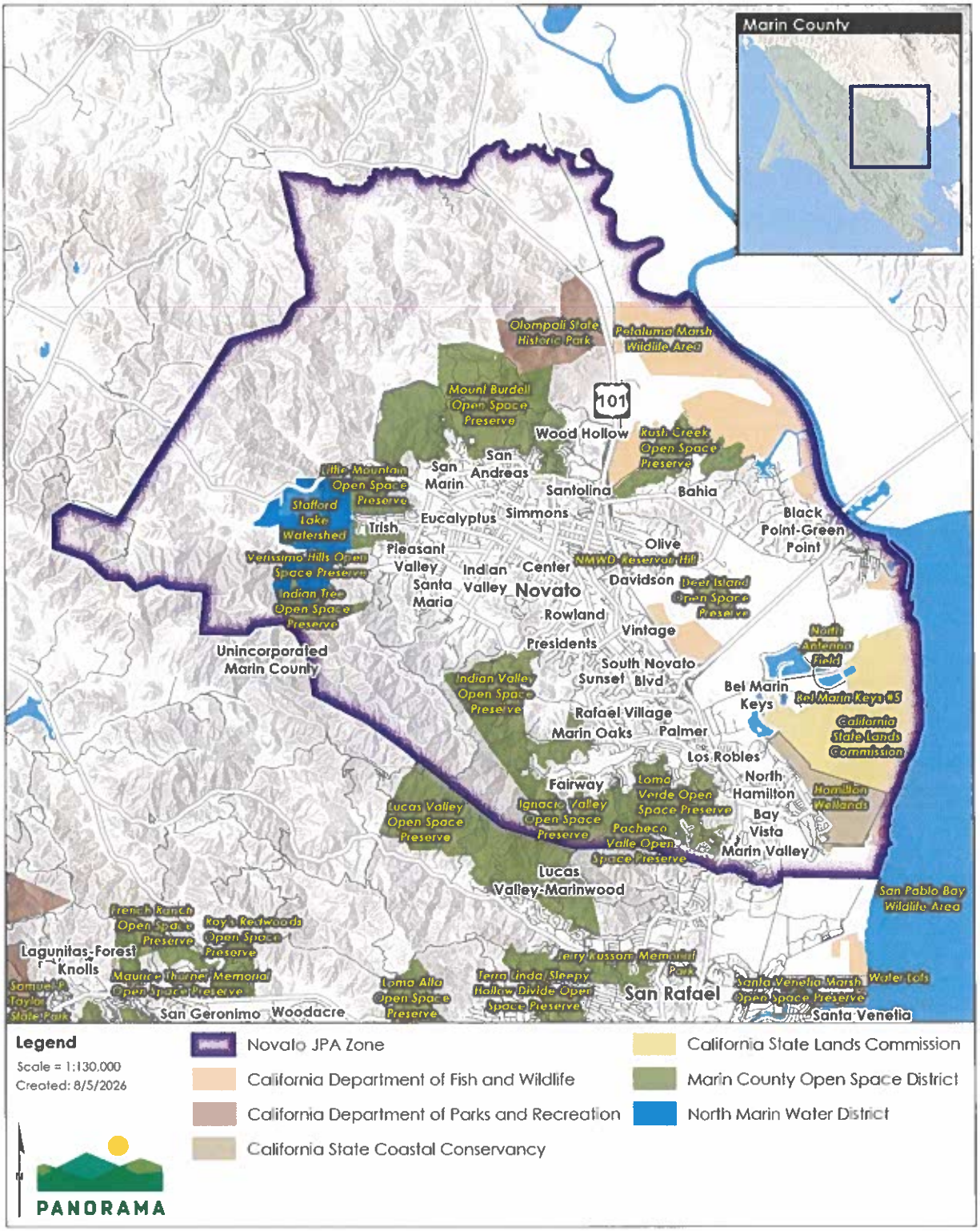
Signature: Lynne Osgood Date: 9/17/26 Title: BC of Prevention

☑ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Figure 1 **Project Location**



Date: September 17, 2026

Project: Novato Core Direct Assistance and Novato Hazardous Vegetation Removal Programs

Exemption Summary

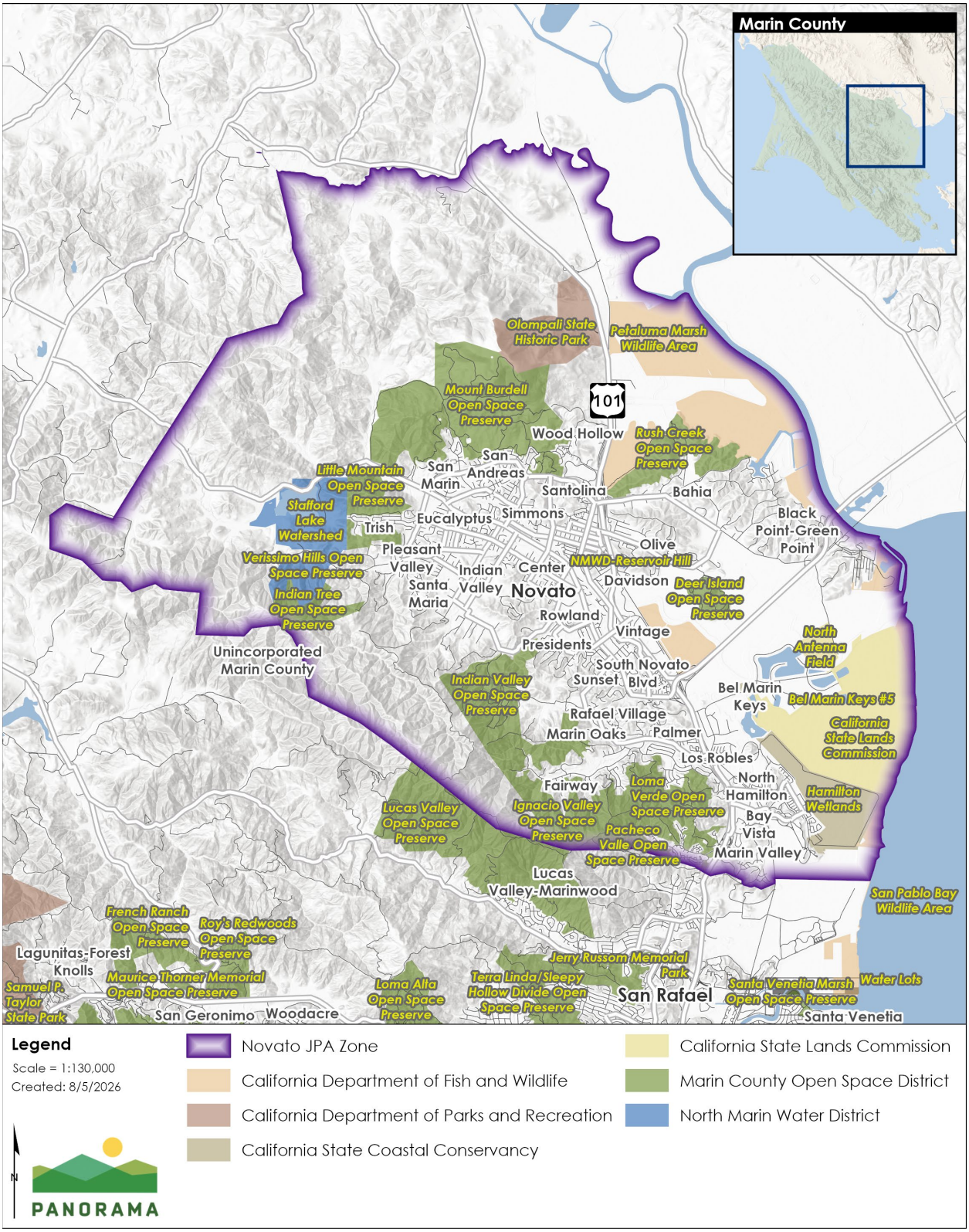
The Novato Fire Protection Department (Novato Fire), as the lead agency, has determined that the Novato Core Direct Assistance and Novato Hazardous Vegetation Removal Programs (proposed projects) are statutorily exempt under Public Resources Code (PRC) sections 21080.49(c) and 21080.49(d). The Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (Marin Wildfire), as the responsible agency under CEQA, concurs with Novato Fire's determination that the proposed projects are exempt under CEQA. A project exempt in accordance with PRC section 21080.49(c) involves establishment or enhancement of residential home hardening or defensible space for wildfire risk reduction within 200 feet of a legal structure located in a high or very high wildfire hazard zone, and under section 21080.49(d), consists of a fuel break that extends up to 200 feet from structures, including the clearance of flammable vegetation and trees less than 12 inches in diameter as measured at chest height.

The proposed projects would remove hazardous accumulated ground, ladder fuels, and hazard trees within up to 200 feet of structures in the Novato Zone to enhance defensible space and reduce flammable vegetation within and adjacent to neighborhoods. Over half of the Novato Zone is in high or very high fire hazard severity zones. The treatments under the proposed projects could occur in targeted locations on an as-needed basis with local private landowners throughout the Novato Zone, as shown in Figure 1, which is consistent with enhanced defensible space and fuel breaks that extend up to 200 feet from structures.

Marin Wildfire Background

Marin County voters passed Measure C in 2020, which established a 17-member Joint Powers Authority, Marin Wildfire, to fund and oversee proactive state-of-the-art wildfire prevention and preparedness efforts within the County. Members include several cities and towns, fire protection districts, and community service districts. Marin Wildfire was formed to develop and implement a comprehensive wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness plan throughout almost all of Marin County. This proposed project is a Core Project that is funded by and within the purview of the Marin Wildfire. Core Projects include those projects that focus on wildfire detection, notification, and evacuation; vegetation management and fire hazard reduction; grants management; and public education.

Figure 1 Project Location



Purpose and Need

The purposes of the proposed projects are as follows:

- provide direct assistance to homeowners in the Novato Zone to enhance defensible space and existing adjacent fuel reduction projects to increase wildfire resiliency across the communities under the Novato Core Direct Assistance Program; and
- to provide direct assistance to homeowners to provide targeted removal of invasive and introduced trees and plants that pose a wildfire hazard or could impede emergency evacuation, under the Novato Hazardous Vegetation Removal Project.

Project Description

Novato Core Direct Assistance Program

Since 2020, Novato Fire has provided matching reimbursable grants to Novato residents, funded by Measure C through Marin Wildfire. The Novato Core Direct Assistance program will be an additional free resource to Novato residents. This program targets plants that are often identified as hazards in defensible space home evaluation programs, such as juniper and Italian cypress, within Zones 0 and 1. It could also include hazardous vegetation up to 200 feet from structures depending upon the level of risk the hazard presents. Novato Fire's vegetation management team and wildfire mitigation specialists will manage a landscape contractor to conduct hazardous vegetation removal for this program at least one week each month. For a resident to be eligible for this program, they must receive a free wildfire mitigation assessment from one of Novato Fire’s certified wildfire mitigation specialists. This is a 30- to 45-minute educational assessment that identifies wildfire risks to the home and property.

Novato Hazardous Vegetation Removal Project

Novato Fire manages multiple fuel reduction projects adjacent to private parcels within their jurisdiction. This program will focus on private properties located adjacent to existing fuel reduction projects or within moderate, high, or very high fire hazard severity zones. The program targets hazardous, invasive vegetation and dead and down woody debris in previously untreated areas within 200 feet of the habitable structures. The program is invitation-based, and Novato Fire will manage the contractors to perform the vegetation removal work.

Treatment Methods

Potential vegetation treatments will include invasive plant and hazardous tree removal, dead and down vegetation removal, and pruning trees up 6 to 8 feet above ground within up to 200 feet from structures. Project treatments would include handheld manual and mechanical fuel reduction using chainsaws, weed whackers, loppers, pole pruners, and other similar handheld tools. The treatment activities would be conducted by hand crews to create vertical and horizontal clearance. Any tree trimming or removal work that may require the limited use of large machinery such as bucket trucks would be typical of residential tree work already occurring throughout Marin County. Off-road tracked chippers may be used, where appropriate. A trailer-mounted chipper would be operated from on or adjacent to nearby roads and fire roads. The work completed would only include above-ground vegetation removal. Stump grinding or stump removal is not included as a treatment.

Cut stumps of non-native, invasive shrubs and trees—such as broom, Italian cypress, juniper, and eucalyptus species—may be treated with herbicide with the active ingredient triclopyr (e.g., Garlon 4), if permitted per the land managers/owners. Italian cypress and juniper are known fire hazards due to their dry, woody vegetation and high oil concentration. The vegetation would be cut with tools and then herbicide applied immediately after treatment using spot treatments such as the painted cut-stump or other targeted application methods to prevent regrowth. These methods have been found to have the best success rate for control of certain species, including broom (Oneto et al. 2010). Herbicides would not be applied within 24 hours of a known rain event and signs would be posted at the project site within or adjacent to public recreation areas, residential areas, schools, or any other public areas at least 1 day prior to application and would remain posted on-site at least 1 day following application (PDIF HAZ-4).

Disposal

Project debris would be disposed of through pile burning, lop and scatter, chipping and broadcasting, or chipping and hauling, depending on the location and condition of the work area. When chipping, the vegetative material would be fed through the chipper and broadcast at treatment areas or hauled away for disposal. Chipped material spread on site would be chipped to under 3 inches in size and would be applied 2 to 4 inches in depth at most to minimize wildfire risk.

Cut material may be pile-burned depending upon the conditions of the work area. Suitable treatment areas are typically flat or have gentle slopes and have open areas away from tree canopies and power lines. Areas selected for pile burning would be away from waterways. Piles would generally be 4 feet in diameter and 4 feet in height, but pile dimensions may vary. Multiple piles may be burned on a single day. Pile burning would be conducted in compliance with Bay Area Air District (BAAD) Regulation 5 for open burning and burn day restrictions.

Workers

A single contractor crew would consist of 5 to 10 workers at a single location. Several crews may be working at the same time across the Novato zone to address needs for both programs.

Site Access

Treatment areas would be accessed via existing roads, fire roads, and trails to the maximum extent feasible. Private residences may be used as access points with the landowner’s permission.

Schedule and Duration

All work would be performed on weekdays generally between 7:00 am and 5:00 pm. All noise-generating activities would comply with the relevant noise ordinance. Most of the defensible space treatments would be expected to occur between the months of July and October each year, but could occur throughout the year, as appropriate.

Project Design and Implementation Features

Marin Wildfire has developed specific design and implementation features adapted from several source documents referenced in footnotes after each name that will be incorporated as applicable into the project design and implementation for each of its projects. The following specific project design and implementation measures are part of the proposed projects:

CUL-1 Training[1]

For all activities with the potential for ground disturbance (excluding prescribed herbivory, vegetation and tree trimming, and hand pulling smaller vegetation) all contractors and crew will receive training prepared by and/or conducted by a qualified archaeologist (who meets the U.S. Secretary of Interior's professional standards set forth in 48 FR Parts 44738-44739 and Appendix A to 36 CFR Part 61) prior to beginning work. The Tribal Heritage Preservation Officer(s) (THPO) from a local tribe (Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria [Graton Rancheria]) will be notified of the opportunity to attend and/or train crews. The training will address the potential for encountering subsurface cultural resources, recognizing basic signs of a potential resource, understanding required procedures if a potential resource is identified including reporting the resource to a qualified archaeologist and/or THPO, as appropriate, and understanding all procedures required under Health and Safety Code § 7050.5 and PRC §§ 5097.94, 5097.98, and 5097.99 for the discovery of human remains.

CUL-2 Unanticipated Discovery[2]

In the event that a previously unidentified cultural resource is discovered during implementation of an activity all work within a minimum of 150 feet of the discovery will be halted. The resource will be located, identified, and recorded in the Marin Wildfire cultural resources GIS database.

The boundaries around the buffered resource will be temporarily marked, such as with fencing or flagging. A qualified archaeologist will inspect the discovery and determine whether further investigation is required. Data regarding archaeological resources will be kept confidential per law. As appropriate, the qualified archaeologist will inform Graton Rancheria's THPO of the discovery. If the discovery can be avoided and no further impacts will occur, the resource will be documented on California State Department of Parks and Recreation cultural resource record forms and no further effort will be required. If the project proponent wishes to continue work in the area, only work performed using hand tools or powered hand tools is allowed, work cannot include ground disturbance and the work area can only be accessed on foot as determined acceptable by the qualified cultural resource specialist/archaeologist.

Alternatively, the qualified archaeologist and/or THPO or tribal monitor will evaluate the resource and determine whether it is:

- Eligible for the CRHR (and a historical resource for purposes of CEQA),
- A unique archaeological resource as defined by CEQA, and/or
- A potential tribal cultural resource (all archaeological resources could be a tribal cultural resource).

If the resource is determined to be neither a unique archaeological, an historical resource, nor a potential tribal cultural resource, work may commence in the area.

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[1] Adapted from measures in the Marin Municipal Water District, Final Program Environmental Impact Report for the Biodiversity, Fire, and Fuels Integrated Plan (BFFIP EIR), October 2019.

[2] Adapted from measures in the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Wildland Fire Resiliency Program Final Environmental Impact Report (WFRP EIR), May 2021.

If the resource meets the criteria for either a historical resource, unique archaeological resource, and/or tribal cultural resource, work will remain halted in the buffered area around the resource. No work will occur within the buffered area except those methods previously discussed as determined acceptable by the qualified archaeologist and/or THPO or tribal monitor. After work is completed, all cultural resource delineators (e.g., flags or fencing) will be removed in order to avoid potential vandalism, unauthorized excavation(s), etc.

CUL-3 Cultural Resource Investigation[2]

Prior to implementation of vegetation management activities that have potential for intensive ground disturbance below the ground surface, significant heat from a burn, or use of heavy equipment off established roads and trails, a qualified archaeologist will conduct a records search and/or site-specific survey of the project areas where such disturbances could occur. Monitoring may also be identified by the qualified archaeologist as an appropriate measure to avoid damage or destruction of previously documented or potential resources (e.g., areas with a high sensitivity for buried resources) if conducting activities in the vicinity. Outreach with Graton Rancheria will be conducted as early as feasible to obtain information regarding culturally sensitive areas and/or the location of tribal cultural resources within the project areas. Graton Rancheria will be notified of the opportunity to attend any surveys or monitoring, if there is the known or potential presence for precontact resources. Any information provided by Graton Rancheria and/or tribal monitor(s) is confidential and exempt from public disclosure in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements (Cal. Gov. Code § 6254(r), 6254.10; PRC § 5097.98(c); Cal. Code Regs. § 15120(d); 40 CFR § 1516.9; PRC § 21082.3 (c)(1)). Records searches, field survey results, and monitoring results will be shared with Graton Rancheria, as appropriate. Resources found during the records search, tribal outreach, survey, and/or monitoring will be flagged for avoidance with an appropriate buffer identified by the qualified archaeologist, or the qualified archaeologist may identify modifications to the prescriptions using only hand tools or powered hand tools and access by foot with no ground disturbance, provided it would avoid all impacts to the resources. Any resource found during the site survey will be documented on California State Department of Parks and Recreation cultural resource record forms and a survey report will be completed for every cultural resource survey completed. The specific requirements will comply with the applicable state or local agency procedures.

CUL-4 Native American Project Notification

For core projects subject to a CEQA determination or compliance and requiring Marin Wildfire Board of Directors' approval, Graton Rancheria will be notified and project maps and/or spatial data provided for projects that will potentially entail ground disturbance. Any input from Graton Rancheria regarding specific resources that could be affected will be considered during project implementation through the methods of avoidance as described in CUL-3.

CUL-5 Cultural Resources Monitoring

Based on the results of CUL-3 and -4, cultural resources monitoring may be conducted in order to avoid impacts to known resources. In addition to flagging the resource for avoidance (as described in CUL-3) if monitoring is conducted, a qualified archaeologist will be present during ground disturbance work to ensure the known resources are avoided and protected during project implementation, and if the resource is identified to be pre-contact archaeological and/or

a tribal cultural resource, a tribal monitor will be invited to attend during the ground disturbance work.

ET-1 Environmental Training for Biological Resources[3,4]

All crew members and contractors will receive training from a qualified registered professional forester (RPF) or biologist prior to beginning a treatment project where sensitive biological resources could occur in the work areas. The training will describe the appropriate work practices necessary to effectively implement the appropriate project design and implementation features and to comply with the applicable environmental laws and regulations. The training will include the identification, relevant life history information, and avoidance of potentially present special-status species with potential to occur; identification and avoidance of sensitive natural communities and habitats with the potential to occur in the treatment area; best management practices; and reporting requirements. As appropriate, the training will include protocols for work, such as specific trimming methods, where applicable. The training will instruct workers when it is appropriate to stop work and allow wildlife encountered during treatment activities to leave the area unharmed and when it is necessary to report encounters to a qualified RPF or biologist. The qualified RPF or biologist will immediately contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), as appropriate, if any wildlife protected by the CE Species Act (CESA) or Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) is encountered and cannot leave the site on its own (without being handled).

ES-1 Environmental Surveys for Rare Plants

Within areas where rare and special-status plants have a moderate to high potential to occur, based on desktop data of habitat types, known site-specific information, and the professional judgment of qualified biologists, surveys will be conducted prior to any activity that has the potential to damage perennial plants or is proposed to occur during the flowering season for the specific annual plant species that has the potential to damage the flowering body and seeds of these plant species. Activities that have the potential to damage the flowering body may include but may not be limited to mowing, weed whacking, off-road vehicle and heavy equipment use, discing, and prescribed burning.

Surveys for rare plants will occur for these species across the entire project footprint. Surveys will occur during the blooming period, if feasible, and will occur prior to work for the specified special-status plant. If blooming period surveys are not feasible and the sensitive plant in question can be keyed to genus outside of the blooming period, surveys will be conducted for all members of the genus. Individuals will be flagged for avoidance or modified methods. Physical avoidance will include flagging, fencing, stakes, or clear, existing landscape demarcations (e.g., edge of a roadway) to delineate the boundary of the avoidance area around the suitable habitat and removal after completion. For physical avoidance, a buffer may be implemented as determined necessary by the biologist. Sensitive species damage or loss avoidance may include implementation of appropriate species-specific no-activity buffers around sensitive

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[3] Adapted from the measures in the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) Practices and Procedures Monitoring and Reporting Plan Section 01 35 44 Environmental Requirements, August 2018.

[4] Adapted from measures in the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection California Vegetation Treatment Program Final Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP EIR), November 2019.

resources. Temporary fencing will also be implemented, as and where determined necessary based on the species tolerance, if grazing is prescribed in the area of flagged individuals for avoidance or modified methods (WILD-1).

ES-2 Assessment of Suitable Habitat for Listed Species

If planned treatment activities could potentially modify or convert suitable habitat for federal or state listed threatened and endangered species that have a moderate or high potential for occupation by the species, as determined by a qualified biologist, a survey of the site will be conducted. The qualified biologist will assess the site and planned treatment activities to determine whether avoidance or modification of the treatment is necessary to ensure that loss of suitable habitat will not occur. Refer also to NSO-3 and NSO-4 regarding prevention of habitat alteration in suitable northern spotted owl habitat.

IP-1 Clean Equipment[4,5]

All crew members, surveyors, and other personnel on site related to project activities will clean clothing, footwear, and equipment used during treatments of soil, seeds, vegetative matter, other debris or seed-bearing material, or water (e.g., rivers, streams, creeks, lakes) before entering the treatment area or when leaving an area with infestations of invasive plants, noxious weeds, known plant pathogens, or invasive wildlife.

IP-2 Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species and Plant Pathogens[4,5]

Segregate and treat soils and vegetation contaminated with invasive plant seeds and propagules. Treat, as appropriate, to prevent the spread of invasive plants. Treatment may include disposal on site within already infested areas, chipping or pile burning and mulching to eliminate viable seeds, or disposal at an approved cogeneration plant or green waste facility.

Minimize soil disturbance to the greatest extent possible to reduce the potential for introducing or spreading invasive plants or plant pathogens, to protect topsoil resources, and to reduce available habitat for the establishment of new invasive plants.

IP-3 Treat Invasive Plants Prior to Seeding[4,5]

Schedule activities to maximize the effectiveness of control efforts and minimize introduction and spread of invasive plants as feasible, with consideration for project objectives and location (e.g., install and maintain fuel breaks, disc lines, and other work before non-native plants set seeds).

IP-4 Retain Native Plants[4,5]

When removing vegetation, focus first on removing invasive and highly flammable species, and dead or diseased vegetation. Retain beneficial, low-fire risk, healthy native plant species whenever possible, except where the historic disturbance regime for the vegetation community has not been maintained or the vegetation poses a hazard to the public.

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[5] Adapted from measures in the draft Ecologically Sound Practices Partnership, Ecologically Sound Practices for Vegetation Management (ESP) report, May 2021.

GEO-1 Erosion and Soils Loss Stabilization Measures[2]

Soils will be stabilized if a vegetation management activity may leave less than 70 percent groundcover or native mulch/organic material.

For areas between 50 percent and 70 percent ground cover left:

- Sow native grasses and other suitable native vegetation on denuded areas where natural colonization or other replanting will not occur rapidly; use slash or chips to prevent erosion on such areas.
- Use surface mounds, depressions, logs, rocks, trees and stumps, slash and brush, the litter layer, and native herbaceous vegetation downslope of denuded areas to reduce sedimentation and erosion, as necessary to prevent erosion or slope destabilization.
- Install approved, biodegradable erosion-control measures and non-filament-based geotextiles (e.g., coir, jute) when:
  - Conducting substantial ground-disturbing work (e.g., use of heavy equipment, pulling large vegetation) within 100 feet and upslope of currently flowing or wet wetlands, streams, lakes, and riparian areas;
  - Causing soil disturbance on moderate to steep (10 percent slope and greater) slopes; and
  - Removing invasive plants from stream banks to prevent sediment movement into watercourses and to protect bank stability.
- Sediment-control devices, if installed, will be certified weed-free, as appropriate. Sediment control devices will be inspected daily during active work to ensure that they are repaired and working as needed to prevent sediment transport into the waterbodies.

For areas with less than 50 percent ground cover:

- Any of the above measures
- Stabilize with mulch or equivalent immediately after project activities, to the maximum extent practicable.
- If project activities could result in substantial sediment discharge from soil disturbance, as determined by the qualified personnel (e.g., RPF), organic material from mastication or mulch will be incorporated onto at least 75 percent of the disturbed soil surface where the soil erosion hazard is moderate or high, and 50 percent of the disturbed soil surface where soil erosion hazard is low to help prevent erosion.
- Where slash mulch is used, it will be packed into the ground surface such as with heavy equipment so that it is sufficiently in contact with the soil surface.

Once work is completed, the areas will be inspected at least annually if accessible, until groundcover exceeds 70 percent or slopes have stabilized, as determined by a qualified professional. At that time, erosion-control and slope-stability devices may be removed.

GEO-3 Soil Saturation and Rain Event Measures[1,2,4]

The following measures will be implemented to prevent soil loss and erosion during rain events and following rain events:

- Shut down use of off-road heavy equipment, skidding, and truck traffic when soils become saturated (from rain event) and unable to support the machines. Saturated soil means that soil and/or surface material pore spaces are filled with water to such an extent that runoff is likely to occur.
- Off-road heavy equipment work will be suspended if the National Weather Service forecast is a “chance” (30 percent or more) of rain within the next 24 hours
- Ground disturbing work (e.g., use of heavy equipment, pulling large vegetation) will not occur during rain events (i.e., 0.5 inch of rain within a 48-hour or greater period≥ 1.5 inches in 24 hours) and may resume when precipitation stops and soils are no longer saturated. Indicators of saturated soil conditions may include, but are not limited to: (1) areas of ponded water, (2) pumping of fines from the soil or road surfacing, (3) loss of bearing strength resulting in the deflection of soil or road surfaces under a load, such as the creation of wheel ruts, (4) spinning or churning of wheels or tracks that produces a wet slurry, or (5) inadequate traction without blading wet soil or surfacing materials.
- For activities that involve ground disturbing work and have not been stabilized, inspect for evidence of erosion after the first rain event (i.e., 0.5 inch of rain within a 48-hour or greater period) as soon as is feasible after the event. Any area of erosion that will result in substantial sediment discharge will be remediated within 48 hours.
- For activities that involve ground disturbing work, inspect project areas for the proper implementation of erosion control, as necessary and determined by the qualified personnel (e.g., RPF), prior to the rainy season. If erosion control measures are not properly implemented, the measures will be remediated prior to the first rainfall event.

GEO-4 Mulch Application

When applying mulch, limit the depth of the chips to 2 to 4 inches to the extent feasible to minimize risk of increasing smoldering in the event of a wildfire. Chips should not be piled up around the base of trees.

HAZ-1 Leak Prevention and Spill Cleanup[1,4]

The project proponent will, at a minimum, implement measures that address the following procedures related to the use of hazardous materials during work:

- Proper disposal or management of contaminated soils and materials (i.e., clean up materials)
- Daily inspection of vehicles and equipment for leaks and spill containment procedures
- Emergency response and reporting procedures to address hazardous material releases

- Emergency spill supplies and equipment will be available to respond in a timely manner if an incident should occur
- Response materials such as oil-absorbent material, tarps, and storage drums will be available in the plan area at all times during management activities and will be used as needed to contain and control any minor releases
- The absorbent material will be removed promptly and disposed of properly
- Use of secondary containment and spill rags when fueling
- Discourage “topping-off” fuel tanks
- Workers using fuels or other hazardous materials must be knowledgeable of the specific procedures necessary for hazardous materials cleanup and emergency response
- All diesel and gasoline powered equipment will be maintained per manufacturer's specification, and in compliance with all state and federal emission requirements

HAZ-2 Wildfire Risk Reduction[1,3,4]

The following measures will be implemented during activities that involve the use of equipment that can generate sparks or heat:

- Maintain fire suppression equipment (e.g., shovel, extinguisher) in work vehicles and ensure workers are trained in use
- Closely monitor for ignited vegetation from equipment and tool use
- Train workers to properly handle and store flammable materials to minimize potential ignition sources
- Prohibit smoking in vegetated areas
- Avoid use of spark- and/or heat-generating equipment during high fire danger days (e.g., Red Flag Days and Fire Weather Watch)
- Outfit off-road diesel vehicles and equipment with spark arrestors
- Avoid metal string or blade weed trimmers
- Maintain one fire extinguisher for each chainsaw

HAZ-3 Pile Burning[3]

The following measures will be implemented to reduce hazards associated with pile burning:

- Pile burning will only be allowed on days when fire is less likely to spread (e.g., wind speeds are less than 15 mph).
- Piles will only be constructed in areas where burning can be safely controlled, for example, on the flattest area possible. Bottoms of steep, vegetated hills will be avoided.
- Piles should be constructed with 10 feet of clearance around them.
- Piles will be set back from public roads and trails at a distance to minimize risk to the public or cordoned off from the public.
- All requirements of CAL FIRE, the local fire department, and/or the BAAQMD will be met, including any permit, notification, burn bans, and reporting requirements.
- Have fire suppression crews on-site during the fire season determined by CAL FIRE or the local fire department (typically mid-May to mid-November) during curtain and pile burns.

- Pile burning will adhere to BAAQMD criteria pollutant thresholds and Regulation 5 for open burning.

HAZ-4 Application of Herbicides[4]

Projects will comply with all herbicide application regulations and ecologically sound integrated pest management principles.

- Herbicide containers will be triple rinsed with clean water at an approved site, and rinsate will be disposed of by placing it in the batch tank for application.
- Herbicide drift to public areas or sensitive areas will be minimized through the following measures:
  - Application will cease when weather parameters exceed label specifications or when sustained winds at the site of application exceeds 7 miles per hour (whichever is more conservative).
  - No herbicide will be applied during precipitation events or if precipitation is forecast 24 hours before or after project activities.
  - Spray nozzles will be configured to produce the largest appropriate droplet size to minimize drift.
  - Low nozzle pressures will be utilized.
  - Spray nozzles will be kept within 24 inches of vegetation, if spraying.
- For herbicide applications occurring within or adjacent to public recreation areas, residential areas, schools, or any other public areas within 500 feet, signs will be posted at each end of herbicide application areas and any intersecting trails notifying the public of the use of herbicides at a minimum 1 day before and 1 day after herbicide use.

HAZ-5 Protect Vegetation and Special-Status Species from Herbicides[4]

The project proponent will implement their approved integrated pest management (IPM) procedures when utilizing herbicides, or the following measures if no IPM is in place that addresses herbicide use in sensitive areas:

- Locate herbicide mixing sites in areas devoid of vegetation and where there is no potential of a spill reaching non-target vegetation or a waterway.
- Use only herbicides labeled for use in aquatic environments when working in riparian habitats or other areas where there is a possibility the herbicide could come into direct contact with water. Only hand application of herbicides will be allowed in riparian habitats and only during low-flow periods or when seasonal streams are dry.

- No terrestrial or aquatic herbicides will be applied within Watercourse and Lake Protection Zones (WLPZs) of Class I[6] and II[7] watercourses, if feasible. If this is not feasible, hand application of herbicides labeled for use in aquatic environments may be used within the WLPZ.
- No herbicides will be applied through any method within a 50-foot buffer of federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) or California ESA listed plant species or within 50 feet of dry vernal pools other than painted or sponged on applications to invasive and/or non-native species cut stumps.
- For spray applications in and adjacent to habitats suitable for special-status species, use herbicides containing dye (registered for aquatic use by California Department of Pesticide Regulation, if warranted) to prevent overspray.

NOI-1 Minimization of Noise Disruption to Nearby Neighbors and Sensitive Receptors[4,8]

All projects will comply with applicable local noise ordinances. All powered equipment and power tools will be used and maintained according to manufacturer specifications. All diesel- and gasoline-powered treatment equipment will be properly maintained and equipped with noise-reduction intake and exhaust mufflers and engine shrouds, in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations.

Measures to minimize noise disruption to nearby neighbors and sensitive receptors will be implemented as needed. These measures may include but are not limited to:

- Using noise control technologies on equipment (e.g., mufflers, ducts, and acoustically attenuating shields)
- Locating stationary noise sources (e.g., pumps and generators) away from sensitive receptors
- Closing engine shrouds during equipment operations
- Shutting down equipment when not in use. Equipment will not be idled unnecessarily
- Operating heavy equipment during daytime hours if such noise would be audible to receptors (e.g., residential land uses, schools, hospitals, places of worship)
- Locating project activities, equipment, and equipment staging areas away from nearby noise-sensitive land uses (e.g., residential land uses, schools, hospitals, places of worship), to the extent feasible

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[6] A Class I watercourse includes any domestic supplies, including springs, on site and/or within 100 feet downstream of the operations area, and/or fish are always or seasonally present onsite, and includes habitat to sustain fish migration and spawning.

[7] A Class II watercourse has fish always or seasonally present offsite within 100 feet downstream, and or aquatic habitat for nonfish aquatic species. Class II watercourses excludes Class III waters that are tributaries to Class I waters.

[8] Adapted from San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Standard Construction Measures, July 2015.

NSO-1 Northern Spotted Owl Nesting Season Avoidance[1]

Each project will be reviewed by a qualified biologist to determine if northern spotted owls have potential to occur near proposed project activities. Within areas where northern spotted owl have the potential to occur, work, including mowing with heavy equipment, the mechanical removal of vegetation, or prescribed burning, including pile and broadcast burning, will occur outside of the northern spotted owl nesting season to the extent feasible (February 1 to July 31).

If work must occur during the northern spotted owl nesting season, either NSO-2 or NSO-3 will apply.

NSO-2 Work During Northern Spotted Owl Nesting Season – Surveys[1]

Within an area where northern spotted owl has the potential to occur, when work will occur during the northern spotted owl nesting season (February 1 through July 31), and work is not considered low-impact by a qualified biologist the following measure will apply. Low impact type activities include, but are not limited to, goat grazing, hand pulling of weeds, hand trimming of trees and vegetation with non-mechanized equipment, chipping from existing roadways in residential areas, and use of mechanized equipment adjacent to roads or in residential areas that is a typical noise for the environment. In contrast, high-impact activities may include operation of heavy machinery in wildlands with lower baseline environmental noise, or work which produces noise disturbance for a longer duration than is typical in the environment.

The biologists will determine if a known breeding pair is found within 0.25 mile of the proposed activity (i.e., from existing surveys that season or historic data) and perform a nest check to confirm presence. If no survey data for the season has been completed for the areas, two surveys will be conducted by a qualified biologist (whose qualifications have been approved by Marin Wildfire or lead public agency) for nesting northern spotted owls during the months of April and May preceding the commencement of these activities. At a minimum, the survey area will include all suitable nesting habitats within 0.25 mile of any planned activity sites, and then one of the two options listed below will be implemented. If access cannot be secured for surveys, then work should be delayed until after the nesting season, unless it can be shown that noise generation from the activities and the activities proposed would be below noise and visual disturbance levels for northern spotted owls (refer to USFWS Revised Transmittal of Guidance: Estimating the Effects of Auditory and Visual Disturbance to Northern Spotted Owls and Marbled Murrelets in Northwestern California) at the nest site, if known.

- If it is conclusively determined that there are nesting northern spotted owls, planned activities that generate noise (e.g., mowing, heavy equipment usage, crews with hand tools that generate noise) in areas without regular human disturbances from human residency (e.g., leaf blowers, home construction and remodeling, roadways), that are within 0.25-mile of an identified active nest will not begin prior to September 1 unless the young have fledged, at which time work may begin no earlier than July 10. Prescribed burns may only occur within suitable northern spotted owl habitat (as determined by a qualified biologist) during the nesting season if protocol surveys have determined that northern spotted owl nesting is not occurring in the area of planned activity.
- If work must occur within 0.25 mile, and work has been determined to have the potential to impact an active northern spotted owl nest, CDFW and USFWS would

be consulted to determine if take could occur and whether further permits are required.

NSO-3 Northern Spotted Owl Habitat Alteration[1]

For projects involving removal of large trees (10 inches DBH or greater) in potential northern spotted owl roosting, or nesting habitat (as identified during the desktop review) in areas without regular human disturbances from human residency, habitat alteration within core use areas (nesting and roosting habitat) will be planned in consultation with a qualified northern spotted owl biologist.

NSO-4 Retain Dusky-footed Woodrat Nests[1,5]

Dusky-footed woodrats are important prey for northern spotted owls. Wherever feasible, project activities will leave dusky-footed wood rat nests intact. If possible, maintain a 3-foot buffer of vegetation around dusky-footed woodrat middens.

NB-1 Nesting Bird Season Avoidance[1,4,5,9]

Whenever possible, schedule work outside of the bird nesting season, which is generally from February 1 through July 31st [10]. Not all species nest between the regulatory season, and active nests that are encountered year-round are protected.

NB-2 Nesting Bird Surveys[1,4,5]

If work that has the potential to impact nesting birds commences between February 1 and July 31 (during the nesting season), a qualified biologist (whose qualifications have been approved by Marin Wildfire or lead public agency) will conduct a pre-activity survey for nesting birds.

Nesting bird surveys are recommended during the nesting season for work involving mowing with heavy equipment, other vegetation (including tree) removal or limbing and trimming activities, and prescribed (broadcast and pile) burning. Low-impact activities including goat grazing, hand-pulling weeds, and herbicide application do not generally require nesting bird surveys. Determination of need for surveys for low-impact activities should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in consultation with a qualified biologist or RPF.

Nesting bird surveys will occur within no more than 7 days prior to work to ensure that no nests will be disturbed during vegetation management work. If work pauses for more than 7 days, a follow-up survey will be conducted prior to the restarting of work. Appropriate survey areas will be determined by the qualified biologist depending on the project footprint, type of activity proposed, and suitable habitat for nesting birds. Surveys will be conducted during periods of high bird activity (i.e., 1-3 hours after sunrise and 1-3 hours before sunset). If the qualified biologist determines that visibility is significantly obstructed due to on-site conditions (such as

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[9] Adapted from Marin County Parks (MCP), Bird Nesting Survey Training Manual, 2017.

[10] Note that the general nesting season between February 1 and July 31 is a guideline, and that birds may begin nesting beforehand, and complete nesting after these dates. Regardless, active nests are protected year-round. Avian nesting season may begin as early as January 1 and extend to August 15 or beyond.

access issues, rain, fog, smoke, or sound disturbance [including high wind]), surveys will be deferred until conditions are suitable for nest detection.

NB-3 Nesting Birds: Active Nest Avoidance[1,4,5,7]

If active nests (i.e., presence of eggs and/or chicks) are observed in areas that could be directly or indirectly disturbed (including noise disturbance), a temporary, species-appropriate no-disturbance buffer zone will be created around the nest sufficient to reasonably expect that breeding would not be disrupted. No work will occur inside the buffer zone.

The size of the buffer zone will be determined by the biologist, by taking into account factors including but not limited to the following:

- Noise and human disturbance levels at the site at the time of the survey and the noise and disturbance expected during the work;
- Distance and amount of vegetation or other screening between the site and the nest; and
- Sensitivity of individual nesting species and behaviors of the nesting birds, taking into account factors such as topography, visibility to source of disturbance, noise/vibration, nesting phase, and other case-by-case specifics.

Buffer sizes may be altered during the course of work at the recommendation of the biologist. Raptor nests are subject to additional protections, including during the “branching” phase, when fledglings begin to fly but do not fully leave the nest. Buffers will be maintained until young fledge or the nest becomes inactive, as determined by the qualified biologist.

If work must occur within the buffer, proceed to NB-4.

NB-4 Nesting Birds: Active Nest Monitoring[1,4,5,7]

If an avoidance buffer is not achievable, a qualified biologist may monitor the nest(s) during work activities within the recommended nest buffer to document that no take of the nest (nest failure) has occurred related to work activities. If it is determined that work activity is resulting in nest disturbance, work should cease immediately.

RB-1 Prework Survey[3,4]

If vegetation management activities would (1) occur in trees with potential for roosting bat species (e.g., trees with a diameter at breast height of 10 inches or greater), (2) would include removal of trees where a bat could be roosting and (3) the work would commence between March 1 and July 31[11], during the bat maternity period, a pre-activity survey will be conducted for roosting bats within 2 weeks prior to work to ensure that no maternity roosting bats will be disturbed during work. This survey can be conducted concurrent with other surveys for other sensitive species. Potentially suitable bat roosting habitat within the work footprint that have been determined to be unoccupied by roosting bats, or that are located outside the avoidance

[11] In the coastal zone, the bat roosting season for Marin Wildfire-funded core projects is March 1 through April 31; September 1 through October 15.

buffer for active roosting sites may be removed. Roosting initiated during work is presumed to be unaffected, and no buffer would be necessary.

RB-2 Avoidance of Maternity Roosts and Day Roosts[3]

If active maternity roosts or day roosts are found within the project site, or in areas subject to disturbance from work activities, avoidance buffers will be implemented. The buffer size will be determined in consultation with the qualified biologist or RPF.

RB-3 Bat Roosting Tree Removal – Seasonal Restrictions[3]

If it is determined that a colonial maternity roost is potentially present, the roost will be avoided and will not be removed during the breeding season (March 1 through July 31) unless removal is necessary to address an imminent safety hazard.

Operation of mechanical equipment producing high noise levels (e.g., chainsaws, heavy equipment) in proximity to buildings/structures supporting or potentially supporting a colonial bat roost will be restricted to periods of seasonal bat activity (as defined above), when possible.

RB-4 Bat Roosting Tree Removal – Emergency Removals[3]

Potential non-colonial roosts that must be removed in order to address a safety hazard, can be removed after consultation with a biologist. Removal will occur on warm days in late morning to afternoon when any bats present are likely to be warm and able to fly. Appropriate methods will be used to minimize the potential of harm to bats during tree removal. Such methods may include using a two-step tree removal process. This method is conducted over two consecutive days, and works by creating noise and vibration by cutting non-habitat branches and limbs from habitat trees using chainsaws only (no excavators or other heavy machinery) on Day 1. The noise and vibration disturbance, together with the visible alteration of the tree, is very effective in causing bats that emerge nightly to feed, to not return to the roost that night. The remainder of the tree is removed on Day 2.

SH-1 Riparian Resources – Project Design[4,5]

In riparian areas, treatments will be limited to removal of uncharacteristic fuel loads (e.g., removing dead or dying vegetation), trimming/limbing of woody species as necessary to reduce ladder fuels, and select thinning of vegetation to restore densities that are representative of healthy stands of the riparian vegetation types that are characteristic of the region. Allowable activities include hand removal (or mechanized removal where topography allows) of dead or dying riparian trees and shrubs, invasive plant removal, selective thinning, and removal of encroaching upland species. Mature, healthy trees will not be removed from a riparian corridor. Any activities conducted within a riparian corridor will be conducted so as to avoid alteration to a bed, channel, or bank of a waterway and all debris, including sawdust, chips, or other vegetative material, will be prevented from entering the bed, channel, or bank of a waterway, unless a permit from the California Department of Fish and Game under Section 1600 is obtained.

SH-2 Grazing and Sensitive Habitats[4]

Avoid grazing in sensitive habitats including serpentine-associated communities, chaparral, and across waterways and within a 50 foot buffer if there is a need for protection of riparian vegetation from grazing. Limited grazing may be allowed if it would be beneficial to plant and

wetland communities, including serpentine-associated communities, without causing harm (e.g., removal of invasive species) and would not result in erosion.

SH-3 Minimization of Pile Burning Disturbance[12,13]

Pile burning will not be performed in sensitive habitats, such as serpentine-associated communities, wetlands, or riparian areas. If piles are burned on a different day than piled, the piles should be moved prior to burning to ensure wildlife is not present, such as by re-piling by hand, or a qualified biologist will inspect the pile prior to burning to ensure wildlife are not present. If moving or inspection of the piles is not feasible, the pile will be lit from one side and allowed to burn slowly to the other side, in order to allow any wildlife to relocate, rather than lighting the entire pile at once.

TR-1 Emergency Access to Project Areas[1,2]

The following measures will be implemented to maintain emergency access:

- At least one week prior to temporary lane or full closure of a public road for vegetation management-related work, the appropriate emergency response agency/agencies will be contacted with jurisdiction to ensure that each agency is notified of the closure and any temporary detours in advance and obtain all required encroachment permits
- In the event of any emergency, roads blocked or obstructed for maintenance activities will be cleared to allow the vehicles to pass.
- During temporary lane or road closures on public roads, flaggers equipped with two-way radios will be utilized where needed to control traffic. During an emergency, flaggers will radio to the crew to cease operations and reopen the public road to emergency vehicles.
- All authorized vehicles at the treatment site will be parked to not block roads when no operator is present to move the vehicle.

TR-2 Traffic Control Measures[3]

Traffic control measures will be implemented to maintain traffic and pedestrian circulation on streets affected by project activities. The following measures may include:

- All traffic control devices will conform to the latest edition of the MUTCD, and as amended by the latest edition of the MUTCD California supplement.
- Any work that disturbs normal traffic signal operations and ensure proper temporary traffic control (lane shifts, lane closures, detours etc.) will be coordinated with the agency having jurisdiction, at least 72 hours prior to commencing worker.
- Flaggers and/or warning signage of work ahead.

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[12] Adapted from Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD). (2015, April). Vegetation and Biodiversity Management Plan. *Best Management Practices.*

[13] Adapted from California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). (2011). California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2011-046-03. *Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan*. East Bay Regional Parks District

- A minimum of twelve (12) foot travel lanes on public roads must be maintained unless otherwise approved.
- Maintaining access to driveways and private roads at all times unless other arrangements have been made.
- Traffic control devices will be removed from view or covered when not in use.
- Sidewalks for pedestrians will remain open if safe for pedestrians. Alternate routes and signing will be provided if pedestrian routes are to be closed.
- Scheduling truck trips during non-peak hours to the extent feasible.

References

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