



# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

FILING REQUESTED BY AND WHEN FILED, RETURN TO:

**Marin County Parks and Open Space District**  
1600 Los Gamos Drive, Suite 275 San Rafael, CA 94903  
[www.marincountyparks.org](http://www.marincountyparks.org)  
(415) 473-6387

# FILED

01/27/2026

Marin County Clerk  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 234  
San Rafael, CA 94903

**SHELLY SCOTT**  
**MARIN COUNTY CLERK**  
By A. Oxlaj Arevalo Deputy  
**21-2026-020**

**DATE:** January 26, 2026  
**PROJECT TITLE:** **CORTE MADERA RIDGE FUEL BREAK AND FOREST HEALTH PROJECT**  
**PROJECT LOCATION:** Blithedale Summit Open Space Preserve. 535 W Blithedale Avenue, Mill Valley, Marin County  
**ASSESSORS' PARCEL(S):** 021-240-14, -34, -36; 021-250-01, -16, -19

### Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of the Project:

The Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD) is proposing to implement a fire fuel reduction project within Blithedale Summit Open Space Preserve, the purpose of which is to maintain and improve an historic fuelbreak area to control rampant invasive broom growth and prevent the succession of oak woodlands into high-density conifer forest. Funding is through the Measure A Wildfire Fuel Reduction funds.

The proposed project area is the vicinity of an existing fire road following a spur ridge between Larkspur and Mill Valley within Blithedale Summit Open Space Preserve, which is owned and maintained by the MCOSD. The fire road is used as an emergency access road and recreation trail, and is maintained as a fuelbreak. Most of the project area is Coast Live Oak Woodland and Forest, with a mix of Madrone Forest, Shrubland, California Bay Woodland, and Redwood Forest comprising the rest of the project area. The project area is mapped within the very high fire hazard severity zone and a Wildland Urban Interface area.

The project area would have an average width of 200 feet and would be approximately one mile in length, totally approximately 18 acres. The proposed project includes the following elements throughout the project area:

- Remove dead plant material
- Remove broom and other non-native invasive vegetation including Monterey pine with no restriction on diameter
- Remove young conifers including and Douglas fir up to a maximum of 9-inches diameter measured at breast-height
- Potential pile burning
- Potential broadcast of chipped plant material
- Potential herbicide treatment

Project implementation is expected to begin in Spring 2026 continuing through the end of 2029. Equipment would include manual tools, including power tools, such as weed wrenches, chainsaws, weed whips, and mechanical equipment including a wood chipper and a masticator. All tools, equipment, and clothing would be clean and free of dirt and vegetative material and treated with a 10 percent bleach solution after working to reduce the spread of sudden oak death. Equipment would access primarily from Summit Drive, with Glen Drive and Crown Road as secondary access points. Staging would be along Corte Madera Ridge Fire Road.

Follow-up treatments would include hand-pulling in certain sections and may include chemical herbicide treatments. Should chemical treatments be applied as part of follow-up treatment, herbicide application would be implemented according to all applicable regulations and only under the recommendation of a certified Pest Control Advisor and according to CA Department of Pesticide Regulations including: no application within 24 hours of a known rain event, all applicators would be supervised directly or individually hold a Qualified Applicators Certificate or license, a "Notice of Herbicide Application" and accompanying map would be posted four days in advance of the application at all main entry points and would remain posted on-site for four days following application in conformance to MCOSD policy.

There are no surface waters or records of special status plant or wildlife in the project area, though northern spotted owl nesting does occur in the vicinity of the project area. Nesting bird surveys would be completed March through July. All mechanical work would be conducted outside of nesting season, between February and July, to avoid noise disturbance to nesting birds. Work buffers would be implemented around nests for dusky-footed woodrats identified in pre-project

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implementation surveys. Targeted vegetation removal would be non-native species forming understory brush, and no native trees larger than 9-inches breast-high diameter would be removed.

**Public Agency Approving Project:** Marin County Open Space District

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out the Project:** Chris Chamberlain, Director and General Manager

**Reasons for Exemption:** The MCOSD has reviewed the project along with its environmental setting and has determined it to be categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act under the following sections of the California Administrative Code:

**Section 15301: Existing Facilities.** The proposed project consists of the maintenance and minor alteration of an existing public facility involving no expansion of existing or former use. Implementation of the proposed project would improve public safety by implementing fire fuel management activities to reduce the volume of flammable vegetation to improve residential evacuation safety, provide alternate means of ingress for firefighting resources, and reduce wildfire potential.

No endangered, rare, or threatened plant or wildlife species would be impacted because Best Management Practices would be implemented to ensure that nesting birds, bats, and woodrats are not impacted and to reduce the spread of sudden oak death consistent with the MCOSD's Road and Trail Management Plan and Vegetation Biodiversity Management Plan. All mechanical work would be conducted outside of nesting season and would avoid any wood rat nests identified in pre-project implementation surveys. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in significant erosion or sedimentation into surface waters because there are no surface waters within 500 feet of the project area. Implementation of the project would not affect historical buildings or other historical resources. The project area is not located on a hazardous waste site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

Wildfire fuel reduction work in the project area during the past five years has included wide-area mowing and broom pulling, and tree pruning for fire road access. When past wildfire fuel reduction work is considered along with the proposed project, these activities provide a beneficial effect to the project area in terms of public safety, reducing the amount of flammable vegetation in the project area, and minimizing the fire fuel ladder which protects healthy native trees. For these reasons, implementation of the proposed project would not result in cumulative impacts or a significant effect to the environment due to unusual circumstances.

**Lead Agency Contact Person**



Michelle Julene, Senior Regulatory Open Space Planner  
Marin County Parks and Open Space District

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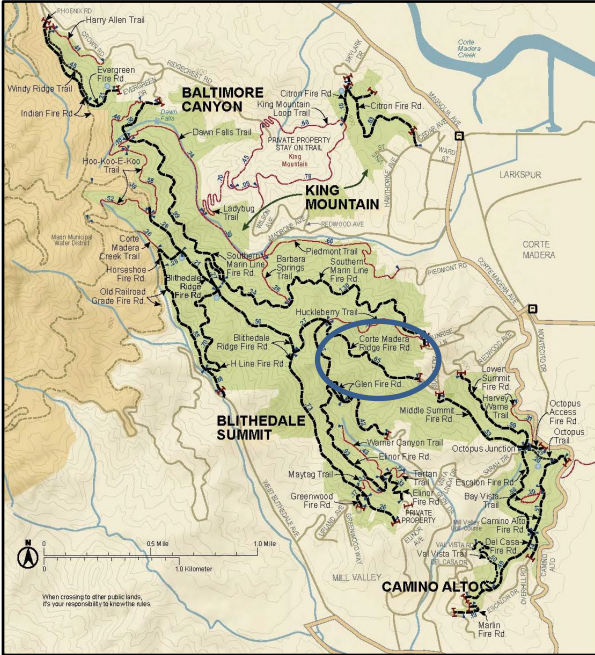
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# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

## BALTIMORE CANYON OPEN SPACE PRESERVE CORTE MADERA RIDGE FUEL BREAK AND FOREST HEALTH PROJECT

January 26, 2026



**Legend**

- Project Area

**BLITHEDALE SUMMIT**  
Corte Madera Ridge Fuel Break

0 1,300 2,600 5,200 Feet  
0 365 710 1,420 Meters



**Legend**

- Preserves
- Project Area

**BLITHEDALE SUMMIT**  
Corte Madera Ridge Fuel Break

0 105 210 420 Feet  
0 25 50 100 Meters