



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record

East Side Road Fuelwood Reduction Project, Lake Berryessa

California Great Basin – Interior Region 10

ED Tracking: CGB-ED-2025-040

Prepared and Recommended by:

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DEC 11 2025

Approved by:

Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and affiliated Island Communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public

Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to examine the potential effects to the environment associated with Reclamation's proposed action to conduct fuelwood reduction efforts on Federal lands along East Side Road at Lake Berryessa (Project), Napa County, California. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) follows implementation regulations for an EA described in 43 CFR Part 46 and the Department of the Interior Handbook of NEPA Implementation Procedures (516 DM 1). This FONSI is supported by Reclamation's East Side Road Fuelwood Reduction Project EA (reference # CGB-ED-2025-040), incorporated here by reference.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Project is to help reduce the risk of wildfires along the east side of Lake Berryessa and adjacent communities. The project is needed to reduce the amount of fuel load and thereby, the potential for uncontrolled wildfires and enhanced overall landscape health. In 2018 and 2020, wildfires devastated the area around Lake Berryessa, and as a result, CAL FIRE has suggested increasing prescribed burns and other methods for reducing fuelwood in the interest of public safety.

Proposed Action

Reclamation would implement fuelwood reduction treatments using manual removal of vegetation using hand crews, mastication, herbicide application, goat grazing, and prescribed fire (broadcast and piles) on seven paddocks along the East Side Road. The Project is expected to be implemented, as needed, over 10 years. The number of treatments that could occur at one time would vary based on the time of year, availability of funding and crews, landscape conditions, and size/complexity of individual treatments. The goal of Project implementation is a resultant thinning of trees, shrubs, brush, and other vegetative growth within the Project area to reduce the intensity and spread of potential wildfires. The Proposed Action includes conservation measures developed to reduce the potential for adverse impacts to the environment. Further details of the proposed action can be found in *Section 2 Proposed Action* of the EA.

Mitigation, Monitoring, and Enforcement

Measures to reduce potential effects on federally protected species have been identified in *Section 2.2.6 Conservation Measures* of the EA. These measures are considered a part of the Project. Project conservation measures include specific measures for the protection of the California red-legged frog, a species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (as amended). The authority to implement these measures is derived from the Endangered Species Act, Department of Interior Regulations, Executive Orders, and Reclamation policy.

Finding

The EA evaluated the reasonably foreseeable effects of the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action.

In determining the degree of significance, the following were considered:

1. Short- and long-term effects:
Potential short- and long-term effects of the Project were analyzed in Section 3 of the EA and include air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, and water resources. As a result of Project implementation, there were no significant short- or long-term impacts to resources analyzed.
2. Beneficial and adverse effects:
The analysis in Section 3 of the EA details the primary benefit of the Project is the significant reduction of wildfire risk, which will protect both the natural environment and residential properties. The Project will also benefit flora and fauna by maintaining habitat conditions similar to those in a natural fire frequency regime. Adverse effects include temporary disturbances for the local community and wildlife during the implementation phase and minor air quality impacts from the use of motorized equipment and burning activities.
3. Effects on public health and safety:
The Project will enhance public health and safety by reducing the risk of large-scale wildfires, which can cause significant harm to human health through smoke inhalation and property damage. By managing fuels and reducing wildfire intensity, the Project will help protect the Lake Berryessa community and surrounding areas from the devastating effects of wildfires. Public health and safety is summarized in Section 3.1 of the EA.

4. Economic effects:

Economically, the Project will likely result in cost savings by reducing the need for extensive firefighting efforts and post-fire recovery. Preventing large-scale wildfires can save significant resources that would otherwise be spent on emergency response, habitat restoration, and rebuilding efforts. Additionally, maintaining a safer environment can enhance property values and attract more residents and visitors to the area.

5. Effects on the quality of life of the American people:

The Project will improve the quality of life for the residents of the Lake Berryessa community and surrounding areas by providing a safer, more stable environment. Reduced wildfire risk means less disruption to daily life and a lower likelihood of property loss and health hazards. The Project also contributes to the overall well-being of the community and recreationists by preserving natural habitats and promoting a healthier ecosystem.

Reclamation coordinated with appropriate federal, state, and local entities through permitting and consulting procedures. Reclamation reviewed the Selected Alternative for conformance with land use plans, and compliance with laws pertinent to the decision. The following are relevant findings of the Selected Alternative, with respect to the plans and laws associated with the affected environment.

- National Historic Preservation Act

Reclamation determined that this action does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, should such properties be present, pursuant to the Title 54 U.S.C § 306108, commonly known as Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) regulations codified at 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1). Reclamation consulted with the State Historic Preservation Officer regarding our determination on the proposed action. The State Historic Preservation Officer responded with no objection to our determination on December 3, 2025. This completed the NHPA process and Reclamation has no further obligations under NHPA Section 106, pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.3(a)(1).

- Endangered Species Act

Based on the Project specifics, location, habitat conditions in the Project footprint, and other factors, Reclamation determined that implementation

of the Project has the potential to affect the CRLF. Reclamation received concurrence with our determination, through Section 7 consultation, from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service on September 29, 2025 (reference # 2025-0145690).

- Clean Air Act

The General Conformity Rule was used to determine if Federal actions meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act by ensuring that air emissions related to the federal action do not: cause or contribute to new violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation of NAAQS, or delay timely attainments of NAAQS or interim emission reduction. Implementation of this project will be in compliance with the Clean Air Act.

- Clean Water Act

Hydrology and water quality impacts associated with the burning and fuel reduction activities would be localized. A 200-foot buffer has been established from the streambed where no activities will be conducted. The potable water treatment and community fire hydrant water source systems are not within the drainage of the proposed treatment area. This project is in compliance with the Clean Water Act through avoidance of impacts to water resources.


Reclamation follows the DOI and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations. The draft EA was posted for public review on August 21, 2025, through September 21, 2025. No public comments were received at that time.

After consideration of the information described above and analysis contained within the EA, Reclamation finds that the Project would not have a significant impact on the human environment.

Decision

Based partly on the analysis within the EA (CGB-ED-2025-040), Reclamation has decided to implement the Project. The Project best meets the purpose and need to reduce wildfire risk on Federal land at Lake Berryessa. This is necessary to prevent the build-up of fuels, which increases the potential for more frequent and intense wildfires. The Project aims to protect the natural environment, residential properties, and public health and safety by implementing treatments designed to mitigate wildfire risks. All

practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the Proposed Action are adopted with this decision. This document certifies that Reclamation has considered all relevant information raised in the NEPA process and that the NEPA process has concluded. The Responsible Official has decided to adopt the FONSI.

Certified by:  Date: DEC 11 2025
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