



California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Urban and Community Forestry Program

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

Part 1: ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. Project Title: _____
2. Project Applicant's Name: _____
3. Name and title of checklist preparer: _____

This checklist is intended for use by applicants for California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Urban Forestry Program projects. It is modeled after the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Environmental Checklist, which has been modified to more closely focus on the types of actions and impacts expected to occur while conducting urban forestry tree planting projects. As the lead agency under CEQA, CAL FIRE must make a determination as to a project's potential environmental impacts, develop mitigations if necessary and determine the level of environmental documentation and review required. The completion of this checklist will assist CAL FIRE in identifying impacts of the proposed project prior to approval. To meet that need someone that is intimately familiar with the project and knowledgeable on potential environmental consequences must complete this checklist. The information in the checklist is meant to supplement the information provided in your application. Maps and photos supplied with your application will assist in CAL FIRE's review. This checklist is available electronically (MS Word 97) or may be completed by hand. If you need assistance, please contact CAL FIRE's Urban Forestry Program personnel.

It is the intent of CAL FIRE and the Urban Forestry Program to approve tree-planting projects that are categorically exempt from further environmental review under CEQA. In order for a project to qualify for a categorical exemption CAL FIRE must find that there are no "unusual circumstances" associated with the project that lead to the project having impacts on environmental resources (e.g., threatened or endangered species, aesthetics, cultural resources, water quality, etc). CEQA does not allow for a project's impacts to be minimized or compensated under a categorical exemption; avoiding impacts to resources is the only mitigation permitted. To meet that end, the following questions were designed to identify environmental impacts that may occur in various tree-planting settings and encourage project applicants to develop measures to avoid those impacts. In the event that potential impacts to a resource are identified it is recommended that the project applicant redesign or reconfigure their project proposal to avoid impacts to the resource. Failure to fully avoid impacts will result in your project requiring a "higher level" of environmental review such as the preparation of a negative declaration or environmental impact report. This could be costly and delay your project. Because of the time and cost associated with the preparation of a negative declaration or environmental impact report CAL FIRE encourages you to change your project in order to qualify for a categorical exemption.

A brief explanation is required for "Yes" responses to the following questions. Responses must be supported by facts, not merely the personal opinion of the checklist preparer.

All responses must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.

Earlier analyses may be used where an impact has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. In this case, a brief discussion should identify the earlier analysis, describe the mitigations that were developed and supply copies of relevant sections/pages. A source list should be attached and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion sections where necessary.

Part 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Project Location:
(City, County, Nearest Town, etc.) _____

2. Description of Project: Describe the entire project, including but not limited to size and numbers of trees, size and depth of excavations, planting site preparation (i.e., land clearing), equipment to be utilized in planting and preparing the planting site (e.g., backhoes, power augers, heavy equipment), later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or off-site features necessary for the project’s implementation. Emphasis should be placed on activities that will potentially impact the environment rather than describing project benefits.

3. Identify the type(s) of setting(s) where your project will be located.

Urban or Developed Settings	Rural, Undeveloped or Wildland Settings
Street (parkways, medians, sidewalks, etc.)	Undeveloped land
Existing landscaped city/county park	New or rural park
Existing landscaped school grounds	New school grounds
Urban trail, bike trail	Agricultural land
Public building grounds	Historic district, railroad right-of-way
Other similar urban or developed setting. Describe setting:	Riparian area (within 100 ft of a stream, lake or wetland)
	Other similar rural, undeveloped or wildland setting. Describe setting:

Projects confined to urban or developed settings must address questions in Checklist, Part 4.

Projects that include rural, undeveloped or wildland settings must address questions in Checklist, Parts 3 and 4.

**Part 3: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS FOR PROJECTS
IN RURAL, UNDEVELOPED OR WILDLAND SETTINGS**

Projects, or portions of projects, planned for rural, undeveloped or wildland settings may have impacts on various resources (e.g., threatened or endangered species, cultural resources, water quality, etc.). Therefore, project applicants must conduct the following resource studies to determine if resources exist that warrant protection.

Resource Studies:

Conduct a Natural Diversity Data Base Search

Contact CAL FIRE, Urban Forestry Program staff to determine how to conduct a Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDDB) Search. Submit a copy of the search results along with this Environmental Checklist. If the NDDDB search identifies any threatened or endangered species of animals or plants that may be present describe avoidance measures in the appropriate discussion section.

Conduct an archaeological records check

Contact CAL FIRE, Urban Forestry Program staff to determine how to conduct an Archaeological Records Check. Submit a copy of the results along with this Environmental Checklist. If the Records Check identifies cultural resources within the project site describe measures to avoid impacts in the appropriate discussion section.

Conduct an archaeological survey

Contact CAL FIRE, Urban Forestry Program staff to determine how to conduct an archaeology survey. Submit a copy of the survey results along with this Environmental Checklist. If the archeological survey identifies cultural resources within the project site describe measures to avoid impacts in the appropriate discussion section.

Based on the results of the resource studies please respond to the following questions for projects located in rural, undeveloped or wildland settings.

1. Discuss the results of the resource studies and briefly describe the archaeological and biological resources identified within your project site.

Will the project:

2. Require the removal of native vegetation (trees, shrubs) prior to planting, thereby potentially impacting threatened or endangered plant or animal species or cultural resources?

Yes

No

3. Require extensive soil disturbance, thereby potentially causing soil erosion and impacting, threatened or endangered species or cultural resources?

Yes

No

4. Require the use of large equipment (i.e. backhoe) thereby potentially impacting threatened or endangered species or cultural resources?
 Yes No
5. Occur within 100 feet of a perennial watercourse, riparian zone or wetland thereby potentially impacting threatened or endangered species, cultural resources or riparian values?
 Yes No
6. Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance to non-agricultural use?
 Yes No
7. Discuss any "Yes" responses and describe measures to avoid impacts.

Part 4: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS FOR ALL PROJECTS

Please answer the following questions for all projects and discuss all "Yes" responses.

Will the proposed project:

1. Require approval from other public agencies (e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement (e.g., grading permits, CALTRANS encroachment permits, right-of-way easements, etc.))
 Yes No
2. Include activities that were identified in other environmental documents or analyses and support findings of no significant impact (e.g., CEQA documents, environmental surveys, general plans, studies, reports, etc.)
 Yes No

3. Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to general plans, specific plans, local coastal programs, or zoning ordinances)?

Yes

No

4. Conflict with any ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation ordinance, Habitat Conservation Plan, or other policy?

Yes

No

5. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Yes

No

6. Result in trees, once mature, coming into contact with power lines?

Yes

No

7. Expose people or structures to the risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Yes

No

8. Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources or substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?

Yes

No

9. Result in substantial adverse impacts to public services for tree pruning and maintenance?
 Yes No
10. Substantially increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities or require the construction of additional recreational facilities resulting in significant environmental impacts?
 Yes No
11. Include trees known to produce pollen/allergens/odors that are irritants or objectionable to large numbers of people?
 Yes No
12. Substantially damage a scenic resource or vista or degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?
 Yes No
13. Result in, once trees are mature, undesirable shading of nearby property, including residences, offices, swimming pools, solar energy collectors, recreational facilities, etc. or subject adjoining properties to excessive amounts of litter and/or debris?
 Yes No

14. Obscure public safety improvements such as streetlights, traffic signals, signs, etc.?

Yes

No

15. Greenhouse Gas Emissions
<input type="checkbox"/> This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> 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:

If you checked “No” to all preceding questions or checked “Yes” and have provided the required Resource Studies and identified measures sufficient to protect all resource values the project may be categorically exempt from further environmental review. Sign the Certification, below, and submit this Checklist with your application to the CAL FIRE, Urban Forestry Program office. CAL FIRE will review your responses and determine whether additional environmental review is necessary prior to project approval.

Part 5: CERTIFICATION

I certify that I have reviewed the proposed project’s description and inspected the project site(s). I have provided accurate and factual responses to the questions and have supplied accurate information when requesting database searches. In my opinion the proposed project will not have any negative impacts on the environment.

Signature of Checklist Preparer

Date

Part 6: DETERMINATION

DETERMINATION (To be completed by CAL FIRE, Urban and Community Forestry Program Staff)

As a representative of CAL FIRE and as lead agency for environmental review under CEQA I have determined that an environmental impact evaluation for the proposed project has been satisfactorily completed.

On the basis of this evaluation:

- I find that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and meets the Class 4 (Minor Alterations to Land) categorical exemption requirements. This project is therefore exempt from the requirement for the preparation of environmental documents. CAL FIRE will prepare a Notice of Exemption (NOE).
- I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment and does not meet the Class 4 categorical exemption requirements; therefore a negative declaration will be prepared.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the applicant. A mitigated negative declaration will be prepared.
- I find that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment, and an environmental impact report is required.
- I find that the proposed project may have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated impact" on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An environmental impact report is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
- I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration pursuant to applicable standards and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to an earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Signature of Authorized CAL FIRE Reviewer

Print Name

Title

Date