

# Memo



UPPER SALINAS-LAS TABLAS  
RESOURCE  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Upper Salinas-Las Tablas  
Resource Conservation District  
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**Date:** May 1, 2023

**To:** California Coastal Commission and Interested Parties

**From:** Spencer Gordon, Project Manager, Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District

**Subject:** Notice of Impending Development for the Cambria Reserves Restoration and Vegetation Treatment Project (SLT-NOID-0002-23)

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Pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 30606 and California Coastal Commission (Commission) Regulations Section 13358 and Section 13359, this letter is presented to provide Notice of Impending Development (NOID) for the Cambria Reserves Restoration and Vegetation Treatment Project in San Luis Obispo County. Such notice must be submitted to the Commission before a public agency proposing a public works project pursuant to a certified Public Works Plan (PWP) may commence with implementation of the project.

## Project Description

The Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District (US-LTRCD), in partnership with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), is proposing the Cambria Reserves Restoration and Vegetation Treatment Project (project or proposed project). The project consists of vegetation treatments on up to 291 acres of land, comprising up to 187 acres of land within the University of California Natural Reserve System's Kenneth S. Norris Rancho Marino Reserve (RMR) and 104 acres of land within the Cambria Pines Ecological Reserve (CPER). Both reserves are located in the unincorporated town of Cambria in San Luis Obispo County. The vegetation treatments would be consistent with Coastal Vegetation Treatment Standards (Coastal VTS) and the objectives of the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP).

US-LTRCD is facilitating the implementation of treatments on RMR. Treatments would consist of ecological restoration treatments on up to 170 acres and shaded fuel break treatments on up to 17 acres of Monterey pine forest within RMR. Monterey pine forests on RMR have been identified as rare, important forestland in need of restorative management focused on forest health and wildfire prevention. The goals for the proposed vegetation treatments are to increase the health and vigor of the Monterey pine forest, increase biological diversity, and reduce the severity of wildfire.

CDFW is implementing treatments on CPER, which would consist of ecological restoration treatments on up to 104 acres. The goals for the proposed vegetation treatments are to control invasive plants, promote germination and recruitment of Monterey pines to maintain a healthy Monterey pine forest, enhance abundance and diversity of native grasses and forbs in grasslands, maintain rare plant populations, and minimize conditions that lead to catastrophic fire and plant community type conversion.

At both reserves, proposed treatment activities would consist of prescribed burning, manual treatments, mechanical treatments, and herbicide application. Vegetation may be left on-site or burned on-site in the form of broadcast burning, pile burning, or using specialized biomass processing technologies (e.g., air curtain burner, carbonator). Small amounts of biomass may be taken off-site to an appropriate treatment facility, if needed. Treatment maintenance could be ongoing and continuous within the two reserves, as needed, using the same treatment types and activities as the initial treatment. Treatment crews on-site would range in size depending on the treatment activity, from one- to five-person crews for herbicide treatments to up to 45 workers for prescribed burns. Although there is the potential for the prescribed burning treatment activity to occur during nighttime and weekend hours, manual, mechanical, and herbicide treatment activities would be limited to daytime hours. Treatments would begin in 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter, as resources are available to implement the initial treatment and ongoing maintenance. Implementation of initial treatments would occur over a span of approximately 3 years, after which maintenance treatments would be implemented in subsequent years to maintain the initial treatments.

## Environmental Documents

The US-LTRCD Forest Health and Fire Resilience PWP was certified by the Commission in 2021. The PWP provides a streamlined mechanism for Coastal Act compliance in combination with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance process facilitated by the CalVTP Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for vegetation treatment projects within the Coastal Zone of a portion of San Luis Obispo County. The PWP requires that projects adhere to the Coastal VTS approved as part of the PWP and that additional information about project design be provided.

The CalVTP Program EIR was certified by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in 2019 to provide a streamlined mechanism for CEQA compliance for vegetation treatment projects. It evaluates the potential environmental effects of implementing qualifying vegetation treatments to reduce the risk of wildfire throughout the State Responsibility Area in California. It was designed for use by many state and local agencies and special districts to accelerate vegetation treatment project approvals by finding them to be within the scope of the Program EIR through the preparation of a Project-Specific Analysis (PSA). The PSA must demonstrate that the proposed activities align with those in the CalVTP, the effects of proposed vegetation treatment are consistent with those analyzed in the Program EIR, and Standard Project Requirements and mitigation measures from the Program EIR will be integrated into the treatment to avoid and minimize impacts.

A PSA was prepared that evaluates this project as a later activity covered by the CalVTP Program EIR as required pursuant to CEQA and includes information that demonstrates the project's consistency with the Coastal VTS as required pursuant to the Coastal Act and PWP. Direct response to the Coastal VTS for the project can be found in Attachment A to the PSA.

This NOID, as well as all supporting environmental documents, including the PSA and the Coastal VTS, are available for public review from May 1, 2023 to June 9, 2023 at the California Coastal Commission office located at 455 Market Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California 94105. The documents will also be available for review and download online on the California Coastal Commission's Agenda webpage, found under Meetings, Monthly agenda online at: <https://www/coastal.ca.gov/>.

## Consistency with PWP

The Final US-LTRCD Forest Health and Fire Resilience PWP was approved by the US-LTRCD Board on September 16, 2021 and certified by the Commission on October 15, 2021. The project will be carried out pursuant to and consistent with the PWP as documented in the PSA and the Coastal VTS.

## Approval Process

As defined in the CalVTP Program EIR and the PSA, the project proponent is a public agency that provides funding for vegetation treatment or has land ownership, land management, or other regulatory responsibility in the treatable landscape and is seeking to fund, authorize, or implement vegetation treatments consistent with the CalVTP. Both US-LTRCD and CDFW meet the definition of project proponent. However, for clarity, the PSA distinguishes between the two agencies by identifying US-LTRCD as the project proponent, and CDFW as the project partner. For purposes of CEQA compliance, US-LTRCD and CDFW both serve as responsible agencies. US-LTRCD is facilitating the implementation of treatments on RMR. For Coastal Act compliance, US-LTRCD is responsible for partnering with other agencies to implement the procedures in the PWP and is responsible for maintaining oversight to confirm consistency with PWP processes. CDFW owns CPER and will implement the treatments therein, and seeks to use US-LTRCD's PWP for Coastal Act compliance.

The US-LTRCD Board approved this project at a Board meeting on April 27, 2023 (resolution #: 2023-03). The US-LTRCD staff contact for this project is:

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Consistent with the requirements of the PWP, the US-LTRCD notified the Commission in advance of its intent to submit a NOID for the project. After receiving the NOID, the Commission has five days to deem the NOID complete and filed or request additional information. The Commission is also responsible for reviewing the PSA and response to the Coastal VTS, and for determining whether the project is consistent with the PWP. Commission review of a proposed project is deemed complete on the date that the project is determined to be consistent with the PWP. The proposed Commission hearing to approve the PSA and act on the NOID for this project begins on June 7, 2023 and extends through June 9, 2023. The Commission staff contact for this project is:

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