

Notice of Exemption

Appendix E

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
County Clerk
County of: Napa & Solano

From: (Public Agency): Napa County
Fire Administration
1195 Third St, STE 310, Napa 94959
(Address)

FILED

JAN 13 2025

Project Title: Mt Vaca Repeater Fuel Reduction

Project Applicant: Napa County Fire Administration

Project Location - Specific:
38.4004522°, -122.1059112°

Bill Emmon, Clerk of the
Board of Supervisors of
the County of Solano,
State of California
Deputy Emily Shepherd

Project Location - City: Unincorporated Project Location - County: Napa & Solano

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:

The project proposes the removal of vegetation within 500 ft of repeater infrastructure on Mt Vaca. Material will be removed with hand tools such as chain saws as well as mechanically with heavy equipment. Material will be chipped, lopped and scattered, masticated or incinerated in a designated burn box. The proposed treatment is necessary for the protection and maintenance of critical communications infrastructure.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Napa County Fire Administration

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: CAL FIRE

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));
[checked] Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: Minor alterations to land, 15304
Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

Reasons why project is exempt:

The planned activities have been reviewed by a registered professional forester in consultation with experts from other pertinent fields who have attested that the activities proposed in this project will have the potential for at most impacts that are less than significant to the environment, having provided adequate measures for avoidance of sensitive environmental resources. The proposed activities fit within the parameters included in CEQA guidelines Section 15304 and does not require additional analysis.

Lead Agency
Contact Person: J.R. Rogers Area Code/Telephone/Extension: (707) 259-8199

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: [Signature] Date: 1/13/25 Title: Asst. Fire Admin

Signed by Lead Agency Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code. Date Received for filing at OPR:
Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Document Posted From
1/13/25 to

Deputy Clerk of the Board

Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

Note: This report has been adapted from the CAL FIRE Environmental Review Report form for CEQA Exempt projects. This document serves as a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a notice of exemption document for a proposed project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable categorical exemptions, this report presents Jacobszoon & Associates' (J&A) review for possible exceptions that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by J&A.

Author: Seamus Fleming Title: Registered Professional Forester Address: 117 Clara Ave, Ukiah CA Phone: 707-485-5544 ext. 105 Email: seamus@jeforestry.com
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Project Name: Mt Vaca Repeater Fuel Reduction Project Number: Lead Agency: Napa County Program Type: CAL FIRE Unit: LNU County: Napa/Solano Acres: 29 Legal Location: T6N, R2W, Section 5, MDBM Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s): Mount Vaca <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Vicinity Map Attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Location Map Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Photos Attached
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Other Public Agency Review or Permit Required:		
Would the project result in:	YES	NO
Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:		

Project Description and Environmental Setting (describe the project activities, project site and its surroundings, its location, and the environmental setting): Project Location: Mount Vaca Repeater Site (38.4004522, -122.1059112) Project Site: The project is located on Mount Vaca in Napa and Solano Counties at approximately 2800' above sea level on primarily Eastern and Western aspects. Vegetation communities present include chaparral and mixed hardwood forest and woodland. Overstory species observed include blue oak (<i>Quercus douglasii</i>), interior live oak/scrub oak (<i>Quercus wislizeni/berberidifolia</i>) and California bay-laurel (<i>Umbellularia californica</i>). Project Activities: Vegetation removal using hand tools and mechanical equipment within 500' of critical infrastructure. Cut material will be chipped, lopped and scattered, or piled and burned. Trees less than 10" dbh may be removed to achieve crown separation and eliminate ladder fuels. Trees greater than 10" dbh may be pruned to 8' above ground level. Heavy equipment will be limited to previously disturbed areas such as parking areas and roadways.

Environmental Impact Analysis

Aesthetics

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The project area is not open to the public and is not viewable from any major public roads within a 3-mile radius. The removal of vegetation and subsequent treatment of material will not substantially change the character of the pre-operations forest condition.

Agriculture and Forest Resources

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds, if necessary.
- Yes No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?
- Yes No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Any trees felled during the project will be relatively small diameter, not to exceed 10" dbh, which generally make up the understory of an existing stand of forested vegetation. Trees of this size can be expected to be replaced via natural regeneration. The removal of these trees and subsequent treatment of woody material will not substantially change the character of the pre-operations forested condition.

Air Quality

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Any burning of vegetation/debris which result from actions taken during this project will be done so under the authority and permitting requirements of the local Air Quality Control District and/or CAL FIRE.

Biological Resources

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?
- Yes No Was a current California Natural Diversity Database review completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

CNDDDB results show that there are rare, threatened, or endangered plants or animals that have been located within 3 miles of the project area. There have been no observations of rare, threatened or endangered plants or animals within the project area. Operations have been planned to avoid habitats where these sensitive biological resources would likely be located based on the life history accounts of rare species provided by CDFW. No rare plants were observed during a cursory botanical survey completed by the RPF.

Cultural Resources

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes No Was a CAL FIRE staff or contract archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:
- Yes No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:
- Yes No Will the project effect any historic, archaeological or tribal cultural resources?

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A records search was completed for the project area through NWIC. No historic or archaeological sites are present within the project boundary.

Geology and Soils

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?
- Yes No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:
- Yes 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:

Removal of live vegetation will unavoidably generate the emission of Carbon Dioxide (CO2) through the use of internal-combustion engines in vehicles and equipment used on site; the direct act of cutting live vegetation will also inevitably produce GHG emissions when that vegetative matter is either burned or decomposes over time. The material in this project is not of commercial size, and does not have value as a product which may be preserved via maintenance, such as lumber or furniture. However, the treated vegetation within this project represents a relatively small amount of the stored carbon potential on site, and the treatment of this vegetation will aid in the long term stability of carbon stored in live residual vegetation and in organic soil matter found on the site. There are no feasible market alternatives such as biomass energy generation for material from this project to offset the initial GHG emission from the project, but in the context of the current forest health crisis, the emissions anticipated from this project are not significant.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Hydrology and Water Quality

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- Yes No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

There are no watercourses or bodies of water within the project area.

Land Use and Planning

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Mineral Resources

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Noise

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.
- This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

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<p>Population and Housing</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:</p>	
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<p>Public Services</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:</p>	
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<p>Recreation</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:</p>	
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<p>Transportation and Traffic</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:</p>	
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<p>Utilities and Service Systems</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:</p>	
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<p>Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts: None</p>	
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Mandatory Findings of Significance:	YES	NO
(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒
(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects.	☐	☒
(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☒

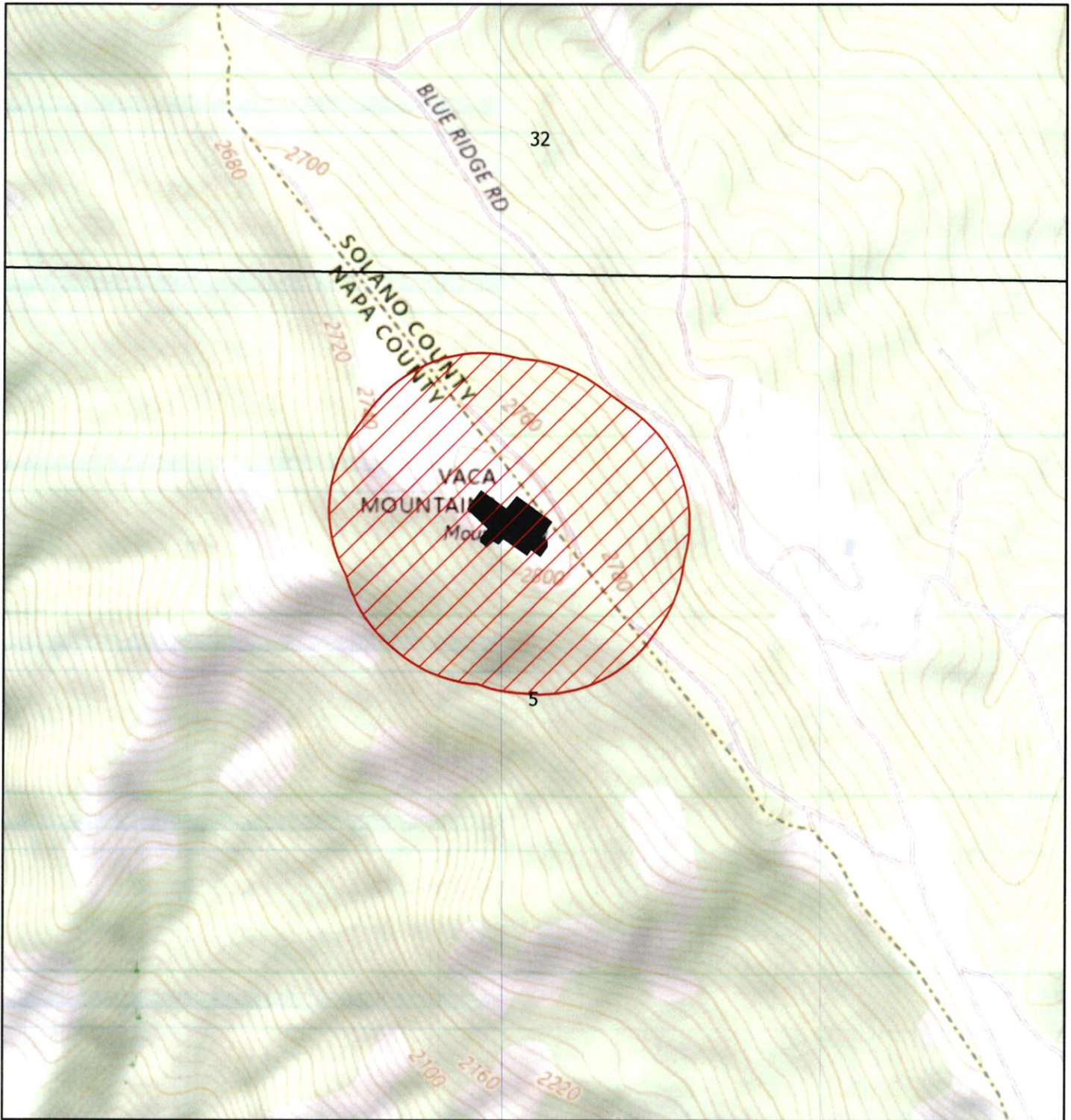
<p>Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):</p> <p>PRC §15304 Minor Alterations to Land- Consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes. The planned activities meet the definition of "forestry" in PRC §753 and have been reviewed and approved by a Registered Professional Forester in consultation with experts from other pertinent fields who have attested that the activities proposed</p>	
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in this project will have the potential for at most impacts that are less than significant to the environment, having provided adequate measures for avoidance of sensitive environmental resources.

Conclusion:

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, J&A has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. J&A considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A notice of exemption will be filed at the State Clearinghouse.

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, J&A has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site that precludes the use of a categorical exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a negative declaration or a mitigated negative declaration.



Mt Vaca Fuel Reduction Project

Map 1 of 2

Operations Map

Portion of T06N, R02W, Sec 5
 Mount Vaca USGS 7.5' Quad
 Napa and Solano Counties, CA



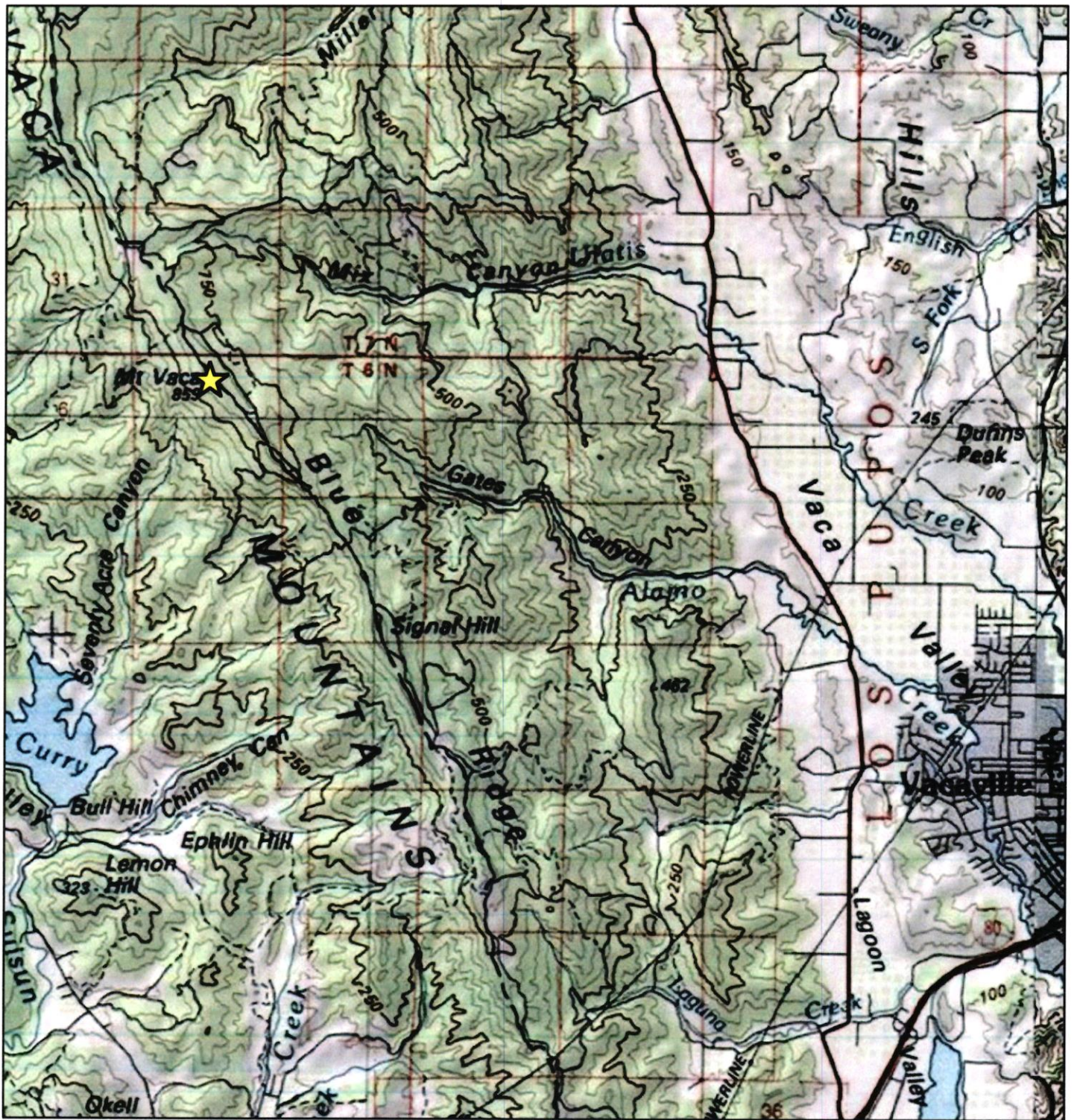
JACOBSZOON & ASSOCIATES, INC.
 natural resource planning & management

Legend

- Repeater_Infrastructure
- PLSS Sections
- Treatment Area (500 ft buffer)

Scale: 1:6,000





Mt Vaca Fuel Reduction Project

Map 2 of 2

Legend

 Project Location

Vicinity Map

Portion of T06N, R02W, Sec 5
 Mount Vaca USGS 7.5' Quad
 Napa and Solano Counties, CA



Scale: 1:60,000

