

EXCEPTION CHECKLIST FOR BIA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

Date Printed: 09/23/2026

Date Approved:	09/23/26	Transaction or Project Name:	TR-4314-P5 J52 Yurok Sudden Oak Death Prescribed Burn
Brief description of the proposed transaction or project:			
Continuation of previous NEPA Tracker #68562 The Yurok Tribe is facing an immediate cultural, ecological, and community safety crisis across Yurok lands. In late April 2026, Phytophthora ramorum was confirmed present on the Yurok Reservation through laboratory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing, the definitive diagnostic standard for this pathogen. The confirmed infected core marks the first laboratory confirmed detection of the pathogen on Yurok Tribal ground. In addition, eDNA samples indicate Bençs Creek, located near Weitchpec, have also tested positive for Phytophthora ramorum. In direct response to this threat to tribal survival and sovereignty, the Yurok Tribal Council passed Resolution No. 26-31 on May 14, 2026, ratifying a formal State of Emergency Declaration (SOE) under Article IV of the Yurok Constitution to activate emergency authorities and secure regional assistance to stop the landscape-level spread of the pathogen. Unmitigated spread risks rapid canopy failure, permanent conversion of forest species composition, a catastrophic increase in hazardous fuel loads, and high-intensity canopy wildfire threats to local communities, while permanently destroying cultural resources and degrading long-term wildlife habitat and water quality across the Klamath River watershed. Ahead of this proposed containment burn, emergency crews have already initiated and completed the manual cutting, felling, and piling of host trees and infected vegetation under a separate, previously completed Categorical Exclusion. This current proposal covers only the subsequent burning operations and associated burn preparation work (e.g., handline, mastication in strategic locations). The project will utilize a ridge-to-ridge landscape-level prescription to establish a secure biological and thermal containment barrier within and surrounding the infected areas. The total footprint for this emergency intervention is 1,999 acres.			
Property description including Native Allotment number, landowner name, and legal description:			
Any change in land use or ground disturbing activity? If yes, please explain:			
516 DM 10.5 Categorical Exclusion letter, the specific title and the text of the category:			
**Emergency forest and range rehab (less than 10,000 acres) (§ 5.H.06) Forestry. Approval of emergency forest and range rehabilitation plans when limited to environmental stabilization on less than 10,000 acres and not including approval of salvage sales of damaged timber. Appendix 2, Section 10.5.H.06. **Prescribed burn plan (less than 2,000 acres) (§ 5.H.09) Forestry. Approval of prescribed burning plans of less than 2,000 acres when in compliance with policies and guidelines established by a current management plan addressed in earlier NEPA analysis. Appendix 2, Section 10.5.H.09.			

Evaluation of extraordinary circumstances for the categorically excluded action listed above (43 CFR 46.215)

1. This action would have significant impacts on public health or safety.	No
2. This action would have significant impacts on: natural resources and unique geographical features as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild and scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or prime drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant areas.	No
3. This action would have highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources.	No
4. This action would have highly uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risk.	No
5. This action will establish a precedent for future actions.	No
6. This actions is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.	No
7. This action will have significant impacts on properties listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.	No
8. This action will have significant impacts on a species listed or proposed to be listed as endangered or threatened, or Critical Habitat of these.	No

9. This action threatens to violate federal, state, local, or tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.	No
11. This action will limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on federal lands, by Indian religious practitioners, and/or adversely affect the physical integrity of such sites.	No
12. This action will contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area, or may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.	No

This checklist may be used to determine if an environmental assessment is required for a single, independent proposed action that is determined to be a BIA-approved categorical exclusion as listed in Department of Interior 516 DM 10.5. The person preparing this checklist must have supporting information or reasonable assurance that the proposed action will not have significant or adverse effects on any of the twelve situations above. If so, it is reasonable to answer "No" to the exceptions above. If not, an environmental assessment must be prepared to further investigate and determine whether an action will have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment.

A "Yes" to any of the above exceptions will require that an EA be prepared

NEPA Action: CE

Preparer's Name: Colton Bearquiver **Date:** 09/08/26

Regional Office/Agency Environmental Coordinator:

Reviewed and Recommended: Jacilyn Snyder **Date:** 09/10/26

Regional Wildlife Biologist Approval:

Reviewed and Recommended: Peter DeJongh **Date:** 09/10/26

Regional/Agency Archeologist:

Concur with Item 7: Julie Taomia **Date:** 09/22/26

Environmental Professional (Phase 1) Approval :

Reviewed and Recommended: _____ **Date:** _____

Regional Director/Agency Superintendent:

Concur: Ryan Hunter **Date:** 09/23/26