



# **Finding of Applicability and No Extraordinary Circumstance (FANEC) Apple and El Dorado Post-Fire Restoration Project**

## **USDA Forest Service San Bernardino National Forest San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, California**

### **Purpose and Need and Proposed Action**

The Forest Service proposes to implement a post-fire restoration project within the burn footprints of the 2020 Apple Fire and El Dorado Fire on the San Bernardino National Forest. More detailed information can be found in the project record under Appendix A.

### **Categorical Exclusion**

This action qualifies for a categorical exclusion under 7 CFR 1b.4(d)(47), which identifies categories of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and therefore do not require preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

The proposed activities fall within the categorical exclusion for restoration activities, which include reforestation, habitat improvement, and fuels reduction. These activities are consistent with the scope and intent of 7 CFR 1b.4(d)(47) and are supported by extensive analysis of similar projects across the National Forest System.

Additionally, this category does have two extra required components consisting of 1) consulting the Forest Service Washington (or National) Office prior to signing the finding, which occurred on March 11, 2026, as well as 2) a collaboration requirement. For this project, the planning and interdisciplinary team collaborated with TreePeople, the National Forest Foundation, Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, the Headwaters Resiliency Partnership, the Southern California Mountains Foundation, and CalFire.

### **Extraordinary Circumstances Review**

The resources to screen for in the potentially affected environment when considering extraordinary circumstances may include, but are not limited to:

- i) Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat or species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat;

- a. A Biological Assessment and Biological Evaluation was prepared to analyze the effects of this project on federally-listed Threatened and Endangered species and consultation is not required.
- ii) Flood plains, wetlands, or other such sensitive areas;
  - a. This action will not have any effect to these resources
- iii) Special sources of water, such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, municipal watersheds, or other water sources that are vital in a region;
  - a. This action will not have any effect to these resources
- iv) Areas having formal Federal or state designations, such as wilderness areas, parks, or wildlife refuges; wild and scenic rivers; marine sanctuaries; national natural landmarks; inventoried roadless areas; or national recreation areas;
  - a. This action is not authorized in wilderness
  - b. This action is authorized within inventoried roadless areas because there will not be road construction or commercial timber harvesting
- v) Specially managed areas, such as designated research or experimental areas, coral reefs, coastal barrier resources, or, unless exempt, coastal zone management areas;
  - a. This action is not authorized within research natural areas
- vi) Important or prime agricultural, forest, or range lands; or
  - a. The project area does not include these areas
- vii) Property (*e.g.*, sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archeological, or architectural significance, as designated by Federal, Tribal, State, or local governments, or property eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
  - a. This action is a screened undertaking under programmatic agreement with the California State Historic Preservation Officer.

Based on this review, no extraordinary circumstances exist that would require further analysis in an EA or EIS.

## Findings Required by other Laws and Regulations

This decision is consistent with the San Bernardino National Forest Land Management Plan and complies with the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Water Act, and other applicable laws and regulations.

## Implementation

Project implementation is expected to begin in 2026 with site preparation, followed by planting in 2026. Some units, including those involving Bigcone Douglas-fir research, may begin earlier.

## Enclosures

Appendix A – Purpose and Need and Proposed Action

Appendix B – Design Features

## Contact

For additional information concerning this decision, contact: Joseph Martin, NEPA Planner, [Joseph.Martin@usda.gov](mailto:Joseph.Martin@usda.gov).

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3-25-26

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District Ranger

Date

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