



Calaveras County

Butte Fire Recovery

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BUTTE FIRE RECOVERY-HAZARD TREE REMOVAL

The Calaveras County Public Works Department and Cal-Trans will be removing hazard trees on public roads and public rights-of-way, and utility companies will be removing hazard trees within utility easements.

For damaged or destroyed trees on private property that do not pose an immediate hazard to a structure and are not located on public rights-of-way or utility easements, Gary Whitson, the Cal Fire Forester assigned to Calaveras County, explained that private property owners may remove these trees without a permit so long as they do not sell, trade, or otherwise use a commercial species of tree for a commercial purpose. In other words, if fire-affected trees on private property are cut down by the property owner and either left there or used by the property owner for personal use only, this would not be considered a commercial harvest and no Cal Fire permit would be required.

If a property owner, on the other hand, wishes to sell, barter, exchange, or trade commercial species of trees or their byproducts, Mr. Whitson explained that this would be considered a commercial use—even if these trees have been damaged or destroyed by the fire. Commercial species most likely to be found on fire-affected properties in Calaveras County are ponderosa pine, sugar pine, Douglas fir, and white fir. While an expedited procedure (such as the “Emergency Timber Operations” exemption) may apply to the harvesting of fire-damaged trees in lieu of a Timber Harvest Plan, the property owner would need to comply with Cal Fire regulations and work with a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) to determine if an exemption applies. Any commercial harvesting conducted on the property would have to be performed by a Licensed Timber Operator. Further information about Cal Fire timber harvesting permits, exemptions, and timber harvesting forms can be found at http://calfire.ca.gov/response_mgt/resource_mgt_forestpractice_harvestingforms.php . Mr. Whitson can also provide residents with a Cal Fire handout describing the various permits and exemptions that might apply to private property owners who wish to sell or trade their fire-affected trees. He can also be reached at (209) 754-2708 or at gary.whitson@fire.ca.gov .

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