



To the Coastside Fire Dept,

You're always ready to step up and help out.

Thank you for all you do.

Thank you for all your hard
work on the Caldu fire!
We are eternally grateful
for everything you do! Stay
safe out there!

♡ Helen, Alex, Fiddy
Zephyr Cove, NV

Thank You Coastside Fire District
As long time residents of
South Lake Tahoe, we want
to express our sincere gratitude
for your incredible efforts
to save our beautiful city
from the Caldor Fire.

We hope that you can come
back in the future to
enjoy South Lake Tahoe
and all its beauty!

♡ The Power Family



Subject: FW: Possible New Abatement Program
Date: Thursday, September 16, 2021 at 11:26:13 AM Pacific Daylight Time
From: Cox, Jonathan@CALFIRE <Jonathan.Cox@fire.ca.gov>
To: Michele Ortiz <mortiz@coastsidefire.org>
Attachments: image001.png

Michele,

Can you please put this in the October board agenda under correspondence?

Best regards,

Jonathan Cox | Deputy Chief
CAL FIRE San Mateo Division



Proudly serving San Mateo County Fire Department and Coastside Fire Protection District.

From: Susan Casey <kccoast@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 5:46 PM
To: sstockman@coastsidefire.org; csherrill@coastsidefire.org; Cox, Jonathan@CALFIRE <Jonathan.Cox@fire.ca.gov>; Silva, Gary@CALFIRE <Gary.Silva@fire.ca.gov>; Seely, Austin@CALFIRE <Austin.Seely@fire.ca.gov>
Cc: midcoastcommunitycouncil@gmail.com
Subject: Possible New Abatement Program

Warning: this message is from an external user and should be treated with caution.

To CFPD Vegetation Management Committee:
Director Stockman
Director Sherrill
Deputy Fire Chief Cox
Fire Marshal Chief Silva
Deputy Fire Marshal Seely

C.C. Midcoast Community Council

Thank you to Director Stockman, Director Sherrill and Deputy Fire Chief Cox for your attention in the matter of excessive vegetation on El Granada Blvd as outlined in my July 27 letter and reviewed in the August 25 Board Meeting. While I am concerned that enforcement for the eight parcels near my home has been put on hold, I am pleased that the board is recognizing the larger problem of excessive vegetation and is actively pursuing identifying the scope of this problem and inspecting private property with eucalyptus.

Prior to your August 25 Board Meeting, I attended the August 11 Midcoast Community Council meeting when a letter from Austin Seely was read describing the work he is currently doing by going lot to lot to inspect vacant lots in El Granada to assess property owners who will be receiving correction notices in mass for ground fuel clean up. He said, "We are currently working simultaneously inspecting lots as well as the specifics of what we will require the contractors to do." The letter stated it would be a one time inspection and next year these properties

would be enrolled in future notices under weed abatement. He states that this is currently a work in progress and has not yet been approved by the board. While this is a first step, it is an important and significant first step, if board approved, toward the enforcement of vegetation reduction on unimproved properties.

I commend Austin Seely for doing this painstaking work of going lot to lot. My following comments in no way are to be interpreted as a criticism of what he is doing. Since this is a work in progress, this may be a good time for community input.

First and foremost I think that any work for any fuel reduction should be viewed as part of a larger on-going plan that aids in the transition from non native eucalyptus and other invasive species, to a native habitat. This also should be viewed that any and all resources which may include Austin Seely's time, property owner's funds, grant funds, etc. are precious and limited and therefore should be used as productive and intentional as possible. Efforts need to be about ensuring all work that is accomplished each year to be as effective in stemming the regrowth of eucalyptus as much as possible, so that future work, efforts and funds will be for further fuel reduction and not for maintenance of what was done in previous years. There, of course will be a need for some maintenance, but the point is to set up the process so that the need for maintenance will be minimized.

Therefore, when correction notices are sent to property owners, it would be helpful to be as specific and thorough as possible in explaining what should be removed and what remedies are available to minimize regrowth. It is best if correction notices point out specifically what is to be included to reduce fuel. I mention this because even though one of the eight parcels that was cleared quite well, did not cut approximately 80 saplings, so I am questioning whether that was specifically included in the correction notice sent. Another observation I would like to share with you has to do with the abundance of smaller trees, eight inches in diameter and less which adds to the density and overcrowding on many of the parcels. I don't think these trees look healthy, but I cannot say with certainty that they are dead or dying. What I can say is that they add to the extreme density and even if they could be considered healthy, they may continue to grow. Therefore, I recommend that rather than trying to describe for a property owner what a dying tree looks like, include in the vegetation abatement program the removal of all trees less than eight inches in diameter. If these smaller and even medium size trees can be removed, that will not only eliminate a full-size tree in five years, it can be chipped to help provide the mat of chips needed to help suppress weeds.

I am concerned about what guidance the property owners will be provided in these correction notices to ensure the work is as effective and long lasting as possible. I have lived near this eucalyptus forest for 24 years, so I understand their weed-like properties. Upon cutting of saplings (or any eucalyptus), herbicide must be placed on the cut area immediately after, or new growth will continue to occur. Grassy weeds will grow if a mat of chips is not there to prevent it. And other invasive plant species such as cape ivy should be killed or removed prior to any chipping to prevent further spreading of unwanted invasive species growth. At certain stages of their growth, I have observed eucalyptus growing 12+ feet per year. It does not take too many years before a forest can get out of control.

In addition, I think this needs to be looked at as an annual ongoing program and not as a one time thing. Hopefully this is one of your considerations. Even if it is not known today where the headcount will come for inspections next year, without an ongoing component to this plan, we will never get on top of the eucalyptus problem. Goals need to be stated and named for what can ideally be accomplished even if it is not completely understood at this time how they will be achieved.

I am encouraged by the speed that you are approaching a solution to the excess vegetation on and near El Granada Blvd, and as I said it is an important first step. As you see how the new program is working, I would like to encourage you to consider next steps and even a transition plan from invasive non native eucalyptus to native vegetation. As long as removal of mature eucalyptus are not included in the plans, particularly in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone such as El Granada Blvd, I feel our evacuation route will be jeopardized and homes and lives placed at risk.

It is hard to summarize the myriad of concerns we on upper El Granada Blvd have. We understand the unique characteristics of El Granada Blvd and how each factor adds exponentially to our wildfire risk but most importantly, the risk of not being able to successfully evacuate. That is why we are so concerned with significant fuel reduction and a plan to transition from eucalyptus to native habitat. Our concerns include but are not limited to:

- Upper El Granada Blvd has only one evacuation route.
- Owners of undeveloped private property are not attending to the fuel reduction needs on their property and

CFPD has not been enforcing that it be done. Hopefully this will soon become less of a factor.

- These lots line the El Granada Blvd evacuation route and at points come in direct contact with trees in Quarry Park.
- Power lines from the PG&E poles cross El Granada Blvd at least 34 times.
- El Granada Blvd is on the direct path of Diablo Winds from the Northeast and 40+ MPH winds are not uncommon in this area.
- The locked gate at the top of El Granada Blvd is a potential alternative escape if it could be unlocked.
- A hot, offshore windy day, is both the type of day that crowds will flock to the coast, as well as the type of day that is high fire danger, thus making evacuation much more difficult, if not impossible.
- This not only would impact evacuation, but also response time by first responders.

It does not take much imagination before one realizes, either me and my family or a neighbor could be in a long line of cars that is not moving during an evacuation. This is one of the reasons why it is essential to have prevention rather than evacuation. However, if there is a need for evacuation, I don't think mature eucalyptus should be lining the route. The professional judgement of seasoned fire professionals should be able to deem them too dangerous to be on an evacuation route due to the endangerment of others.

We also understand that the vast majority of the fires that may occur around El Granada or Quarry park will not be like the recent Dixie or Caldor fires that have been in the headlines. Clearly all the past plans and diligence from CFPD have kept us all safe. However, with that said, it is not lost on El Granada Blvd residents that our topography with steep slopes and ravines along with ENE Diablo Winds are similar in many ways to these fires that are stealing headlines. The drought, dead and dying trees, extreme flammability of eucalyptus, and way too little forest management has exacerbated an already dangerous situation. Our fear of a canopy fire is within the realm of possibility given so many risk factors.

Since we can do nothing about topography and nothing about weather, the only component that can possibly be addressed is fuel level. And the basic fact is that the fuel level on these primarily vacant lots in El Granada as well as Quarry Park is extremely dense. As long as there are no plans to have property owners be responsible for the largest component of fuel on their properties, mature eucalyptus, the Vegetation Management plan is incomplete.

Much will be learned once this new "Abatement Program" will hopefully be implemented. I do not want even the appearance of coming across ungrateful for this work that you all are doing on behalf of El Granada residents. It's just that I can see that there will be a need for next steps in the not too distant future. In the mean time thank you for all your hard work.

Sincerely,
Susan Casey
El Granada Blvd Resident