



# FIRE SAFE SAN MATEO COUNTY

June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
General Meeting Minutes

Online conference call. No in-person meeting.

**Commence 9:37 am**

## I. Attendance:

Online Zoom conference call in lieu of in-person meeting due to COVID-19 meeting restriction due to sheltering-in-place order.

39 members attended the meeting.

## II. Introduction

Council President Denise Enea welcomed all members who called into the meeting. Then she acknowledged County Park presenter Dan Krung- in 2 years he has made significant positive impacts related to forest management and relationship with fire agencies.

## III. Presentation Dan Krug, San Mateo County Parks Forest and Fire Updates- Fuel Management on Park Land

- Through stewardship, San Mateo County Parks preserves our County's natural and cultural treasures, and provides safe, accessible parks

### 1. Background:

- San Mateo County Parks (majority oak woodland and redwood forests):
  - A diverse collection of 25 properties covering roughly 17,000 acres and
  - A collection of historic uses: Memorial County Park- saved from logging in 1924.
  - Huddart Park-
  - Sam McDonald Park
  - Pescadero Creek Park
  - San Pedro Valley Park
  - Wunderlich Park
  - San Bruno Mountain
  - Edgewood Park and Preserve
  - Quarry Park

### 2. History:

- Over time, there was a significant alteration of county park land use. Mixed-use lands shifted to conservation, but this shift decreased overall land management, and there was a misunderstanding of maintenance needs for natural landscapes.
- This became a prioritization of recreation management not natural resource management.
  - For example, a common theme became management for park management, trail maintenance NOT fuel reduction and defensible space.
- Recently, there was a shift to natural resource management and a Natural Resources Special District was designated within the Park. This provided:
  - Scientific approach to land management.
  - Technical advisory to park staff.

3. Fuel reduction management, county park examples:

- Kings Mountain Rd: Governor's Project
  - Pre-condition vs. post (see pictures)
  - 5 week road closures due to debris on roadway from fuel management (mastication, chipping)
  - This project required effective communicating with community
  - Mastication, burning piles, felled larger trees
- Quarry Park
  - Eucalyptus on roadways and ridges
  - 95 acres
  - Some Monterey pine and chaparral
  - Challenges: due to steep terrain, full park closure
    - Unhealthy eucalyptus- mountain biking and trails cut (make it unhealthy)
- Junipero Serra- Neighborhood Protection 2019
  - Understory removal
  - Oak woodland to reduce ladder fuels
  - Eucalyptus removed
- Sylvan Way
  - Adjacent homes
  - Overdense CA Bay Trees (understory fuels and SOD vector)- fuel reduction
- PG&E- improve communications on some park properties
  - San Bruno
  - Edgewood
    - Fuel reduction 2019
    - Fuel break from 2010 that needed re-treatment
    - Work under transmission lines and near substation
    - IPM work too
    - Selective removal
  - Huddart
- Wunderlich
  - Maintenance until 2020
- New project planning
  - Accessibility
    - Slope and terrain taken into account
    - Location of existing routes

- Determine process for vegetation management
    - Mechanical
    - Chemical
    - Handwork
    - Grazing
  - Environmental Review- CEQA compliance
4. Discussion/Questions [*text below is from virtual chat during presentation and verbal questions post-presentation. Includes discussion among council members and also presenter responding to members*]
- Denise: SMC Parks in the 1990s and early 2000 had an almost non-existent budget and almost a \$0 line item for fuels management. Cities want open space but do not do the do-diligence for fire safety and fuel reduction- dan has done a lot.
  - Nikki Hanson: On the Kings Mt. Fuel reduction project, overall it looks great! I was wondering thought if crews shown locations of the endemic Kings Mt. manzanita species? Some of the very large shrubs were taken out. I think this was inadvertent, but I am wondering if you know more about the process of educating crews or tagging plants ahead of time.
  - Sarah Collamer (provided response to question above): We (CAL FIRE) had a biological contractor identify and flag King's Mt Manzanita prior to mastication. Also KMM requires full sun and disturbed soil to propagate. project activities should benefit that plant species overall.
  - Nikki Hanson: Thanks for the information on the KMM. I am hoping overall the species will rebound and proliferate like you say. I was just curious if it was conscious that plants near the road were completely removed. I talked to some people who were part of the flagging of the plants and it kind of sounded like there were some accidental removals. I am very happy to know most of the plants were avoided. Thank you! I realize it is such an enormous undertaking, it is impossible to be perfect.
  - Sarah Collamer: The flagging of KMM was completed by Sequoia Ecology, they only flagged the plants and were not funded for any monitoring. They never informed me of any complete removals of KMM, and I did not observe any, although it is possible. The majority of KMM plants were decadent, with a large dead component.
  - Nikki Hanson: Ok, I was talking to people at MROSD, who for some reason were involved in some way. I am not sure why. The manzanitas that I saw that were removed were old, but still alive. The plants can get quite scraggly, so perhaps they were deemed a fire hazard.
  - Nikki Hanson: I am excited to see how the native plant communities respond to the burn piles— a lot of unusual and diverse species can be triggered to germinate with the charcoal.
  - Denise Enea: The 2010 project was a Fire Safe funded and collaborative with SF PUC, SMC Parks, Woodside Fire & County Fire. We hand cut vegetation and burned the piles. The 2020 project has an expanded scope and looks great, Before the road improvement it was really impossible to get any fire apparatus into Wunderlich from the bottom access on Woodside Rd.
  - Michael Barber: This presentation should be made available to the County BOS. Maybe a condensed version could be given to them at a Board meeting. Important to highlight the value of the work before pending County budget cuts.
  - Casey PMAC:+1 Michael Barber’s comment. ( the audio / Dan’s verbal supplement is crucial tho)

- Denise: Michael I agree and I think maybe we can tie it into providing some additional info to the BOS on Fire Safe.
- Casey PMAC: QUESTION: Dan, is there some prelim doc I can read on the Pescadero Corridor ?
- Dan Anseer- no not really. Just an idea I have in my head. Just based on what the department could do.
- Dudley Carlson: Great presentation. Key insight: importance of collaboration and especially of planning and developing funding for ongoing maintenance of open space (in terms of fuel management)
- Denise: Do you think any of the parks you think it would be appropriate would utilize grazing?
- Dan- San Bruno Mountain has a pilot program where cows will be utilized for non-native grasses and butterfly habitat. Goats may also be utilized around the county where appropriate
- Craig Beckman: Santa Clara County Parks recently acquired a curtain burner with CalFire support. Curious to see how that might be useful.
- Dan: Craig, I heard about the curtain burner. Looking to hear back of when we can see an in-person demo. Following social distancing protocols, of course.
- Deborah Hirst: Great presentation! Will SMC Parks include projects in the survey for the Coastal Regional Prioritization Group?
- Dan Answer: 7 projects
- Denise: What about using the Timber Harvest Plan (THP) for Eucalyptus
- Dan: Biggest issue is disposal- most timber harvest are for wood products and not chipped
- Denise: Is there increasing pile burning in appropriate areas?
- Dan: Getting past the public perception of smoke- appropriate times of year and getting the community to understand it's a benefit and getting over the permit hurdles for air quality. SBM is in flight path of SFO- we would have to get permitting through them. I think there is an opportunity for more widespread use of burn piles in the county.

#### IV. Announcements

1. Chipper Program updates
  - La Honda- funded
  - South Skyline- RCD reimbursed
  - Butano- Cleo organized with them
  - Middleton Track- Organized and very progressive

Deb Borne South Skyline's chipping program completed in May with approximately 50 homes participating.

Sheena: Measure K funding – we expect more funding and definitely our plan to continue this program.

Dudley Carlson: For PVRanch, Chipper Days have been a godsend. We're so grateful that we've added a

2. John Schweisinger: Here are some GIS Fire News: <https://www.esri.com/arcgis-blog/products/arcgis-living-atlas/public-safety/improve-your-wildfire-maps/>

Info about reporting fires:

[https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d2933dba9fa64df1bddc016825b54e07/page/page\\_3/](https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/d2933dba9fa64df1bddc016825b54e07/page/page_3/)

3. Sarah Collamer: Small controlled burn near Trousdale Exit (8 acres SF Water property) June 16-17, 2020
4. Denise Enea: California Fire Safe Council Forest Assistance Grant due June 18

## V. Adjourn

Meetings the 2nd Wednesday of every month

**July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020**