



FIRE SAFE SAN MATEO COUNTY

January 8, 2020 General Meeting Minutes

I. Attendance:

Casey Dunn	Resident Butano Canyon
Connie Yip	Department of Transportation
Craig Beckman	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
Daniel Krug	San Mateo County Parks
David Gleason	Resident San Carlos
Debra Born	South Skyline Fire Safe Council
Denise Enea	Woodside Fire Protection District/ FSSMC Acting President
Gabriel Venegas	Department of Transportation
Jean St. Martin	City of San Carlos
Joan Dentler	Office of Senator Jerry Hill
Jonathan Perrin	San Francisco Public Utilities Commission
Karen Maki	Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
Liz Chapman	Protect Our Watershed SMC
Luis Estrada	City of San Carlos
Melinda Martin	San Mateo Consolidated Fire Department
Michael Barber	San Mateo County - Supervisor Pine
Rich Sampson	CAL FIRE/ FSSMC Vice President
Scott Collins	Department of Transportation
Sheena Sidhu	San Mateo Resource Conservation District
Steve Daus	Daus Environmental Sciences
Terri & Egon Oyarzún	Goats R US
Tom Reyes	Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
William Stevens	Department of Transportation
Zephyr Oyarzún	Goats R US

II. Introductions

Members and Guests introduce themselves.

III. Presentations:

A. Dr. Craig Dremann, The Reveg Edge Ecological Restoration Services

Topic: Converting the weed grasses back to fire-resistant native grasslands and wildflower fields by unearthing dormant native seeds in the soil

Background: Dr. Dremann's work is focused on converting landscape from invasive weeds to native grasses. He has restored 800 acres of grassland with 90% native species. This has been

done by managing weeds and supporting the native seedbank that is already in the soil. These native species are better suited for the natural fire cycles of California and produce far less fuel than exotic species. For example, he states that 1 foot of weed grass per acre is about 1 ton of fire fuel but converting to native grasses would be the equivalent of 1 sheet of paper worth of fuel. His work is also focused on long-term management of these landscapes.

Here are Craig Dremman's suggestions for converting grasslands from exotic to native species:

1. Have fire districts involved with education, and you can start out with small parcels of land to start small patches of native species that can expand
2. Do not plow fire breaks, because this move native seeds deeper into the soil, and these are the native seeds you need to grow once weeds are removed
3. Mow exotic grasses monthly, not just one or twice a year. Keep them low and do not let them go to seed
4. In areas where shrubs are removed, sow native seeds.
5. After a fire, sow native seeds.
6. Remove all eucalyptus
7. Consider the difference of restoration vs management= no grazing or fires
8. Each town in our area could have 1-2 examples of this conversion to build interest. Use the California flag as an example: look at the bunch grasses that are below the bear- they are low and spaced out. This is what we should do!

Questions and Answers:

- What are some native seeds available? One bottleneck for this management is native seed source, and getting large quantities of seed. There are a limited number of seed suppliers, and limited number of native species available.
- What is the best time to sow seeds? Fall
- What is the best mow height? 1 ft. Not any lower or else you risk mowing emerging native plants
- Is hydroseeding OK? Not recommended. Craig recommends manual seed distribution, but this might be difficult due to limited labor resources
- Which species should we use? Do not use a mix! Usually only one species dominates from a mix, so you can just go with a successful, inexpensive species

B. Terri & Zephyr Oyarzún, Goats R Us

Topic: About Goats R Us services, Questions and Answers

Background: Goats R Us is a family operation. Their goats are used in native restoration and reducing fuel load (it takes 1-2 years to reduce the fuel load). They have 10000 head, and herders that stay with the goats 24/7 when out at sites. Some project sites use a combination of masticators and goats for management

The processes of hiring goats for projects:

1. Get a map to identify if the site and see if your goals are suitable for goat use
2. Next, set up a site visit to discuss goals
3. Then bid will be made

Questions and Answers:

- How are the goats managed at sites? The goats are accompanied by herders that stay on site with the herd 24/7. The goats are also protected from predation risk by guard dogs
- What area do you service? From the peninsula down to Paso Robles
- What are slope restrictions? What landscape is unsuitable? A site visit will help determine if a site is suitable, but generally speaking, the goats need to have a space to lay down because that's how they ruminate. Some projects with large pampas grass and coyote brush stands can first be serviced by a masticator along side goats
- What do goats eat? Is goat waste a concern? Goat diet varies throughout the year depending on what is available. They will eat grass, understory, and oaks they can reach. They will seasonally eat poison oak. They will not eat wood. Different herds do have different preferences! Goat waste is not a concern because goats are herbivores, their waste is not dangerous.
- Can goats be used in archeologically sensitive sites? Yes! Goat use has been approved in these sensitive sites where other fuel reduction prescriptions have not been allowed.

IV. Update on Grants and projects-Members:

A. Rich Sampson, CAL FIRE Governor's Project updates

Topic: update on 3 Governor's projects from 2019. It is possible we that new Governor's projects will be determined soon (no updates yet), and this would be for projects near La Honda. In total ~425 acres were treated, mostly mastication (95%), with planned burning by May. 2 projects in San Mateo County, 1 project in Santa Cruz County.

1. Quarry Park: 91 acres complete, including eucalyptus removal to 10". This covers about 20% of the park, mostly around roads. \$305,000 received for this project
2. Kings Mountain Road: from Huddart to HWY 35 (and part of a trail), all within Huddart County Park. 86 acres. \$235,000 received for this project. Successful in working in older manzanita patches, with outcomes similar to treating with fire, but was all mastication. About 100 burn piles were produced from plants infected with SOD. Everything has been prepared and ready to burn. There was some expressed concern about erosion, but the recent rains have proved this is not an issue because the chip layer is good and sprouting post-rains.
3. Aptos Buzzard Lagoon. 230 acres in area with Redwood, Oak woodland, and tanoak. \$595,000 received for this project. The project created fuel breaks. 30 acres were crushed, to be burned this spring.

B. Denise Enea, CA Resilience Challenge grant

There is an open Request for Proposals (RFP) available called the CA Resilience Challenge grant program. SB 379 requires cities and counties to incorporate climate adaptation and resiliency strategies into their plans, and SB 1000 tasks municipalities to include environmental justice elements into their objectives. This funding is to support those goals with support from private businesses through the Bay Area Council Foundation. The proposals should focus on programs that respond to flood, wildfire, extreme heat, and rising seas adaptation, especially for vulnerable communities. The proposals should have broad community support and be replicable, like community chipper programs. Grants will be awarded between \$100,000 - \$200,000.

Applications are open now and due on February 5, 2020. Denise printed out copies of the RFP for interested attendees. A copy of the material can be found here:

http://documents.bayareacouncil.org/11.27.19_crc_rfp.pdf

V. Correspondence & New Business Items:

A. Tom Gandesbery from the Coastal Conservancy

The Coastal Conservancy recently awarded \$4,000,000 to a joint project of RCS from 4 counties (San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo) for Central Coast Forest Health and Fire Resiliency. Tom is visiting Fire Safe Councils in this area to share information about this grant. This project is one-time funding to increase technical capacity, stakeholder coordination, education and outreach, planning, permitting, and demo projects related to forest health and fire resiliency. Sheena Sidhu and Joe Issel from the San Mateo RCD will be working on this project and are coordinating efforts with this Fire Safe Council, CAL FIRE CZU, and other local and regional forest health and fire groups.

B. Recording Completed Projects for CWPP

Rich asks that as you/your group completes fire-related projects, please send your information to Frank Rodgers, CAL FIRE (frank.rodgers@fire.ca.gov), who can then map the information for the CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan).

C. CDCR/CDCR Sponsor class

The California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation (CDCR) and CAL FIRE will be hosting a Sponsor class on January 9 and Ben Lomond Camp. Attendance at this class is required before requesting CDCR conservation crews for fuel reduction projects. Dates to reserve crews for this season are filling up fast.

- Information for the class was sent out with the last Fire Safe Council agenda email from Sheena Sidhu. Please contact Dianna Adams (dianna.adams@fire.ca.gov) for more information, and to sign up.
- If you have taken this class already, you do not have to re-take it, but you do have to fill out refresher forms and return it to Dianna Adams, CAL FIRE by January 31, 2020 for this year. You should have received the refresher forms from CAL FIRE, and copies of the refresher forms were also sent out by Sheena Sidhu through the Fire Safe Council email list.

VI. Round Table-Members

A. Woodside Fire

The chipper is being put to work from the top of Teague Hill, near the water tank, down to where the houses start. A lot of fuel has been cleared out along the roadside.

B. South Skyline Fire Safe Council

Starting a project in Portola Heights for a community that is accessible by only 1 road and through Midpen. Presently planning for 3 8-hr days with CCC (California Conservation Corps) crews for spring, but waiting on environmental reviews for the dates.

- The council is looking for a coordinator to manage the crews on these days. This is a short-term, paid position.
- Additionally, there will be a home hardening workshop tentatively planned for late February or early March. More information forthcoming.

C. San Mateo County Parks

At Junipero Serra county park, 2 acres have been treated, targeting particularly near homes. A CDCR (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation) crew has been requested for dates for the upcoming season.

D. MidPennisula Regional Open Space District

At present, Midpen is finalizing 2020 workplan for IPM CEQA and fuel management. There is a focus on increasing management more than last year, with a goal that this will be the last year that fuel management will be under the IPM program and it can be moved to a separate fuel management plan, with eventual prescribed fire.

- There is a special meeting for the CEQA process, open for the public, on January 22, 6pm
- Online meeting posted: <https://www.openspace.org/about-us/meetings/bod-20200122>

E. City of Pacifica

The track chipper program is working great. This is for a fire access road on dead end valley, for a way out back.

F. CalTrans

Qucik update: currently working with CALFIRE, with more updates in the future.

G. San Carlos Parks

Working with crews on a steep area between park and homes. The project is clearing vegetation and chipping in place. They will be finishing Friday.

VII. Adjournment: 3:10 PM

The next Fire Safe San Mateo County Meeting will be held on February, 12, 2020