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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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AGENDA: AUGUST 14, 2001

August 8, 2001

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

SUBJECT: SUDDEN OAK DEATH HAZARD TREE REMOVAL PROGRAM

Members of the Board:

As your Board is aware, Sudden *Oak* Death (SOD) is a disease caused by a previously unknown species of *Phytophthora*, a fungus like organism that has killed large numbers of *oaks* and tan *oaks* in some areas of central coastal California. Santa Cruz County has been identified as one of eight counties where the incidence of SOD has been documented. The pathogen that cause SOD also infests, but does not usually kill, a number of other woody plant species in California including rhododendron, huckleberry, California bay laurel, and madrone.

Assembly Bill 62 allocates funds for Fiscal Year 2001-2002 to support a coordinated effort by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the State Resources Agency, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to develop comprehensive research, enforcement and management programs responsive to SOD, and to perform control work on public and private lands within zones where SOD is occurring. The Governor's budget, May revision, includes \$1.9 million for CDF to implement a California *Oak* Mortality Recovery Program. Of that amount, \$1 million is designated for a hazard tree removal program and has been allocated among the eight counties where the incidence of SOD has been documented. The SOD affected counties include Marin, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma. On June 28, 2001, Santa Cruz County was allocated 22.5% of the \$1 million budget, \$225,000. Since that time, Mendocino County was added to the list of counties eligible to participate in the hazard tree removal, which may result in a slight change to the allocation.

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Marin County has been designated to hold the master agreement with the CDF, and each county is required to submit a plan to Marin County describing their approach to removing SOD-affected hazard trees. The purpose of this letter is to provide your Board with the proposed plan for submittal to Marin County.

The County Administrative Office has convened a Sudden *Oak* Death working group composed of the following participants:

County Office of the Agricultural Commissioner
University of California Cooperative Extension
County Fire
County Department of Public Works
County Planning Department
County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
County Administrative Office
City of Scotts Valley
Santa Cruz District of California State Parks

These participants have developed the Santa Cruz County Sudden *Oak* Death Hazard Tree Removal Plan, which is attached for your Board's consideration.

Hazard trees are defined as SOD-affected trees that pose a direct public safety **risk** to public facilities, roads, or homes. This plan is designed to utilize available State funding to remove hazard trees from public land, and from private land if funds are available. Preliminary work by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has identified approximately 54 miles of County maintained roadways where dead and dying SOD affected trees may present a danger to public safety involving use of the actual travel way.


A map is attached which presents those areas in the County where SOD has been identified. Each of the agencies involved in the Hazard Tree Removal Program will continue to survey their areas of responsibility for the existence of SOD and will make that information available to the County Planning Department for further mapping. Public Works staff, in consultation with other participants as necessary, will administer the contract for the State funds and will have primary responsibility for the removal and disposal of high priority hazard trees.

Upon your Board's approval, the plan will be submitted to Marin County for review. Upon plan approval, work will begin on prioritizing trees for removal and disposal in this fiscal year, and plans and specifications will be developed. It is anticipated that plans and specifications will be brought to your Board for approval within three months of plan approval by Marin County and that tree removal will be completed by spring 2002.

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It is therefore recommended that your Board approve the proposed Santa Cruz County Sudden *Oak* Death Hazard Tree Removal Plan for submittal to Marin County.

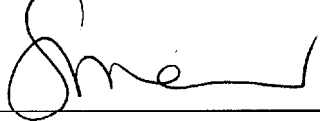
Yours truly,


THOMAS L. BOLICH
Director of Public Works

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Attachments

RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL:



County Administrative Officer

Copy to: Steve Tjosvold, UC Cooperative Extension
Dave Moeller, Agricultural Commissioner
Jim Nee, Agriculture Commissioner
Gretchen Iliff, Parks Department
Laura Kuhn, Scotts Valley
Mike Dever, Planning Department
George Gray, State Parks
Public Works

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COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ SUDDEN OAK DEATH HAZARD TREE REMOVAL PROGRAM PLAN

Through Assembly Bill 62, funds have been allocated for Fiscal Year 2001-2002 to support a coordinated effort by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the State Resources Agency, and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) to develop comprehensive research, enforcement and management programs responsive to Sudden Oak Death Syndrome (SOD), and to perform control work on public and private lands within zones where SOD is occurring. The Governor's budget, May revision, includes \$1.9 million for CDF to implement a California Oak Mortality Recovery Program. Of that amount, \$1 million is designated for a hazard tree removal program. The \$1 million budget has been allocated among the eight counties where the incidence of SOD has been documented. The SOD affected counties include Marin, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma. On June 28, 2001, the County was allocated 22.5% of the \$1 million budget. Santa Cruz County anticipates receiving \$225,000 to reimburse the County for the costs of removing hazard trees affected by SOD.

Marin County has been designated to hold the master agreement with the CDF, and each county is required to submit a plan to Marin County describing their approach to removing SOD-affected hazard trees. The following outline provides a framework for the County's approach to SOD-affected hazard trees.

Definition of Sudden Oak Death: Sudden Oak Death is a disease caused by a recently identified species of *Phytophthora*, a fungus-like organism that has killed large numbers of oaks and tanoaks in some areas of central coastal California. The name Sudden Oak Death is used because of the rapid color change of leaves from green to brown. A tree may be infected with *Phytophthora* for a year or more before exhibiting this sudden change in foliage. The pathogen that cause SOD also infest, but does not usually kill, a number of other woody plant species in California including rhododendron, huckleberry, California bay laurel, madrone and arrowwood.

Symptoms of Sudden Oak Death: Susceptible oak species include coast live oak, California black oak, Shreve oak and tanoak. Other oaks, such as valley oak, blue oak, and many introduced ornamental species have not yet tested positive for the new *Phytophthora*.

Symptoms include:

- bleeding or seeping of a dark viscous substance near the trunk base
- reddish or tan-white fine, beetle boring dust resulting from bark and ambrosia beetles tunneling into the bark and/or wood
- appearance of dome-shaped fruiting bodies of *Hypoxylon* fungus, which are green when new, and later turn to charcoal black

Definition of a Hazard Tree: For the purposes of this SOD-affected tree removal program, a hazard tree is one that poses a direct public safety risk to public facilities, roads, or homes.

Countywide Collaborative Approach: Since November 1999, the County has seen an increase in vegetation dieback attributed to the condition entitled Sudden Oak Death. The results of this vegetation dieback include loss of timber, biomass, wildlife habitat and property value. In addition, the vegetation dieback has the potential of creating hazards to the citizens of Santa Cruz County, including fire, soil erosion, and threat of injury to individuals from dead and dying trees. The purpose of this plan is to address threats to public safety through the removal of hazard trees from public land, and, if funds are available, from private land.

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The County of Santa Cruz has designed a multi-agency, inter-departmental approach to implement the SOD-affected hazard tree removal program. Agencies and departments that will participate in various program stages include the following:

- County Office of the Agricultural Commissioner
- University of California Cooperative Extension
- County Fire/CDF
- County Department of Public Works
- County Planning Department
- County Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services
- County Administrative Office
- City of Scotts Valley
- Santa Cruz District of California State Parks

Other agencies and departments may join the effort, as required.

Roles and Responsibilities: In addition to any specific role associated with the removal of SOD-affected hazard trees, each department and agency will conduct an on-going survey of land under their jurisdiction to continually identify **SOD** affected oaks, and hazard trees. As information is generated, it will be provided to the County's Planning Department, where it will be centrally maintained and mapped in the County's GIS system. In addition, participants will keep the Board of Supervisors informed of funds that may be available to respond to Sudden Oak Death syndrome.

The following provides an overview of projected roles and responsibilities for the various organizations and County departments.

Office of the Agricultural Commissioner:

- Initiate and oversee statutory responsibilities for the regulation of commodities and SOD pathways
- Supervise regulation of quarantined articles and provide regulatory compliance at affected premises
- Provide a regulatory link between the County, the California Oak Mortality Task Force, and other affected counties
- Provide information on treatment to industry and the public
- As possible, provide SOD detection survey assistance
- Coordinate with the University of California Cooperative Extension on education and outreach to the agricultural community
- Coordinate with other agencies and departments on issues related to the disposal of hazard trees

University of California Cooperative Extension

- Coordinate with and maintain contact with agency researchers working on a solution to the SOD problem, and relate information to the Board of Supervisors and other departments, as needed
- Provide education and outreach services to the public and landscape professionals related to SOD
- As possible, assist with the certification and identification of SOD affected oaks in all County jurisdictions
- Assist with the survey effort to identify and map SOD affected areas

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County Fire

- Act as the coordinator between CDF, and Marin and Santa Cruz Counties, related to the hazard tree removal program
- Identify areas where SOD-affected areas may have become a fire hazard site, and coordinate with local fire agencies as required

Department of Public Works

- Remove and dispose of hazard trees within the County's maintained road right-of-way that pose a threat to the traveled way and which have been identified as high priority
- Assist other departments, such as the Parks Department, with removal of trees, as required
- Continue to coordinate with CALTRANS and Pacific Gas and Electric Company to encourage them to identify and remove hazard trees that threaten CALTRANS maintained roads and the provision of electric power to County residents
- Continue to survey county road system for evidence of SOD-affected hazard trees that may possibly pose a threat to use of the County roadway

Planning Department

- Maintain a database of the location of SOD affected trees, and other plant material as may be identified by the UC Cooperative Extension and Ag Commissioner, and map affected areas in the County's GIS system, and make that information available to interested parties
- Assist with required permits or regulatory procedures for removing SOD affected hazard trees on public and private property

Parks Department

- Survey land under the authority of Parks Department and identify affected trees and hazard trees
- Coordinate the removal of hazard trees on County parkland
- Help distribute information on SOD to the public through Parks-owned facilities and in newsletters and other mailings

County Administrative Office

- Assist with the development of Hazard Tree Removal Program Plan and coordinate stakeholder's meetings as may be required
- Assist with the release of information to the public that may be generated by other agencies
- Coordinate communication to the Board of Supervisors and other County departments on SOD related issues

Santa Cruz District of California State Parks

- Survey parklands under the jurisdiction of State Parks for SOD-affected plant material, and report the findings to the County's Planning Department for mapping purposes
- Remove SOD affected hazard trees that present a threat to public safety in public use areas such as campgrounds or parking areas
- Coordinate with other SOD affected counties as may be required to ensure that information on the progression of the disease is communicated to Sacramento

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City of Scotts Valley

- Continue to survey public land and rights of way within City limits and provide information on SOD affected areas to the County Planning Department for mapping purposes
- Remove SOD affected hazard trees and coordinate as necessary with the County Department of Public Works for removal

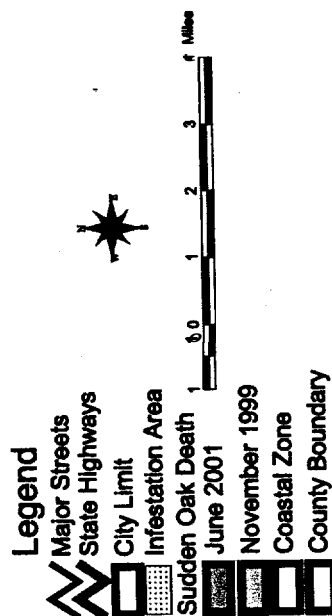
Estimated Costs of SOD Affected Hazard Tree Removal Program:

The County's Department of Public Works has estimated that the cost of contracting for the take down of each SOD-affected hazard tree will range from \$300 to \$700, depending on the location and size of the tree, including take-down, chipping, removal, disposal, and storage as necessary. This work would be done by private contractors qualified in such procedures.

At this time, the Agricultural Commissioner's Office has identified approximately **42** miles of County-maintained roadways where dead and dying SOD affected trees may present a danger to public safety involving use of the actual traveled way. It is estimated that funding will be available to remove approximately 450 infected trees over the 3 year life of the SOD-affected Hazard Tree Program.

Sudden Oak Death

Infestation Zones



Prepared by the County of Santa Cruz
GIS Staff 8/2/01, 231-401

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