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U.S. Department of the Interior

Golden Gate National
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Golden Gate NRA Fire Management

Heavy Duty Chipper Increases Efficiency of Fuels Treatments

In the fall of 2004, funding provided by the National Fire Plan allowed a heavy duty chipper to be purchased for the national parks in the San Francisco Bay Area to enhance fuels treatments in the wildland- urban interface. This chipper, allows increased efficiency in the treatment of larger fuels up to 18" in diameter.

Many fuels reduction projects at Golden Gate NRA, Point Reyes National Seashore, and lands adjacent to these parks, involve removal of eucalyptus and other non- native trees which create unnaturally high fuel loads that threaten nearby communities. Annual winter storm damage, and several local tree epidemics, also create significant amounts of standing and downed fuel. Proper equipment for treating whole trees was identified as a strategy to reduce the costs of fuel reduction in the Bay Area parks and neighboring lands. With the new chipper, more fuel can be chipped and left onsite without needing offsite transport and disposal.



Golden Gate NRA used the new chipper, a Bandit Model 1890 Intimidator, during the winter of 2005 on two important fuel reduction projects. A stand of non- native eucalyptus was cut and chipped at Fort Barry on GGNRA land in Southern Marin County. These trees created a fire hazard near power lines, threatened historic structures, and diminished the cultural landscape. The chipper was also used in a partnership project with the community of Muir Beach for roadside vegetation clearance in an unincorporated area not maintained by the county.

The heavily populated areas along the GGNRA boundary and heavily used public areas within the park are surrounded by dense vegetation which grows quickly in the lush environment of the central California coast. Increased fuels management activities proposed in the draft Fire Management Plan are expected to be approved in near future. The new heavy duty chipper will be essential to implementing this plan which emphasizes fire protection in the wildland- urban interface.

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