



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Golden Gate National
Recreation Area

Fire Management Office
Bldg 1068, Fort Cronkhite
Sausalito, CA 94965

415 331-6374 phone
415 331-6942 fax

Golden Gate NRA Fire Management



Homestead Fuel Reduction Implements Community Wildfire Protection Plan

During the fall of 2005, more than 100 trees were removed from 89 acres in Golden Gate National Recreation Area, to protect the adjacent community of Homestead Valley, where there are over 1,000 homes. Non- native Monterey pines, Acacias, eucalyptus and plums, and encroaching Douglas- firs were cut and piled for burning.

Homestead Valley is an unincorporated area located between the city of Mill Valley and Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). The Homestead project was identified as a priority in the recently completed Marin County Community Wildfire Protection Plan, which proposes a comprehensive 40- mile fuelbreak system extending from Sausalito to Lagunitas, California. A series of projects, which includes Homestead, will implement the 40- mile fuelbreak, which is now 20% complete. A major component of the plan calls for removing large stands of non- native trees which were planted for aesthetic purposes in the past, but have become a serious fire hazard. Fire road improvements are another key component of the plan.

The public response to the Homestead project has been very positive. Homeowners in the

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Amaranth subdivision and managers of the Homestead Land Trust whose properties are in immediate proximity to the project were fully supportive of the work. Visual impact near the road was minimized by craning out the stemwood and grinding the remaining stump when a large tree was removed from a major 4- way intersection. While the work was in progress, there was only one complaint, despite a long history of public concern when trees are cut in Marin County.

The cut stumps from the Acacias, eucalyptus, and plums were treated with herbicide to prevent resprouting. The remaining debris piles will be burned during the winter of 2006.

The Homestead project was managed by Marin County Fire Department in cooperation with FIRESafe MARIN, who developed contracts with Great Tree Tenders and Treemasters to accomplish the work.

In Phase 2 of the project, the Homestead Fire Road will be cleared and regraded to create an alternative route for emergency response and evacuation. Erosion and vegetation overgrowth has turned the fire road into nearly a single track trail. This treatment will connect Lattie Lane in Tamalpais Valley to Panoramic Highway, further increasing fire protection for the Homestead area. The fire road will play a vital role in many scenarios, including a wildfire in one of several eucalyptus groves nearby, as was demonstrated by the 2004 Tam Fire. The fire road improvements will be completed in 2006.

**Contact: Alex Naar, Fire Management Officer – Golden Gate National Recreation Area
Phone: (415) 331- 6374**

**Contact: Kent Julin, Registered Professional Forester - Marin County Fire Department
Phone: (415) 499- 3759**