

Wolfback Ridge

Fuel Reduction Project

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Golden Gate
National Recreation Area



Summary

Golden Gate National Recreation Area is working to reduce fire hazard along its borders. To do so, the park is cooperating with local fire departments and community organizations in Marin County on a series of projects. These projects reduce excessive vegetation near homes that border park land. Removing vegetation decreases the chance a fire will threaten homes by creating a defensible space and improving emergency access along fireroads, thus allowing a faster response time for firefighters protecting homes.

Need for Projects

The Wildland Urban Interface, or WUI, is the area where homes and wildlands meet. Many homes in Marin are located in the Wildland-Urban Interface. Because WUI homes sit close to open lands and heavy vegetation, wildland fire could threaten public safety and property.

Golden Gate National Recreation Area includes many wildland areas where coniferous forests, eucalyptus groves, coastal scrub and grasslands flourish near

homes. Many Sausalito and Marin City neighborhoods border park land and are areas where fire is a concern.

In 1991, the Oakland Hills Fire destroyed nearly 2500 homes. 45 homes were lost to the Vision fire near Point Reyes in October of 1995. These fires started in open spaces and spread into residential areas. Such losses emphasize the importance of the National Park Service addressing Wildland Urban Interface issues.

Fuel Buildup

Vegetation that could serve as fuel for a wildland fire has built up to dangerous levels in many areas. Many invasive plant species have added to this fuel load.

Non-native Eucalyptus groves expand voraciously. In some locations eucalyptus can grow 10 – 15 feet a year. That growth creates a great deal of hazardous fuel.

Eucalyptus trees are extremely flammable. They shed bark in ribbons and shower

leaves everywhere. Both leaf and bark litter have large surface areas and burn easily. Eucalyptus trees also have high concentrations of volatile oils in their leaves.

Similarly, non-native shrubs like French and Scotch Broom have displaced much of the lighter native grassland, thereby adding to the fuel load. Removal of these non-native plants is an important step in fire safety

Other Problems with Non-natives species

When plants are introduced to areas outside their native habitat, the natural mechanisms that usually balance their populations are often absent. When those non-natives grow in climates similar to their native land they can expand uncontrollably.

Eucalyptus and Broom groves in Marin exemplify this phenomenon. These invasive species crowd out native plants, threatening the diversity that is so valuable

to any ecosystem.

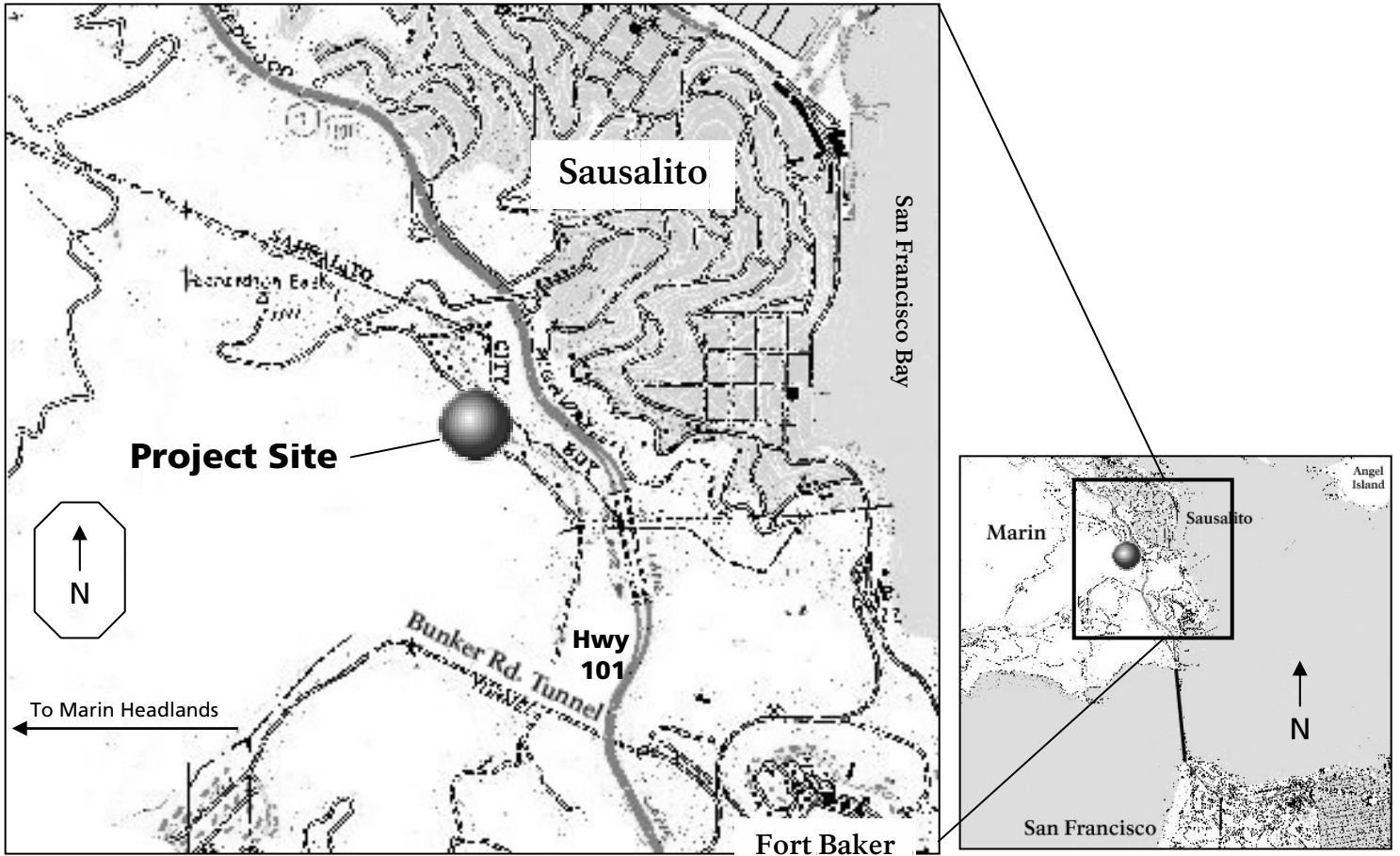
Removing these non-natives will help restore the habitat and allow native plants and wildlife to thrive. Restoring native plant communities also reduces fire danger.

The park's Habitat Restoration Team will oversee restoration efforts. Visit our Natural Resources web page to learn more about becoming a restoration volunteer.

Project Objectives

The projects along Wolfback Ridge will accomplish the following goals:

- Improve fire road access for emergency response.
- Add emergency evacuation routes through restored fire roads.
- Improve defensible space around homes.
- Improve habitat for the recovery of native species.
- Reduce over-all fuel load to reduce chance of catastrophic fire.
- Reduce vegetation that can carry fire into tree-crowns.



Partners

NPS Fuel Reduction Projects involve local Fire Departments and other community organizations.

They include FireSafe Marin council, Southern Marin County Fire District and Marin County Fire. The National Park Service provides funding for these local

communities for preventative fire protection measures on GGNRA boundaries.

The Tamalpais Community Services District and others have also provided support by facilitating communication within communities.

Temporary Access Limitations

For visitor safety, access may be limited at project sites while work is being done. Trails and fire roads may be closed on weekdays between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Visitors will have access to the area in the evenings and on weekends.

More Information

For general and site-specific information please visit our website at:

- www.nps.gov/goga/fire

Also visit these websites:

- Southern Marin Fire District www.smfd.org
- Tamalpais Community Services District www.tcsd.com
- Marin County Fire District www.marincountyfire.org
- FireSafe Marin www.firesafemarin.org
- National Interagency Fire Center www.nifc.gov
- National Park Service Fire Page www.nps.gov/fire

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