

Summary of Public Input Received by the National Park Service at the Community Meeting at the Tamalpais Community Services District on December 9, 2008

Discussion on the NPS proposal to restore NPS property west of Tam Valley by removing eucalyptus and replanting the area with native vegetation.

- A. Discussion of the funding and approval process ahead.** Questions that needed more research will be addressed in future meetings.
- A.1. *Is there funding?* Not at the current time. The NPS may solicit bids from contractors who are looking for the utilization of the biomass from the eucalyptus. At the present, the NPS is including all or part of the funding necessary for site restoration as part of the contractor's bid.
- A.2. *What would be the timeline for implementation?* The NPS estimates it could not initiate the project earlier than one year from now.
- A.3. *Why is replanting needed?* The condition of the native seedbank under the eucalyptus stand is unknown. The trees have been established for many years and the native seedbank may be degraded or non-existent over some of the acreage. There will be many opportunistic weed seeds available in the seedbank and blowing into the site from Highway 1 and surrounding lands which will aggressively compete with the native seeds remaining in the seedbank. Replanting with nursery grown plants gives a competitive edge to the native plants and increases the potential for restoration to succeed.
- A.4. *What is needed critically is a 200-yard cleared perimeter from all homes. Can we get started on this?* The residents can get started clearing trees on their individually-held parcels. Contact Marin County planning to determine which, if any, permits or approvals are required. The residents should look for opportunities to apply for wildland fire mitigation grant funding. Contact Kent Julin at FireSafe Marin or Southern Marin Fire Protection District for further information or check out the State FireSafe Council website <http://www.firesafecouncil.org/index.cfm>. The current grant application cycle closes February 20, 2009.
- A.5. *At what point would the NPS get to actually contracting for tree removal?* Contractors would not be solicited until a proposal is better defined. The NPS will provide additional information to the public required by the Fire Management Plan before contract bids are requested. The additional information would include a site plan, a restoration plan, a circulation and traffic safety plan, information on potential changes to fire hazard, viewshed, wind patterns and fog, windthrow of remaining trees and noise.
- A.6. *What are the fall back plans if this opportunity – the potential reuse of chips for plywood – disappears?* Alternative plans could include: a) limiting native plant restoration to the Tam Fire Site, b) finding fire hazard mitigation funding for a smaller project such as a buffer or a thinning project, c) pursuing native plant restoration funding for the stand as a carbon sequestration site or d) waiting until the market revives but with planning completed.

- B. Recommendations for Implementation.** . The community brought up these recommendations for the NPS to consider as the process goes forward.

Recommend

- B.1. removing the stand in stages.
- B.2. removing understory vegetation from the stand to reduce wildland fire hazard.
- B.3. thinning the density of the stand to reduce wildland fire hazard.
- B.4. removing the large diameter trees and retain some smaller diameter trees.
- B.5. replanting the area with *Sequoia sempervirens* which are native to nearby areas and could result in expanded northern spotted owl habitat.
- B.6. limiting the project to the creation of a cleared buffer between the eucalyptus stand and the residential area.
- B.7. leaving the cut logs on-site eliminating the need to truck the logs or chips offsite.
- B.8. planting more mature, larger plants to improve viewshed.

- C. Comments for consideration as part of proposal development.** The input and issues raised by the community at the December 9, 2008 meeting are summarized in the list below. Many of these issues raised were also brought up in emails sent to the NPS prior to the meeting and are also addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (12/2005) and Record of Decision (2/2006) for GGNRA's Fire Management Plan (FMP). The FMP is posted on the GGNRA website http://www.nps.gov/goga/parkmgmt/fire_fuelsplan.htm.

In developing the project proposal, the NPS needs to consider that:

- C.1. trees slow runoff, decrease the amount of runoff and provide erosion protection for the watershed.
- C.2. trees break up wind coming from Muir Beach.
- C.3. wind speed would increase if the protection afforded by the trees is removed.
- C.4. fog patterns would change if the stand configuration changes.
- C.5. the fire road and fuel break would provide additional ingress/egress in the event of an emergency.
- C.6. fire hazard may be overstated because underbrush is needed to initiate a wildfire and there is little underbrush in the eucalyptus stand.
- C.7. there may be economic impacts from increases in the cost of home insurance due to the adjacent fire hazard.
- C.8. there may be benefits to wildlife from clearing the stand through the increase in amount and variety of forage and habitat.
- C.9. restoration is the overriding issue. A restoration plan is key to the success of the proposal and gaining public support.
- C.10. confirmation of adequate funding for restoration is needed. Show us the money!
- C.11. the contractor would need be bonded to ensure that work would be performed as directed by contract specifications.
- C.12. removal should be staged in phases rather than removing the entire grove at once. This would allow a more reasonable, phased restoration.
- C.13. the stand provides screening from noise generated by traffic on Highway 1.

- C.14. there may be beneficial and adverse impacts to the views, including Spring Drive, from the removal of the trees and restoration with native plants.
- C.15. there are alternatives for biomass utilization including paper, flooring, landscaping chips, plywood or fuel.
- C.16. the eucalyptus pose a fire hazard to adjacent private and public properties.
- C.17. the Marinview subdivision, Marin Drive and Alta Avenue are examples of successful eucalyptus removal and restoration projects for the community to investigate.
- C.18. part of the restoration process could be accomplished by volunteers helping with oak propagation from local acorns.
- C.19. public/private partnerships are possible funding sources.
- C.20. there are potential beneficial and adverse impacts to the watershed and restoration potential related to removing the eucalyptus stumps.
- C.21. eucalyptus trees vigorously resprout from cut stumps.
- C.22. there are tradeoffs in impacts from full removal versus partial retention of the eucalyptus trees and in removal or retention of the eucalyptus chips generated by the tree removal.
- C.23. a traffic study would be needed to determine impacts to traffic levels, noise, and traffic safety during project implementation.
- C.24. permits may be needed to cross the Caltrans right-of-way or for other approvals.
- C.25. noise modeling may be needed to estimate potential impacts to sensitive receptors from project noise and long-term impacts to ambient noise from the loss of trees between highway traffic and the residences.