

ABOUT THE PHOENIX PROJECT

by Nancy Stein, Phoenix Project Coordinator

MOST VISION FIRE SURVIVORS ARE PEOPLE WHO CHERISHED THE FOREST around them. To be able to reside in a place where nature is intact, and humans are part of the equation of balance, is a rare and valuable experience. To live on land that is both remote and natural does imply certain risks, fire being one of them. Many of those who love the forest and live there consider themselves to be stewards of that land.

The Environmental Action Committee of West Marin launched the Phoenix Project in order to provide sound information to those stewards. The initial thrust of the project was a concerted effort, just after the fire, to provide homeowners with information that would aid in making good choices for the recovery of the burned lands. On November 11 and 18, 1995, EAC held seminars for homeowners, where foresters, arborists, fire ecologists, and geomorphologists with considerable fire experience presented slides and discussion. Field trips followed, where homeowners could obtain answers to their specific questions on burned sites.

Reforestation Project

As the experts of the Phoenix Team set out over subsequent months to produce the report you are holding, the Phoenix Project also concentrated on coordinating the donation and planting of trees and shrubs for reforestation in the burn zone.

Volunteer Day. In the spring of 1996, working together with Marin Releaf and the Living Tree Center, EAC assembled 40 volunteers from all over the Bay Area including the West Marin communities to work planting trees in burned neighborhoods. One hundred free trees were given to survivors of the V15ion Fire. The trees (spruce, redwood, giant sequoia - beautiful, 20-gallon specimens, reaching as high as ten feet) had been grown as Christmas trees. In a program run by the Living Tree Center, they were donated to Vision Fire survivors by people who had purchased them as living Christmas trees. On March 15, a beautiful spring day, EAC's volunteers and Phoenix Team worked together with the fire survivors, beginning the rewarding labor of reforesting the burn area.

Free Plants. On May 18, 1996, additional native plants for landscaping were given away. Many thanks to John Littleton of San Anselmo, who collected seed within Marin County over the last few years and grew coast live oak, redwood, buckeye, bay and tan oak trees. (When he began collecting seed, John didn't know where the trees would go: he just decided to grow a forest.) Shrub Growers of Napa, Skylark Nursery of Santa Rosa, and Mostly Natives Nursery of Tomales have also contributed many native plants through the Phoenix Project.

Give a Plant. Residents of/local unburned areas are encouraged to donate native plants to residents of the burned area. Plants can be heeled in (placed in soil with their roots protected) in a specially designated area of Toby's Feed Barn. Property owners who are cleaning up their land in an effort to create defensible space can provide valuable reforestation materials to survivors of the fire.

Seeding and Transplants. Students at Tomales High School will grow bishop pine seedlings from seed collected on Inverness Ridge. Students at West Marin School will plant live oak acorns

gathered in the fall of 1995 from local trees. Both these programs will be carried out on private property, at the request of owners. Planting will take place in the fall of 1996.

If there are areas of your property that don't seem to be sprouting new trees, EAC will be happy to coordinate a transplant project for you. New seedlings will need water about once a month over the first summer.

For information. For the duration of the Phoenix Project, anyone interested in donating plants or any other aspect of reforestation on Inverness Ridge may contact Nancy Stein, Coordinator, at (415) 663-8851.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the following organizations for contributing to the Reforestation Project sponsored by the Environmental Action Committee of West Marin.

Chris Giacamini, Toby's Feed Barn, 11250 State Route One, Point Reyes Station CA 94956

Sandra Sellinger, Marin Releaf, P.O. Box 9512, San Rafael CA 94912

Mack Kalish, Living Tree Center, 6000 Locust Avenue, Cotati CA 94931 Sunnyside

Nursery, 130 Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, San Anselmo CA 94960

Rich Readimix, P.O. Box 67, Point Reyes Station CA 94956

Stephen Torre, P.O. Box 133, Point Reyes Station CA 94956

Jon Littleton, 27 Tamalpais Avenue, San Anselmo CA 94960

Shrub Growers of Napa, 3260 Redwood Road, Napa CA 94558

Mostly Natives Nursery, 27235 Highway One, Tomales CA 94971