



## San Rafael-San Anselmo Fuel Reduction Zone Project FAQs

### What is a Wildfire-Urban Interface Fuel Reduction Zone?

Located in WUI-designated areas, fuel reduction would generally consist of strategic removal of vegetation to prevent or slow the spread of non-wind driven wildfire between structures and wildlands, and vice versa.

### What is the purpose of the proposed fuel reduction zone?

The purpose of the proposed fuel reduction zone/shaded fuel break is to create and maintain a reduced-fuel and forest-health-restoration zone between San Rafael and San Anselmo to minimize wildfire hazards. The proposed project would reduce wildfire risk in the area and to neighboring communities by removing non-native eucalyptus trees, reducing the overall acreage of the eucalyptus stands, and reducing the density of the remaining eucalyptus trees. It would also restore native habitat by retaining a mosaic of retained oak, grassland, and other common native tree and shrub species.

After years of drought stress the eucalyptus stands that span lands owned primarily by the Marin County Open Space District (MCOSD), Tamalpais Cemetery, Cedars of Marin, and Town of San Anselmo have experienced:

- Declining forest health
- Increased tree mortality
- Multiple fires
- Heavy accumulation of biomass
- High tree density and recruitment
- Heavy surface fuel loading and ladder fuels
- Increase in dead and dying standing trees

The high-density eucalyptus stands pose a high fire risk and could compromise emergency response in this area. This high fire risk area is situated between multiple at-risk communities.

### Will the proposed treatments remove native shrubs or trees?

Healthy, mature native trees would typically be left intact and in place unless removal were required due to structural or health defects that place infrastructure or lives at risk or should tree densities pose a fire hazard risk.

Treatments would focus primarily on the removal of invasive and non-native, fire hazardous vegetation, comprised of smaller eucalyptus trees, typically 10 inches diameter breast height (dbh) or less. Select eucalyptus or other non-native, fire hazardous trees greater than 10 inches

dbh would be assessed and potentially removed in subsequent phases. The project would also remove non-native understory (e.g., broom, Himalayan blackberry) and other fire-hazardous understory vegetation.

**Will the Project remove all eucalyptus?**

Smaller stand eucalyptus removal would occur throughout the approximately 145-acre area depending on access and ease of removal. Some eucalyptus trees between 11 and 15 dbh may be removed and most eucalyptus greater than 15 dbh would be retained.

**Will the Project create new access roads?**

No new access roads would be created as part of the project. Most of the treatment area can be accessed using existing roads and trails. Haul routes to remove the vegetation would be identified prior to implementation of the project.

**When will the proposed fuel reduction zone treatments be implemented?**

Implementation of this project would be phased and take place over several years. The initial eucalyptus removal is anticipated to begin as early as late 2023. Treatments would continue annually between July and January as needed based on the availability of funds for that year. Maintenance would be ongoing annually or every 3 to 5 years, typically, depending on the type of vegetation maintenance that is needed. Cut eucalyptus and seedlings, broom, or other fast-growing invasive species are anticipated to be inspected annually and treated every 1 to 3 years, depending upon the condition of the sites.

**Where will the proposed fuel reduction zone treatments be implemented?**

The fuel reduction zone/shaded fuel break treatments are anticipated to occur within a 145-acre area in western San Rafael and San Anselmo, see Figure 1. The largest landowners include MCOSED (47 acres), Mt. Tamalpais Cemetery (43 acres), Cedars of Marin (21 acres), and the Town of San Anselmo (19 acres). The project may use existing disturbed, graded, or paved areas outside the vegetation treatment area for staging vegetation removal or biomass disposal equipment.

**How will cut vegetative material from the proposed treatments be processed?**

Project debris would generally be processed through hauling, chipping and hauling, chipping and broadcasting, mulching, and/or burning. Burning may include pile burning, air curtain burning, burning via a carbonator, or kiln burning. The cut vegetation materials may be processed in a variety of ways if off-hauled, including but not limited to use in pyrolysis-biomass conversion or enhanced composting. The MWPA is participating in a biomass recovery study to identify long-term, high-value solutions for managing domestic green waste and biomass produced by wildfire hazard reduction activities throughout the County over the next

10 to 20 years. Following completion of the study, additional methods of biomass processing may be used.

**When will the environmental document be available for public review?**

The MWPA, Central Marin Fire, San Rafael Fire, and MCOSED, for the portions of the project on their lands, are evaluating the proposed treatments for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance as later activities covered by California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention's (CAL FIRE) California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) using the Project-Specific Analysis (PSA) checklist. The PSA process does not require a public review period per the CalVTP PEIR. CAL FIRE includes information about proposed projects on an [online viewer](#) at least 15 days prior to filing the Notice of Determination for a project. The PSA is then uploaded to the [CalVTP website](#) after it has been approved.

The MWPA anticipates making the PSA and Addendum available to the public the Friday prior to the MWPA's approval of the project at the MWPA Board of Director's meeting. Additional notice will be made once the PSA and Addendum are available. The public may view the PSA and Addendum during this time and provide feedback to the MWPA.

Prior to implementation, the MWPA, Central Marin Fire, and San Rafael Fire in partnership with MCOSED will host a public meeting to share project updates.

**What is a "PSA"?**

A Project Specific Analysis or PSA is a tool that project proponents can use under California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention's (CAL FIRE) California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) if they are proposing vegetation treatments consistent with the CalVTP Program EIR. A project proponent is any local or state agency providing funding or having land ownership and/or management or other regulatory responsibility in the treatable landscape. The PSA is a site-specific analysis of whether the activities and impacts of a proposed vegetation treatment project are within the scope of those analyzed in the Program EIR.



**Figure 1 San Rafael – San Anselmo Fuel Reduction Project**

