

Action 3:

East-Side Fuel Reduction/Habitat Management Transition Zone

Summary:

Recommend that EBRPD and EBMUD manage land just below the East-Side Fuel Reduction Zone (Action 2) and just above the East Side Habitat Management Zone (Action 4) in a highly selective manner in perpetuity. The purpose of this action is to complement fuel reduction in the uphill Fuel Reduction Buffer Zone by helping to reduce flame lengths to less than 8' below ridgeline homes and other values at risk while maintaining the existing distribution of native vegetation types and protecting or enhancing the quality of wildlife habitat.

Description:

Management in the Transition Zone should be geared towards reducing fuel loads in a sensitive, site-specific manner while maintaining existing vegetation types in existing locations. Fuel reduction work should be designed to assist with achieving 8' flame lengths in the adjacent Fuel Reduction Buffer Zone in the least intrusive, most biologically benign manner possible. Most vegetation within this Zone will not be treated at all, while many treated areas may be so conservatively managed that post-treatment changes will be difficult to discern. The exact width of this Transition Zone would vary, but would range from 50' near undeveloped portions of Grizzly Peak Blvd. to as much as 200' near homes and other values at risk (i.e. as much as 300' from homes and the uphill edge of the Fuel Reduction Zone described in Action 2). Treatment will tend to be more intense adjacent to the Fuel Reduction Buffer and less intense adjacent to the Habitat Management Zone, though some uphill areas may receive little or no treat-

ment because many areas on this slope already support moderate or low fuels, while some areas at the lower end of this zone, such as gullies or chimneys with dense stands of coyote brush, may be thinned more intensively.

Management techniques which facilitate succession to less fire prone vegetation will be favored over management techniques which will require continuing resistance to succession to maintain less flammable vegetation, though some of the latter will be necessary. Primary treatments anticipated include concentrated efforts to reduce or remove highly flammable non-native vegetation such as French broom, pines, and eucalyptus, thinning of some native brush stands, and reduction of ladder fuels in some wooded areas. Native vegetation will be encouraged in areas from which exotics have been removed.

Overall, management will protect the unique, diverse native vegetation present on the eastern slope and maintain habitat values. Rare stands of native vegetation would be protected and promoted. Only management necessary to accomplish fuel reduction goals will be performed, unless necessary to restore ecosystem processes (see Action 4 below).



The east bore of the Caldecott Tunnel (J. Kopchik)

Implementation:

EBRPD and EBMUD are the agencies primarily responsible for implementing this recommendation. Due to the highly selective nature of recommended management, manual treatment by trained individuals will generally be required. The likely treatment interval is approximately 3 to 7 years, though annual work may be needed initially and at times later on to prevent invasion by French broom, pines, and other weedy species. The width of this treatment zone and/or the type and intensity of fuel reduction work within it should be refined as we improve our understanding of fire behavior and treatment alternatives in this area. Fire modeling should be performed for this area to support adaptive management. Public involvement should continue. Please see the "Implementation Strategy" section for additional discussion of this issue.

etation management should not be a substitute for other actions to control the threat of fire, such as improved fire detection and response.

Of the three recommended vegetation management actions related to the eastern slope of the ridge over the Caldecott Tunnel, this action should receive second highest priority. Only Action 2, which includes a fuel reduction buffer very near to homes, should have higher priority.

Volunteer assistance may be helpful, particularly to assist with longer-term restoration objectives (i.e. thorough removal of exotics such as French broom, poison hemlock, and Italian thistle).

Fiscal Impacts:

\$1000 per acre per treatment interval for manual treatment. Funding options are discussed in detail in the "Implementation Strategy" section at the end of this document.

Anticipated results:

Reduce fuel loads and improve ability to fight fires in the adjacent Fuel Reduction Buffer. Maintain and enhance existing vegetation and habitat values

Cautions:

Care should be taken to avoid introducing weedy species in this relatively undisturbed and unique area. Veg-