

Action 6:

Road-side Ignition Reduction Buffers

Description:

Manage or continue to manage vegetation within 10 to 20 feet of main roadways in the Corridor area and any turnout areas on these roads to reduce the quantity and degree of ignitable materials. Fish Ranch Road (particularly on the west side of the road), Grizzly Peak Blvd., and Old Tunnel Road are probably the most appropriate roadways for this treatment. These roads, and the turnouts on them, are likely sources of ignition due to tossed cigarette butts, hot engines and catalytic converters, etc. Grassland areas should be mowed after the native perennial grasses have set seed and before the annuals dry to favor proliferation of the native grasses which may pose lower ignition risks. Shrub areas should be thinned and dead materials should be removed. Pine needle and dry leaf litter should be reduced annually. A long term management objective should be to reduce the quantity of easily ignited vegetation types, such as Monterey pine and eucalyptus, adjacent to ignition sources.

Implementation:

The City of Oakland, UC Berkeley, and Contra Costa County have some existing programs to perform this work. These programs should be continued, and if necessary, expanded. Opportunities for coordinating or combining the programs of different agencies should be explored to determine if cost-savings are possible. Mowing and hand work should be favored over herbicide application as the latter can lead to accumulation of dead, flammable vegetation (depending upon the chemical used), threaten water quality of downstream reservoirs, and harm wildlife.

Fiscal Impacts:

Approximate cost to maintain an ignition reduction buffer is \$1000 to \$2000/mile/shoulder, depending on vegetation types present and the treatment method used.

Mowing and hand work is significantly more expensive than management with herbicides. Funding options are discussed in more detail in the “Implementation Strategy” section at the end of this document.

Anticipated results:

Reduce the likelihood of fire ignition from these areas.

Cautions:

Care should be taken to prevent weed encroachment in the ignition buffer and adjoining habitat.