

Action 7:

Manage Vegetation in Residential Lots to Reduce Fire Hazard

Description:

Urge home owners and other private property owners in the Caldecott Corridor to manage vegetation on their property to maintain low fuel loads and reduce the threat of fire. Defensible space to fight fires begins at the homes and extends far enough away to provide fire fighters an opportunity to escape flames and radiated heat. In many instances, necessary defensible space extends beyond the property line to adjacent public or private land. However, unless vegetation around homes is safe, fuel reduction on adjacent public and private lands could be useless. In addition, homes and homeowner activities can pose a significant fire ignition hazard and managing vegetation around them may reduce the risk of fire spreading to neighboring homes and public lands.

Implementation:

The VMC report provides more specific information on strategies for managing vegetation around structures. The Cities of Oakland and Berkeley have vegetation management regulations and education and enforcement programs. Water conserving plants should be used. (Contra Costa County and many cities have water conservation ordinances, though these apply to landscaping at new developments.) Other basic strategies include keeping plants well-watered and converting from pyrophytic to fire resistant/retardant vegetation. Use of native plants should be encouraged as this might reduce the intrusion of exotics into fuel reduction buffers on adjacent public lands, thereby reducing the amount of time and money needed to maintain these buffers. Public outreach and involvement in this effort should be continued. Please see the "Implementation Strategy" section for more information.

Fiscal Impacts:

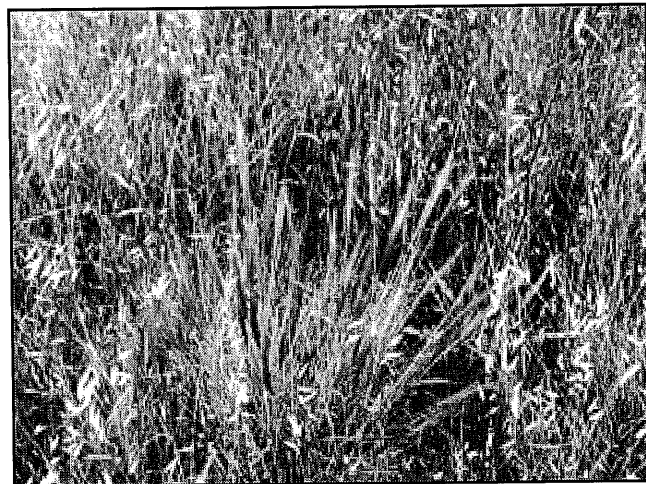
Depending on the vegetation present near homes, developing and/or maintaining fire-safe vegetation could be performed directly by homeowners or by landscapers who may charge \$500 to \$5000 initially, and perhaps \$100 a month to maintain.

Anticipated results:

Reduce the threat of fire spreading to and from homes.

Cautions:

Some residents may prefer the aesthetics of vegetation with higher fuel loads.



Native bunch grass (Dale Sanders)