

Here is my FP report for Tuesday night:

1. Shelterbelt has completed clearing of brush in the East Meadow by reducing brush at the Tunnel Road end of the fire chimney and moving and mincing cut brush on the steep slope underneath the redwoods below Charing Cross. I took care of the French broom.
2. They completed extension of the fire break around the redwoods at the West end of our property on Tunnel Road. This not only protects the thriving grove of redwoods here but provides a buffer to help prevent East to West fire spreading toward our steep, inaccessible slopes opposite the Exhibition Center and, furthermore, widens the fire safe zone along our area of Tunnel Road, creating a demonstration zone for getting AT&T to be required to match on their Tunnel Road frontage.
3. They pick axed out the many Jubata (Pampas) grass seedlings along the upper branch "road" below the end of Hawks Hill Court.
4. Gerhart and Joe Schultz helped not only in pulling remaining French broom growth, but also in cutting back brush along the branch "roads."
5. Whereas the late rains facilitated the hand removal of French broom, it has stimulated growth of grasses. First mowing of grasses and some extension of existing fire breaks will be scheduled for early May. I hope to limit the mowing to key strategic areas this year to preserve funding for bush removal.
6. The Oakland Fire Department has validated and responded to my concerns about the *unauthorized* plantings and mulching across from the Exhibition Center. They are contracting for complete removal of the beautiful but hazardous purple Echium Candidas (Pride of Medeira) and removal of most of the mulch, which is loaded with dried leaves and itself provides fuel while accomplishing no realizeable goal. The Echium is already spreading widely in this area and up the lower West end of Hiller Drive. I have identified one plant 30 feet up our steep slope and others that have spread from the West side of Hiller Drive into the inaccessible area owned by Cal Trans above Tunnel Road. It is extremely important this plant be prevented from invading our steep wildlands as it becomes very woody, fire-prone and difficult to remove. It is already spreading throughout Phase II and has been planted as a landscape plant in Phase IV.
7. The locks on one of our three emergency bins has been removed and replaced with a key lock by the new owner of the adjacent home. I will talk to him again about removing it and, if not successful this time, may require a formal letter from Collins/the Board demanding immediate removal. I may get have the OFD use their cutters to remove it.
8. I would like to write two articles for the *Newsletter*, particularly as there are so many new homeowners. First would be about necessary precautions as the high fire danger season begins and what do if one receives an out of compliance notice during the inspections. Second would be about actions to take should a major earthquake occur and evacuation in the event of a major wildfire.
9. Finally, I would like to suggest that this year the Board and committee chairs review what we might request homeowners do as regards protecting their homes from ember ignitions (such as what's on or under the deck, eg) and additional recommendations as to hazards within patios, including homeowner landscaping. I could also work with the Architecture committee to at least approve any desirable changes homeowners might choose to make on their own, such as flashing where a fence meets siding. Notice I have said request, not require.

--Bob Sieben, Fire Prevention