



County of San Mateo

Planning & Building Department

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DATE: June 2, 2009

TO: Unincorporated San Mateo County Property Owners

FROM: Steve Monowitz, Long Range Planning Services Manager *SM 6/2/09*

SUBJECT: Coastal Development Permit Requirements for Vegetation Management for the Creation of Defensible Space

This memorandum is intended to assist property owners in determining the level of coastal development review required for various vegetation management activities for the creation of defensible space.

A. ACTIVITIES THAT DO NOT REQUIRE COUNTY PERMITS

"Development" is defined by Policy 1.2 of the County's Local Coastal Program (LCP) and Section 6328.3.H of the County Zoning Regulations as including the removal of major vegetation and grading. Therefore, vegetation management that does not remove major vegetation, or involve grading or other development activities, does not require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP).

The following activities are not considered "development" and therefore do not require a CDP:

- Vegetation maintenance outside sensitive habitat areas* by mowing or using a 'weed-wacker' (NO disking or land disturbance),
- Trimming of vegetation that is outside of sensitive habitat areas,* 50 feet away from the edge of a riparian corridor, and/or 100 feet from the edge of a wetland,
- Removal of invasive, non-native pampas grass, French and Scotch brooms, blue gum seedlings, and other invasive species (excludes all trees),
- Limbing up (pruning) of trees outside sensitive habitat areas* up to 9 feet clear above the ground,
- Removal of trees that are dead, and
- Thinning of eucalyptus grove(s) outside of sensitive habitat areas* by removing trees 6" in diameter or less.

*In general, sensitive habitat areas provide habitat for plant or animal species that are rare, threatened, or of local significance. If you have questions, please contact the Current Planning Section or consult a biologist before undertaking activities in areas that may contain sensitive habitats.

In order to confirm that a proposed vegetation management project is not "development," the project proponent should notify the Current Planning Section, provide an APN or address (if the parcel is developed), describe vegetation management activity, and provide a copy of the notice from Coastside Fire Protection District requiring vegetation removal. If vegetation management is limited to the activities listed above, NO planning permit or fee is required to perform the activities.

B. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES THAT REQUIRE PERMITS

Vegetation Removal Activities Requiring a Coastal Development Permit: Vegetation removal involving clearing of an entire area, disking or land disturbance, removal of or any disturbance to riparian or wetland vegetation, or removal of a group or grove of trees. For assistance with the Coastal Development Permit application, please contact the Current Planning Section.

Activities that Require a Significant or Heritage Tree Removal Permit: Removal of one or more live trees (including eucalyptus) that are regulated by the Significant or Heritage Tree ordinances (Sections 11,000 and 12,000 of the County Ordinance Code), including all trees 12" in diameter or greater. For assistance with Tree Removal Permit application(s), please contact the Current Planning Section.

**To Contact the County of San Mateo
Current Planning Section,
Please Call 650/363-1825
Mondays through Fridays 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**