



MARIN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT OVERVIEW: VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Vegetation Management Plan identifies goals and objectives regarding vegetation in the Mt Tamalpais, Nicasio, and Soulajule watersheds. It directs fuel break construction and maintenance, roadside mowing, habitat restoration, and weed suppression activities for a period of 10 to 15 years. The Plan describes Best Management Practices, available tools, anticipated costs, and required resources for its enactment.

The Plan is adaptive: District resource managers will monitor the results of specific actions, incorporate new knowledge as it becomes available, and modify future actions in order to better meet the Plan's goals and objectives. District staff must get approval from the Board of Directors for any actions that are outside the range of those approved in the Plan.

Extensive Research Supports Plan Development

Five major reports provide the information needed to develop the final Vegetation Management Plan. Each report incorporates information obtained through a thorough literature review; the collection and synthesis of District data; interviews with natural resources managers from local, state, and federal agencies, and input from the public. Each report looks specifically at the physical and biological conditions present on the District's watershed lands.

- **Non-herbicidal Weed Control Report.** This report summarizes relevant information pertaining to efficacy, costs, risks and benefits of grazing, prescribed burning, propane flaming, mowing, mulching, hand pulling, and other means of controlling or eradicating the weed species within the specific context of the District's watershed lands. The report describes how each method might be used in an integrated pest management program on District lands.
- **Herbicidal Weed Control and Risk Assessment Report.** This report summarizes relevant information pertaining to efficacy, costs, risk and benefits of conventional, reduced risk, and "alternative" or botanically derived herbicides and additives that have the potential to control or eradicate weed species of greatest concern to the District. This report

gives specific details on how and where specific herbicides might be used in an integrated pest management program on watershed lands. It also describes the environmental and human health risks that may arise as a result of each specified use. The report identifies relevant data gaps regarding the specified herbicide use plan. The report *does not* endorse or disapprove the use of any specific product.

- **Biodiversity Report.** The biodiversity report describes the significant biological resources on District watershed lands. It identifies human and non-human derived threats to the continued persistence of these resources including fire suppression, climate change, Sudden Oak Death, and invasive species. The report describes various means of protecting and enhancing resources on both a population and an ecosystem level. This report received a substantial amount of current research data from the scientific community via a biodiversity symposium held in April 2008.
- **Fire Hazard Reduction Report.** This report identifies fire hazards to resources on watershed lands as well as to surrounding communities. It describes fuel break work that has been completed as well as additions and modifications to the existing system of fuel breaks, access routes, defensible space, and fuel modification zones. This report also details construction and maintenance activities.
- **Alternatives Analysis.** The alternatives analysis, which will be completed in November 2008, reiterates the goals and objectives for the vegetation management plan and describes several alternate means of achieving them by integrating information from the previous four reports. A "preferred" alternative will be identified and then developed further into the proposed Vegetation Management Plan, which will be presented to the MMWD Board of Directors in March 2009.

CEQA Process Precedes Adoption of Final Plan

Once MMWD selects its preferred plan, the district will then begin a formal environmental review of that plan as required by the California Environmental Quality Act. Upon completion of the environmental review process, the plan and the CEQA document will be presented to the board for adoption (in early 2010).