

Clayton Jolley
Battalion Chief/Fire Marshal
Coastside Fire Protection District
1191 Main Street, Half Moon Bay, Ca. 94019

Richard Sampson
Division Chief, Resource Management and Prevention
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
6059 Highway 9, Felton, Ca. 95018

RE: POST Property Fire Safety in the San Mateo MidCoast

Dear Battalion Chief Jolley and Division Chief Sampson:

Thank you for your time on August 4th in helping us better understand the complexities of fire management and prevention. Hopefully you came to a better understanding of our concerns as homeowners. We understand from your comments that the debris piles left last year east of San Carlos Avenue in El Granada will be remediated in the next two months. We certainly look forward to seeing that taken care of and we will follow up with you in a few weeks to see how things are progressing.

In order to help us understand the ordinances under which you operate, could you please clarify the action taken in July, 2010 when a correction notice was issued by the Coastside Fire District to Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) concerning the area east of the northernmost portion of San Carlos Avenue in El Granada and why that is not being enforced this year. The notice subject is: "Identified Fire Hazard" and goes on to advise POST of the "unacceptable nature of the lot and its status as a fire hazard to the neighborhood" and cites a violation to the Coastside Fire District's Ordinance 2009-01 and the 2007 edition of the California Fire Code. The "Identified Fire Hazard" cited is under California Fire Code 304.2

We believe the following are current state ordinances which should be applicable:

California Code of Regulations Title 19, Division 1. (304.1.2 Vegetation)

2010 California Fire Code, Title 24, Part 9, Chapter 49 (Requirements for Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Areas) Chapter 4901 and 4902

We also believe the following CA Code is applicable:

California Codes: Health and Safety Code Section 14875-14876

We would also appreciate a map or maps to help us clarify the different locations in the unincorporated Midcoast which are designated State Responsibility Areas (SRA) as well as Local Responsibility Area (LRA) and how it affects each of the parties in those areas; homeowners, POST, CDF, Cal Fire, Coastside Fire Protection District and GGNRA (which will be soon taking ownership of the Rancho Coral de Tierra property from POST).

The following maps demonstrate that our communities are in very high fire severity zones:

http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/webdata/maps/san_mateo/fhszs_map.41.jpg

http://frap.cdf.ca.gov/webdata/maps/san_mateo/fhszl_map.41.jpg

Because of the higher than usual rainfall last winter and more rain again in June, we are very concerned about the continuation of the vegetation buildup and the accumulation of combustible debris. San Mateo County North Coastal area is categorized as a wildland-urban interface area (WUI) with areas listed as “very high” fuel rank hazard. It goes without saying that even if every homeowner did their best to create a defensible space, unless the adjoining unimproved property is cleared on the perimeter, we remain vulnerable to catastrophic wildfire. We all have a moral obligation to prepare for and prevent wildfires in California. As San Mateo/Santa Cruz Unit Chief John Ferreira stated in his Cal Fire News Release of June 13, 2011, property owners should “prepare for the fire season by making their properties fire safe by creating a 100’ defensible space zone around their homes.” To that end, we would request that all Coastside homeowners that share a property boundary with POST and are within your jurisdiction should have an inspection by the Coastside Fire District or other responsible agencies as soon as possible. This will provide all parties; homeowners, POST, Cal Fire, Coastside Fire Protection District, and GGNRA important information and establish a baseline for future issues.

We strongly believe the transfer of the Rancho property from POST to GGNRA should not be completed until these inspections are done and all parties are in compliance with Cal Fire regulations.

Thank you for taking the time to speak with us and we look forward to working with on fire safety and protection in our communities.

Sincerely,

Merideth Lamont
NCCA
922 San Carlos Avenue
El Granada, CA 94018-2014

Cc:

Supervisor Don Horsley, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Nick Calderon, San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
Len Erickson, Bill Kehoe, Leonard Woren, Midcoast Community Council
Walter Moore, President, Peninsula Open Space Trust
Paul Ringgold, Peninsula Open Space Trust
Nancy Hornor, Brian Aviles, Howard Levitt, GGNRA
Princeton By the Sea Homeowners Association
Suzanne Rust, California Watch
Peter Fimrite, San Francisco Chronicle
Lily Bixler, Half Moon Bay Review
Barry Parr, Editor, Coastsider.com