

CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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San Mateo - Santa Cruz Unit

Notice of Lower Empire Grade Shaded Fuel Break Pile Burning Operation

FELTON – On Tuesday, April 16, weather-permitting, CAL FIRE CZU firefighters will work to improve the Lower Empire Grade Shaded Fuel Break by burning an estimated 60-piles of vegetation across 8-acres. CAL FIRE CZU established this fuel break on the west side of Empire Grade several years ago to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire to the area, improve ingress and egress for the community of Bonny Doon, and to help protect University of California, Santa Cruz infrastructure. Firefighters can also use this maintained shaded fuel break to take a stand against oncoming wildfire, if necessary.

NOTE: This pile burn will be done in accordance with all the rules and regulations of the local air quality district, Monterey Bay Air Resources District (MBARD) to make sure there are no impacts to the local community. Burning pre-arranged, dry piles of vegetation produces much less smoke than heavy fuels in large broadcast burns. Pile burning also allows for easy control of smoke production. Forester Brett Agler says, “It is important to continue work on fuel breaks as the vegetation never stops growing. It is easier to maintain a fuel break once it is established. However, if it is not maintained, it will no longer function as a fuel break.” Please see the map on Page 2 for more information on the treated area.



This prescribed fire was planned as part of broader strategic efforts to protect the local community and nearby natural resources. These plans are informed by community and local stakeholder input and serve as a collaborative effort with a range of cooperators throughout the course of the project. This project adds to significant work underway throughout the state and brings California one step closer towards meeting or exceeding state fuels reduction goals directed by the California Fire Plan and the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan. To track the progress being made, both in your community and throughout California, please visit the CAL FIRE fuels reduction dashboard at <https://readyforwildfire.org/forest-health/prescribed-fires/> and help share important preventing and preparedness information with your neighbors at readyforwildfire.org.

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