

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

455 MARKET ST, SUITE 300
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105
(415) 904-5200



F12a

VTP-NOID-0007-22

(SAN MATEO RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT)

NOVEMBER 14, 2022

CORRESPONDENCE



11/9/22

Daniel Nathan,
Wildfire Resilience Coordinator
California Coastal Commission
Daniel.nathan@coastal.ca.gov
415-904-525

Re: Notice of Impending Development No. VTP-NOID-0007-22 (Butano State Park Forest Health Project)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network in support of the San Mateo RCD's Butano State Park Forest Health Project. The Project Specific Analysis (PSA) and Addendum to the CalVTP PEIR has been designed in collaboration with staff from California State Parks, San Mateo RCD, California Coastal Commission, and CALFIRE, to be in compliance with the San Mateo County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan (PWP).

In the wake of the 2020 CZU fire, partners across the Santa Cruz Mountains are redoubling their efforts to design, permit, and implement critical, high-priority vegetation treatment activities that will reduce future risk of catastrophic, high-intensity fires and create a mosaic of climate and fire resilient native ecosystems. Due to the unique confluence of biological diversity, historic development patterns, water supply infrastructure, and the array of economic activity associated with farming, tourism, and forestry, our Coastal Zone is a critical area for implementing vegetation management projects that result in improved ecosystem health and fire resilience.

The Butano State Park Forest Health Project represents a forward-thinking approach to long-term ecosystem management in the Santa Cruz Mountains. In the wake of the CZU Fire, CA State Parks, CAL FIRE, and San Mateo RCD have sought to manage the ecosystems in Butano State Park in a manner that will promote healthy and resilient systems. Through this project, this will be accomplished by a combination of ecologically restorative treatment types, fuel breaks, and myriad of treatment activities. The purpose of these treatments is to reduce the density and continuity of dead, dying, diseased, and overly dense vegetation and promote ecosystems dominated by healthy, disturbance-tolerant vegetation represented by a mosaic of species, sizes, and age-classes. By permitting the abovementioned activities, State Parks and San Mateo RCD will be able to manage the diverse ecosystems within the park in a manner that is tailored to site specific needs and concerns. This project will provide co-benefits of promoting biological diversity, ecosystem resilience to disturbance (fire, pests, pathogens, etc.), and hazardous fuel load reduction.

We need to increase the pace and scale of implementing projects that protect our environment and our communities. At the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, we are thinking at a regional scale and hope that many projects such as the one proposed will occur.

We strongly support the Butano State Park Forest Health Project and urge the Coastal Commission to approve it at the November 18th hearing.

Thank you for your consideration of this important effort. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,



Dylan Skybrook.
Network Manager



CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF
RESOURCE
CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

11/9/2022

Daniel Nathan,
Wildfire Resilience Coordinator
California Coastal Commission
Daniel.nathan@coastal.ca.gov
415-904-525

Re: Notice of Impending Development No. VTP-NOID-0007-22 (Butano State Park Forest Health Project)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the California Association of Resources Conservation Districts (CARCD) in support of the San Mateo RCD's Butano State Park Forest Health Project. The Project Specific Analysis (PSA) and Addendum to the CalVTP PEIR has been designed in collaboration with staff from California State Parks, San Mateo RCD, California Coastal Commission, and CAL FIRE, to be in compliance with the San Mateo County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan (PWP).

CARCD supports the state's 95 RCDs, connecting, serving, and championing them. We are committed to supporting RCDs in their work safeguarding California's ecosystems. Recently, CARCD is particularly focused on supporting work in wildfire resilience and recovery. The size, frequency, and intensity of California wildfires have substantially increased in recent years, contributing to larger high-intensity burn areas. In 2021, over 2.5 million acres of California burned, destroying over 3,500 structures. This increase in wildfires has cascading social, environmental, and economic costs. As high-severity wildfire patches are increasing in size, landscapes are at risk of permanent forest loss. California is in a forest crisis, with statistics like Steel et al.'s 2022 recent estimates that 30% of the southern sierra's coniferous forest have transitioned out of a forested state from 2011-2022. It is clear that forward-thinking management is needed.

The 2020 CZU fires fit into this "new" wildfire paradigm that California is grappling with. CARCD believes that working to create more resilient, balanced landscapes can mitigate future high-severity fires and is needed in a timely manner. We see partners across the Santa Cruz Mountains working toward this aim. Their ambitious and committed efforts to design, permit, and implement critical, high-priority vegetation treatment activities will reduce future risk of catastrophic, high-intensity fires and create a mosaic of climate and fire-resilient native ecosystems. The Coastal Zone is especially important to safeguard due to its confluence of biological diversity, historic development patterns, water supply infrastructure, and the array of economic activity associated with farming, tourism, and forestry.

The Butano State Park Forest Health Project is a strategic project that uses forward-thinking sciences and best management to mitigate the risks facing the area. The resource experts at CA State Parks, CAL FIRE, and San Mateo RCD have put together a diversity of treatments, to create a resilient and mosaiced environment. They are designed to reduce the density and continuity of dead, dying, diseased, and overly dense vegetation and promote ecosystems dominated by healthy, disturbance-tolerant vegetation. This thinning will allow more growing space for existing vegetation, promoting a more fire adapted and healthy landscape. By permitting the above-mentioned activities, State Parks and San Mateo RCD will be able to manage for landscape that can adapt to current climate conditions and will promote co-benefits of biological diversity, ecosystem resilience to disturbance (fire, pests, pathogens, etc.), and hazardous fuel load reduction.

We need to increase the pace and scale of implementing projects that protect our environment and our communities.

We strongly support the Butano State Park Forest Health Project and urge the Coastal Commission to approve it at the November 18th hearing. Thank you for considering our support for the RCDs and the conservation opportunities in San Mateo County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Sutherland". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Emily Sutherland
Interim Executive Director

California Association of Resources Conservation Districts
705 E Bidwell Street, Suite 2-415, Folsom, CA 95630
(916) 457-7904 www.carcd.org



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Emily Burns, Ph.D.
Nona Chiariello, Ph.D.
David Freyberg, Ph.D.
Alan Launer, Ph.D.
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Lisa Micheli, Ph.D.
Wallace J. Nichols, Ph.D.
Scott Stephens, Ph.D.
Chris Wilmers, Ph.D.

The Redwood Circle
Philippe Cohen, Ph.D.
Richard Conniff
Robert L. Katz
Fred Keeley
Elinor & Richard Mansfield
Dan Martin
Emily Thurber

November 10, 2022

Daniel Nathan,
Wildfire Resilience Coordinator
California Coastal Commission
Daniel.nathan@coastal.ca.gov
415-904-525

Re: Notice of Impending Development No. VTP-NOID-0007-22 (Butano State Park Forest Health Project)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of Sempervirens Fund in support of the San Mateo RCD's Butano State Park Forest Health Project. The Project Specific Analysis (PSA) and Addendum to the CalVTP PEIR has been designed in collaboration with staff from California State Parks, San Mateo RCD, California Coastal Commission, and CALFIRE, to be in compliance with the San Mateo County Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Works Plan (PWP).

In the wake of the 2020 CZU fire, partners across the Santa Cruz Mountains are redoubling their efforts to design, permit, and implement critical, high-priority vegetation treatment activities that will reduce future risk of catastrophic, high-intensity fires and create a mosaic of climate and fire resilient native ecosystems. Due to the unique confluence of biological diversity, historic development patterns, water supply infrastructure, and the array of economic activity associated with farming, tourism, and forestry, our Coastal Zone is a critical area for implementing vegetation management projects that result in improved ecosystem health and fire resilience.

The Butano State Park Forest Health Project represents a forward thinking approach to long-term ecosystem management in the Santa Cruz mountains. In the wake of the CZU Fire, CA State Parks, CAL FIRE, and San Mateo RCD have sought to manage the ecosystems in Butano State Park in a manner that will promote healthy and resilient systems. Through this project, this will be accomplished by a combination of ecologically restorative treatment types, fuel breaks, and myriad of treatment activities. The purpose of these treatments is to reduce the density and continuity of dead, dying, diseased, and overly dense vegetation and promote ecosystems dominated by healthy, disturbance-tolerant vegetation represented by a mosaic of species, sizes, and age-classes. By permitting the abovementioned activities, State Parks and San Mateo RCD will be able to manage the diverse ecosystems within the park in a manner that is tailored to site specific needs and concerns. This project will provide co-benefits of promoting biological diversity, ecosystem resilience to disturbance (fire, pests, pathogens, etc.), and hazardous fuel load reduction.

Sempervirens Fund has worked for 122 years to protect redwood forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains and played a key role in the formation and expansion of Butano State Park. Our work in protecting our redwood forests doesn't end once we



Preserving redwood forests
since 1900

Executive Director
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place a property in public ownership. As forever stewards of this landscape, we strongly support ongoing forest stewardship and restoration work across the landscape, and see this project as key to ensuring the future health and resiliency of Butano State Park. With the impacts of climate change, we need to rapidly increase the pace and scale of innovative forest management projects like this across the Santa Cruz Mountains.

We strongly support the Butano State Park Forest Health Project and urge the Coastal Commission to approve it at the November 18th hearing.

Thank you for your consideration of this important effort. Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Laura McLendon
Director of Land Conservation