

## **SUDDEN OAK DEATH FIREWOOD WARNING**

**Date: January 8, 2002**

SACRAMENTO—Winter weather is upon us, and many Californians are buying firewood to use in their homes and cabins. But, with Sudden Oak Death infesting 10 California Counties,\* all of us need to be concerned about where our firewood is coming from and where we are taking it. The 10 infested counties are now regulated, making the movement of any of the plants\*\* affected by this disease illegal without a permit, unless the wood has been totally debarked. So, when purchasing your wood this winter, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, along with the California Oak Mortality Task Force, reminds you to find out where the wood you are purchasing is from. Be sure any firewood purchased from one of the infested counties is totally debarked before moving it to another location.

Scientists haven't determined how this aggressive disease spreads, what environmental conditions are necessary for its survival, or how to eliminate it. They do know that the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum* causes Sudden Oak Death and has killed tens of thousands of California's oak and tanoak trees. It survives on the branches and leaves of most of the affected plants, making the chances of spreading the disease quite high if the current regulations aren't followed. The State, along with federal and local agencies, has organized an aggressive program to minimize the impacts from SOD, but we need your help. Working together, we can make a difference in stopping the spread.

\*Alameda, Marin, Mendocino, Monterey, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Solano, and Sonoma.

\*\* California black oak, coast live oak, Shreve oak, tanoak, rhododendron, California bay laurel, big leaf maple, madrone, manzanita, huckleberry, California honeysuckle, toyon, California buckeye, and California coffeeberry. The pathogen has also been recovered from Arrow wood in Germany and the Netherlands.

### Attachment to press release of January 8, 2002

Sudden Oak Death (SOD) is a serious disease killing tens of thousands of oak and tanoak trees in 10 known California coastal counties. Fifteen plant species are known to be adversely affected by *Phytophthora ramorum*, the pathogen that causes SOD. The impacts are potentially grave – a newly discovered, devastating forest pest; massive die-off of oak trees over thousands of acres; permanent change in forest cover and ecosystems; a serious increase in fire threat, some of it in very populated areas; and a negative economic impact on California's economy.

The state has been actively addressing this issue for more than a year with a coordinated and comprehensive response focused on research, management, and education. Highlights follow:

**TASKFORCE** - In the summer of 2000, under the direction of the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (BOF) and the Secretary of Resources, the state formed the multi-entity California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF). COMTF's mission is to develop a coordinated and comprehensive response to SOD. Active state agencies are the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), California

Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), California Department of Parks and Recreation, California Department of Fish and Game, the Resources Agency, Caltrans, the University of California (U.C.) Cooperative Extension, U.C. Berkeley, U.C. Davis, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and Sonoma State University. Other task force members include federal agencies, local affected agencies, private entities and legislators of affected districts.

COMTF has developed numerous training materials and outreach information as well as provided many educational opportunities and workshops. It has established a website ([www.suddenoakdeath.org](http://www.suddenoakdeath.org)) devoted to providing the most current information available on SOD and provides monthly updates to the BOF. The task force has established a GIS database of SOD, an OakMapper website, maintains a map of current SOD distribution, ratified COMTF sampling protocol, developed COMTF survey protocol and reporting of individual suspicious trees, coordinated research efforts, and helped to raise money for SOD efforts.

FUNDING - Governor Davis and the Legislature provided \$3.586 million to address SOD in this year's budget. In addition, Governor Davis augmented CDF's fire fighting resources in northern California this year, citing SOD as one of the justifications. The Legislature passed and Governor Davis signed AB 62 (Migden) authorizing the funding and clarifying how it is to be spent consistent with the recommendations of the task force. Funds are allocated as follows: monitoring \$440,000; management \$1,796,000 (primarily for counties); research \$480,000; education \$221,000; regulation \$420,000; and administration: \$243,000. The Federal government has appropriated approximately \$4 million primarily for research and monitoring this year.

CDF & BOF - On April 3, 2001, the BOF passed a resolution declaring a "zone of infestation" for the seven counties known to be infested at that time. Since then, an additional 3 counties have been added to the list. The "zone of infestation" authorizes CDF to take action on private lands to address SOD. CDF also requires foresters to identify mitigation measures on harvest plans in affected counties. CDF Assistant Deputy Director Mark Stanley is the current chair of the COMTF and Deputy Chief for Forestry Assistance Stephen Jones is treasurer for the task force. In addition, CDF hired public information officer Katie Facino to work explicitly on SOD and has staff on all of the COMTF committees. CDF has also done several aerial detection surveys for SOD as well as cooperated with Marin County in conducting a prescribed burn in a SOD infested area.

CDFA - On May 17, 2001, CDFA issued emergency regulations that require permits be issued by an authorized agricultural official to move host plants or materials within or from infested areas. In September 2001, CDFA issued sampling guidelines for *Phytophthora ramorum* defining and requiring "official" samples for regulatory purposes.

U.C. – In July 2000, U.C. researchers identified the cause of Sudden Oak Death to be a previously unknown forest pathogen—*Phytophthora ramorum*. As of 12/18/01 they have found 15 known tree and plant hosts: tanoak, coast live oak, California Black oak, Shreve oak, California bay laurel, rhododendron, big leaf maple, madrone, huckleberry, California buckeye, manzanita, toyon, California honeysuckle, and California coffeeberry. The pathogen has also been recovered from Arrow wood in Germany and the Netherlands. Current research is focusing on how the disease is

spread, what environmental conditions are necessary for survival and reproduction, and what can be used as effective treatment. In addition, UC Extension has published many outreach documents on SOD, given numerous presentations, and hosted SOD workshops.

**PARKS & RECREATION** – Sudden Oak Death has been confirmed in six state parks and is suspected in another seven. Pfeiffer Big Sur State Park has removed 161 trees in the developed area and has since noted at least an additional 100 infected trees. Sugarloaf Ridge State Park is also removing infected trees. In October 2001, China Camp's Back Ranch Campground closed to remove and destroy about 80 hazardous trees. It also has another 70 potentially hazardous trees to remove along park trails. The Department began posting information on SOD to its website in fiscal year 2000/01.

**FISH & GAME** – The CA Department of Fish and Game joined the COMTF Management Committee in March 2001. Their representative attends meetings regularly and is actively involved. Quarterly updates on SOD are made to the Fish and Game Commission and field personnel are on alert for SOD symptoms and report all potential new infestations.

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