



The SCFSC Fireplug

www.SCCFireSafe.org

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In This Issue

- Henry W Coe Two Years Later 1
- Welcome Kellie Guerra 2
- SCFSC 2009 Awards 2
- SCFSC Success and Progress 3
- Recent SCFSC Support 4

Two Years After Fire: Watching the Regeneration of Henry W Coe State Park After the 2007 Lick Fire

By Shannon Dinis, ISA Certified Arborist

In September 2007, the Lick fire exploded through the back country of Henry W. Coe State Park. Over eight days, fire fighters worked diligently to put out the fire that eventually burned over 47,000 acres. Fire is a common disturbance in natural environments with many species of plants requiring heat or chemicals in smoke to break seed dormancy. Other species are well adapted to fire by having underground storage organs that allow plants to sprout after fire. Fire also removes dead or infected plants, nourishing the soil with nutrient rich ash.

Days after the Lick fire passed through, many areas looked like a moonscape with nothing but burned branches left behind. The intensity of the fire varied greatly with very intense fires leaving only burned holes where trees used to be to low intensity fires that simply burned grass and scorched trees.

A team of dedicated volunteers from the Pine Ridge Association led by Dr. Winslow Briggs saw the Lick Fire as an opportunity to monitor the regeneration of the various plant communities

that burned throughout the park. As part of my Master's thesis, I established field sites in chamise chaparral that burned in both the Lick Fire and a prescription burn to evaluate the regeneration of the chaparral star lily, *Zigadenus fremontii*, over two years. During this time, I had the opportunity to watch the resiliency of nature as it bounced back from what looked to be a very devastating fire.

Even as I set up my field sites in April 2008, much of the vegetation had begun to grow back. Among the burned branches of chamise were new branches sprouting from the base. Areas of blue oak savannah were only recognizable as burn sites when I looked closely at the base of the oaks. Grass was already covering the scorched earth. Even the star lily was in flower and setting seed by May 2008.

In April 2009, many of the wildflowers that compose the post-fire bloom were in bloom again, though at much lower numbers. Many of the chaparral star lilies that had flowered in 2008 only grew leaves in 2009. Chamise and Manzanita were growing back well, with branches reaching over a foot in height. Along with resprouting shrubs, seedlings of many species had begun to emerge showing that regardless of how intense a fire is plants have *(cont. page 3)*



Photo of Willow Ridge taken September 30, 2007 by Ron Fischler and Bob Patrie

coefire2007.info/images/panos_ss.html#

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Welcome Kellie Guerra! South County Area Coordinator

We are happy to welcome Kellie Guerra to the SCFSC team as a South County Area Coordinator. Kellie will be joining Shannon in promoting SCFSC and our programs throughout South County including Morgan Hill and Gilroy.

Kellie has many years of experience in grant, contract and project/program management from working with educational institutions as well as in the conservation field. She has continually augmented her work through active volunteer participation with non-profits and collaborative groups and is thankful to have been able to contribute her knowledge and skills to a variety of socially conscious endeavors.

Having grown up in the rural Morgan Hill area, she feels that working with SCFSC will provide her with new opportunities to work with landowners to prevent catastrophic loss from fires and to share fire prevention information within her native community.

Kellie holds a B.S. degree in business management. She is married with two grown daughters, two sons-in-laws, and two beautiful young granddaughters, and enjoys gardening, cooking and spending time with family and friends in her spare time.



Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year, Stu Farwell receives his award from SCFSC president, Jerry Serpa

SCFSC 2009 Awards

**Youth Education
Coordinator of the Year**
Sergio Alatorre

**Chipping Projects
Coordinator of the Year**
Kim Gardner

**SCFSC Golden Chip Award
Coordinator of the Year**
Shannon Dinis

**WUI Community Leaders
of the Year**
Rick Parfitt & Kim Gardner

Certificate of Appreciation
S.P. McClenahan Company

Certificate of Appreciation
Los Altos Hills County Fire District

Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year
Stu Farwell

SCFSC Success and Progress in 2009, Moving Forward in 2010

SCFSC worked tirelessly to fulfill our mission, helping protect 2,780 homes, 8,240 people and \$2.7 Billion in property values through our Defensible Space Chipping programs throughout Santa Clara County in 2009. This could not have been achieved without the outstanding support of our directors, officers, volunteers, members and donors and the hard work of our coordinators. And of course, without the involvement of the community, including the homeowners who participated in our programs and took it upon themselves to be proactive and fire-wise.

“We will continue to grow this year and thank you for your enthusiasm,” remarks Jerry Serpa, SCFSC President. He continues, “with your help, SCFSC Coordinators are creating momentum that will help us accomplish greater success in each of our communities.”

Federal grant funds have been received for our 2010 programs and our members and coordinators are working to implement plans and projects to meet our increased goals and focused objectives for the year. We have begun scheduling chipping projects for the spring and we continue our outreach and education efforts in all of our areas in preparation for fire season. We have high hopes for 2010 and your support and participation in SCFSC will be a key to our success. Thank you!

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(cont. from page 1) evolved the mechanisms to bounce back. Such nutrient rich soils left behind from the fire creates the perfect environment for plants to grow.

Not only were plants coming back, but animals were as well. Each time I visited my field sites, I would be greeted by a jackrabbit and could hear the calls of birds in the trees. Regardless of how a fire starts, plants and animals will always bounce back and fill in the gaps created after fire.

Volunteers continue to evaluate and document the progress of vegetation regeneration at Henry W. Coe State Park. For more information on the Lick Fire and the Vegetation Regeneration Project or Henry W. Coe State Park, please visit: coefire2007.info/welcome.html or www.coepark.org.



*Photo of Willow Ridge taken May 16, 2009
by Ron Fischler and Bob Patrie
coefire2007.info/images/panos_ss.html#*

Shannon Dinis is currently completing her Masters in Conservation Biology at San Jose State University. She is an ISA Certified Arborist and is working as the South County Area Coordinator for the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council, www.SCCFireSafe.org. She can be contacted at ShannonD.SCCFireSafe@gmail.com.



The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC) is a non-profit organization composed of individuals, public and private agencies and companies that share a common, vested interest in preventing and reducing losses from wildfires.

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Visit our website

Resources for Homeowners, Past Newsletters,
Kids Outreach Materials and more!

www.SCCFireSafe.org

“Mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities and environment from wildfires.”

Support SCFSC

Thanks to the following who have made recent grant contributions to support our chipping and other programs.

San Jose Water Company, \$2,500

Target, \$2,500

Aldercroft Heights County Water District, \$2,000

Rotary Club of San Jose, \$1,670

Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation, \$1,000

Bear Creek Stables, \$500

Chemeketa Park Mutual Water Company, \$500

Cisco, \$315 (Flip Camera)

Gillette Mutual Water Company, \$200

Black Cat Construction, In Kind Donation to Soquel FSC



SCFSC Jr. Coordinator, Christian Riese, receives a check from the Build-A-Bear Workshop Foundation from friends at the Valley Fair Mall location.

Funding provided by National Fire Plan grants from the USDI Bureau of Land Management and USDA Forest Service through the California Fire Safe Council. Our Community Outreach, Education and Youth programs and other council activities are also funded in part by grants and donations from local agencies, companies, foundations, organizations and individual donors.

The views and conclusions in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the California Fire Safe Council, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council or the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute an endorsement by the California Fire Safe Council, the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council or the U.S. Government.