



The SCFSC Fireplug

www.SCCFireSafe.org

October 2007

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Lexington Hills Fire 1985

In July 1985, Lexington Hills suffered great loss when a wildfire tore through the area. Some stats from the wildfire:

- 14,000: acres burned
 - 42: homes destroyed
 - 4,500: people evacuated
 - \$7M: in damage
- (www.sccfd.org)

Experience on His Side Welcome Fire Captain Barry Stallard

SCFSC is happy to welcome San Jose Fire Department's new Wildland Officer and SCFSC Director, Fire Captain Barry Stallard.

Captain Stallard, a 20 year SJFD veteran, is replacing José Guerrero who is now Battalion Chief for Battalion 1 in downtown San Jose. As the Wildland Officer, Captain Stallard will be the primary SJFD representative to the Santa Clara County Fire-Safe Council and work with other fire agencies to address wildfire prevention, response and educa-

tion issues and activities throughout the County.

Captain Stallard, whose "home base" is now the SJFD Bureau of Field Operations on Montgomery Street, has spent the majority of his service with the SJFD at Stations 2 and 16 in East San Jose and most recently as Company Officer at Station 23 in northeast San Jose. While his new role as Wildland Officer is far different than his responsibilities as a Company Officer, he is looking forward to contributing "behind the scenes" including address-

ing abatement issues and working in partnership with other fire agencies to streamline response times and processes for residents/homeowners. (cont. page 2)



Fire Captain Barry Stallard
New SJFD Wildland Officer

Sudden Oak Death Syndrome What You Should Know by Shannon Dinis

Sudden Oak Death is a disease that is becoming very prevalent in Santa Clara County and many other coastal counties in California. Known cases of the disease range from Monterey to Humboldt Counties. The number of counties is likely to increase as more research is done. The spread of the disease is mainly found in coastal areas that receive

plenty of rainfall and fog because the fungus needs a moist environment to spread its spores. This disease primarily affects tanoaks (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*), coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*), and various other oak and tree species of the coastal forest.

Sudden Oak Death is caused by a fungus called

Phytophthora ramorum which infects the water flow system of the diseased trees. (cont. page 3)



Coast live oak
bleeding bark canker

Welcome Kim Gardner *SCFSC Lexington Hills Area Coordinator*



Kim Gardner
Area Coordinator

No one knows Lexington Hills better than our new Area Coordinator, Kim Gardner. A resident of Aldercroft Heights for 19 years, Kim joined SCFSC, after years of involvement as a volunteer in chipping projects in her area, to promote fire safety projects in each community in Lexington Hills.

A woman of many hats, Kim works part time for the Aldercroft Heights County Water District, and manages a household of two kids, three dogs, a horse (and a husband). So what keeps Kim inspired and full of hope? Her kids of

course, and the “little accomplishments along the way that give joy.”

Born on February 6th, Kim may be an Aquarius but her weapon for fire prevention is not water. It’s education. “Many residents,” she says, “are unaware of the need to keep their properties in good shape, not only for themselves but for their neighbors as well.” The Lexington Hills area has already benefited from SCFSC’s chipping programs and will soon work with SCFSC on a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). Working with SCFSC Secretary and Lexington

Hills resident Rick Parfitt, Kim’s goal is to see more chipping projects, cleared properties, emergency plans and fire safety programs for the whole area.

We are happy to welcome Kim to the SCFSC team and look forward to her contributions on behalf of the communities within Lexington Hills.

Lexington Hills is an area located in the Santa Cruz Mountains and is comprised of several communities including Redwood Estates, Holy City, Chemeketa Park and Aldercroft Heights

Safety Tips

Here are a few safety tips to protect your roof and chimney this fall:

- Remove dead branches overhanging your roof.
- Remove any branches within 10 feet of your chimney.
- Clean all dead leaves and needles from your roof and gutters.
- Install a Class A Roof - Don't Use Wood Shakes.
- Cover your chimney outlet and stovepipe with a nonflammable screen of 1/2 inch or smaller mesh.

SJFD New Wildland Officer *Fire Captain Barry Stallard cont.*

(cont. from page 1) Reaching homeowners, especially those whose neglected properties pose a threat to homes around them, is one challenge he’s ready to take on.

A resident of San Jose for 30 years, Captain Stallard never intended to become a firefighter but reflects on his career and future goals with great pride. At a turning point in his life, after working as an Officer at Juvenile Hall, Captain Stallard considered a career in both police and

fire. While he would have made an exceptional Police Officer, his choice to join SJFD weighed heavily on the work itself including the ways in which firefighters interact with the community. He says simply, “firefighters provide a band aid for a situation.”

He exudes confidence and authority but also warmth and understanding: a home run combination that keeps him optimistic and enthusiastic about his new role and

the perfect candidate to interface with the residents and homeowners within the County’s high risk fire areas.

A father of three, Captain Stallard and his wife recently moved their family to San Ramon but don’t expect him to give up his San Jose roots. He knows the area inside and out and we can’t wait to take advantage of his expertise and knowledge. Welcome, Barry!

Sudden Oak Death Syndrome

What you Should Know *cont. by Shannon Dinis*

(cont. from page 1) Eventually, the fungus spreads around the entire tree blocking the flow of water from the roots to the leaves which dehydrates it and causes it to die. Along with affecting the water flow system of oak trees, *P. ramorum* is also known to cause leaf infections on California bay trees (*Umbellularia californica*), rhododendron, redwood, and many other tree and plant species. In the case of leaf infection, the fungus does not kill the plants; rather it causes branch dieback and discoloration of the leaves. Bay trees are known to spread the spores of *P. ramorum* and so tanoaks and oaks near infected bay trees usually become infected as well.



Above: Healthy Tanoak
Below: Infected Tanoak



The symptoms of Sudden Oak Death are usually visible on the trunk or the leaves of infected trees. The main indicative symptom in oaks is oozing dark brown to reddish sap from the trunk, called a canker, when there have been no signs of injury on the tree.

This is the tree's first line of defense to try and push the fungus

out of its vessels. Often, these trees will have discoloration of the leaves as well. In oaks other than tanoak, the disease usually affects adult trees, causing them to die within 2-4 growing seasons.

Tanoaks, however, are extremely susceptible to Sudden Oak Death. It has been observed that tanoaks infected with the fungus can succumb within one year while other oak species may take more time to succumb to the disease. The most important thing to remember is that symptoms similar to that of Sudden Oak Death can be caused by various other fungi and tree diseases. Therefore, lab tests *must* be performed in order to determine if the diseased tree really does have Sudden Oak Death.

So what can we do to prevent the spread of Sudden Oak Death? Since there is no known cure for this disease, the most important thing to do is prevent the spread.

- Contaminated materials should not travel from a county with confirmed infection to an uninfected county. To find out which counties are considered infected, visit www.suddenoakdeath.org.
- If you are traveling to an area with known sudden oak death, it is important to disinfect your shoes, tires, dog's feet, etc., by spraying them with Lysol, 70% alcohol solution, or 10% bleach solution before returning. All of these treatments should kill any stowaway spores.
- If tree work is needed on an infected tree, try to limit it to dead branches and perform these activities in the hot summer months when the spores are less active.
- Consider moving and removing downed or dead trees in the hot summer months to prevent the spread of spores.

- Try not to leave the wood for anyone to pick up since you don't know if they will be moving it to an uninfected county. It is safe to burn the infected wood since high heat will kill the spores.
- If chipping the debris, consider composting it. The heat produced from composting usually kills the spores as well.

To learn more about Sudden Oak Death and the California Oak Mortality Task Force, visit www.suddenoakdeath.org

Sources:

Storer, A. *et al.* 2002. Diagnosis and Monitoring of Sudden Oak Death. UC Cooperative Extension in Marin County.

Lee, C. April 2007. Protecting Your Oak Trees from Sudden Oak Death. California Oak Mortality Task Force.

Davidson, J.M. *et al.* 2003. Sudden Oak Death and Associated Diseases Caused by *Phytophthora ramorum*. Plant Management Network. 7 July 2003.

Shannon Dinis is currently pursuing her Masters in Conservation Biology at San Jose State University. She is working for WECCI as a contractor in PG&E's vegetation management program. She is also the South County Area Coordinator for the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council.

This article has been edited for this newsletter. For the complete version, visit the "newsletter" section at www.SCCFireSafe.org



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.”

Upcoming Events

We'd love to see you at one of our upcoming Community and Education Outreach events:

October 21st

American Red Cross
Partners in Preparedness
at Kelley Park in San Jose

November 10th

Morgan Hill Farmers'
Market

***Volunteers always
appreciated!***

For more information on our upcoming events or to contribute an article/story idea for our next newsletter, contact:

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Support SCFSC

The continued financial support of the community and local companies helps us accomplish our goals in wildfire prevention throughout the County.

For a list of our supporters or to make a contribution, visit our website or contact:

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We use donations to provide valuable resources for your community including:

- Hazardous Fuel Reduction (HFR) Chipping Programs
- Community Outreach and Education (COE)
- Kids/teens Wildfire Prevention education
- Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs)

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