

Climate Resilient Monterey Bay



SAN VICENTE REDWOODS PRESCRIBED BURN PREPARATION AND FUEL REDUCTION PROJECT

SUMMARY

San Vicente Redwoods, a 9,000-acre protected area in the Santa Cruz Mountains, was heavily impacted by the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire. Extensive stands of dead trees and dense understory vegetation now create a higher wildfire risk than pre-fire conditions. The San Vicente Redwoods Conservation Partners are implementing a forest resilience project across 462 acres, focusing on reducing hazardous fuel loads, creating shaded fuel breaks, and preparing the forest for future prescribed fire. These actions aim to reduce wildfire risk to nearby communities, protect habitat and wildlife corridors, and restore long-term ecological resilience.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The project is advancing a comprehensive strategy to reduce post-wildfire fire hazards, protect adjacent communities, and restore forest health. Objectives include lowering hazardous fuel loads, preparing the landscape for future prescribed burns, and enhancing ecological resilience.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The San Vicente Redwoods project is actively implementing a comprehensive forest resilience strategy across 462 acres, focusing on reducing hazardous fuels and preparing the landscape for future prescribed fire. Activities include removing standing and fallen dead trees throughout the property, which were left after the 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire, and thinning dense understory vegetation that can carry fire into the forest canopy. All removed biomass is either processed on-site into manageable forms using chipping, pile burning, or biochar/ash production, or transported off-site for alternative uses like firewood or timber production. Strategic shaded fuel breaks are being established along ridgelines and roadsides, including 4 miles of linear firebreaks, to compartmentalize the landscape and create controlled zones for future maintenance-level prescribed burns.

Ground-level ladder fuels are being cleared to reduce the risk of high-intensity wildfire spreading to surrounding communities, while careful consideration is given to preserving legacy trees and sensitive habitat features.

ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Wildfire Risk Reduction



PARTNERS



Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST)

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Work is being coordinated under the supervision of a registered professional forester, ensuring adherence to fire-safe practices, ecological guidelines, and CAL FIRE standards. Pre-treatment monitoring and post-treatment photo documentation are being conducted to track progress, evaluate forest structure and species composition, and inform adaptive management strategies. Additional activities include maintaining access routes for equipment, upgrading bridges if necessary to support heavy machinery, and creating defensible spaces around critical infrastructure and community-adjacent areas.

Collectively, these efforts not only reduce wildfire risk to nearby communities, including Bonny Doon and other areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but also promote long-term forest health and resilience, enhance biodiversity, improve carbon sequestration, and mitigate post-fire hazards such as debris flows and erosion. The project is being implemented in a phased approach, starting in 2025, with sequential treatment of high-priority areas to maximize effectiveness and community safety while supporting ecological recovery and future fire management practices.

ADAPTATION STRATEGY

Wildfire Risk Reduction



PARTNERS



[Peninsula Open Space Trust \(POST\)](#)