

Hannigan, Edith@BOF

From: Suzannah Ferron <suzannah@pobox.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 31, 2016 1:14 PM
To: Vegetation Treatment Program@BOF
Subject: Vegetation Treatment Program

Dear Members of the Board of Forestry,

I am writing to you as a new homeowner in Shadow Hills, a Marriage and Family Therapist and Ecotherapist, a member of the California Chaparral Institute, and a volunteer at the Hahamongna Native Plant Nursery and the Nogales Nursery at Debs Park, to express my strong concern regarding your potentially devastating vegetation treatment program.

Instead of the one-size-fits all program, I urge you instead to create a program that will:

1. Thoroughly consider the entire fire environment, focusing on fire-prepping/proofing houses, structures and communities rather than bulldozing natural landscapes/habitat
2. Reflect bioregional differences rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach in an area with clear biodiversity
3. Allow for transparency and independent oversight--citizens have the right to have individual projects such as this one thoroughly evaluated under CEQA for potential environmental impacts,
4. incorporate the most up-to-date science available rather than anecdotal information and outdated, decades-old fire hazard data,
5. Incorporate a thorough, area-specific and complete determination of the long-term environmental impacts on wildlife, plant communities, water and air quality, visual and aesthetic resources, recreation, soils, and invasive weed spread in all of the areas affected.

Given this time in our history of unparalleled, human-caused environmental stressors that threaten our rapidly dwindling landscapes, biodiversity and habitats, we must do all we can to preserve them. Ravaging 22 million acres of habitat willy-nilly through mowing it down or, even worse, using chemicals, is an obvious recipe for disaster for our native plant, animal and insect species and will result in dangerous erosion, the encouragement of invasive weeds, depletion of seed banks, an increase in local plant community extinctions, and an increase in animal/insect endangerment and extinction. For the sake of California's future, we need to slow this process down, consult with a range of biologists, native plant experts, arborists, geologists, etc., who have a much more thorough and science-based range of knowledge about native landscapes/habitats/communities and hardscaping specialists who can provide ideas about how to fire-proof houses and communities rather than natural landscapes and habitat. To do otherwise is dangerous to the long-term health of this area.

I do not believe we need to denude nature and destroy what little wilderness there is left for wildlife for the sake of expediency. We can and must do better.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this critical matter.

Sincerely,

Suzannah Ferron