



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Santa Clara County FireSafe Council

Rick Parfitt, Rick@Parfitt.info, (408) 353-4912

Kim Gardner, lexhills.sccfiresafe@gmail.com, (408) 353-4395

Morrill Road Shaded Fuel Break Completed in Lexington Hills A Preventative Step as Community Prepares for Wildfire Season

Los Gatos, February 10, 2009 – In a collaborative effort coordinated by the Santa Clara County FireSafe Council (SCFSC), a shaded fuel break has been completed on Morrill Road adjacent to Summit Road on the Lexington Reservoir side of the Summit. The 5.5 acre fuel break, located on a property owned by San Jose Water Company and Santa Clara County Parks, is expected to protect approximately 20 adjacent homes and another 200+ homes as it will help keep future wildfires from escaping onto Summit Road – a potential evacuation route for residents in the area.

The project's success is attributed to cooperation among several agencies and companies: CAL FIRE, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, San Jose Water Company, Santa Clara County Parks, Santa Clara County Fire Department and SCFSC, which oversaw the coordination of the project. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Ben Lomond Conservation Camp provided the manpower to clear the fuel break and operate the chipper. The selection of brush, snags and ladder fuels to be removed and chipped was performed by staff from Santa Clara County Parks. Pacific Gas and Electric Company worked on-site to remove two dead Tan Oak trees close to their power lines.

Residents of the area are extremely pleased with the work. "Local home owners are queuing up to remove 'fire wood' that has been stacked on the side of the road by the work crews," explains Rick Parfitt, Summit Road homeowner and SCFSC Vice President. "Residents are excited about the wildfire protection aspects of the fuel break," he continues. "I hope everyone takes a moment to drive down Morrill Road and see how ladder fuels and brush can be removed to make the landscapes around our homes and roads more fire safe."

Although official wildfire season does not begin in California until spring, residents of Lexington Hills are no strangers to wildfires. The Lexington Hills Fire in 1985 burned over 14,000 acres and several dozen homes and most recently, the Summit Fire in May 2008 burned over 4,200 acres and 31 homes.

Funded by a grant to SCFSC by the Bureau of Land Management, the Morrill Road fuel break will help protect the community of Lexington Hills as well as the high fire risk areas of Los Gatos, Monte Sereno, Saratoga and Lexington Hills, which includes the communities of Aldercroft, Chemeketa and Redwood Estates.

To further reduce risks from wildfires in the Lexington Hills area, SCFSC provides no-cost chipping services and is sponsoring the development of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). To learn more about our chipping programs and the CWPP, please visit our web site at www.sccfiresafe.org. The Santa Clara County FireSafe Council is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is "Mobilizing the people of Santa Clara County to protect their homes, communities and environment from wildfires." The council meets at 2:00 PM on the second Tuesday of each month. Interested organizations and individuals are welcome to attend! For more information and meeting locations, see www.SCCFireSafe.org, e-mail info@SCCFireSafe.org or call (408) 975-9591.

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The following photos show a section of Morrill Road before the brush was removed:



This next photo show the same area after the brush and ladder fuels have been clear 30' from the shoulder of the road:



This last photo shows a view of Morrill Road where both shoulders of the road have ladders fuels and brush removed 30' from the edge of the road:

