

PUBLIC INFORMATION

UC Berkeley Fire Fuel Management BRONTOSAURUS PROJECT: FROWNING RIDGE/CHAPARRAL HILL

Overview:

The University of California, Berkeley is conducting a fuel management project beginning on March 1, 2004. Vegetation will be cleared in the Frowning Ridge/Chaparral Hill area to increase fire safety using equipment known as a “Brontosaurus” (see map - reverse). The “Brontosaurus” is a large cutting head mounted on a tracked caterpillar, which removes and chips, brush and small trees as a single operation. Trees up to 12” in diameter are mulched in place and the chips spread by the equipment. A follow-up treatment with a growth inhibitor, Garlon 4, to individual stumps, will ensure that the removed eucalyptus trees do not re-sprout from their roots.

Removal of non-native trees and underbrush to improve wild-fire safety in the hill area is carefully planned to remove only what is necessary. The current project focuses on the removal of re-sprouted Blue Gum Eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*). The eucalyptus trees were first cut down in 1973, and then again in 1986, but have re-sprouted and grown to heights approaching 85 feet. These trees pose an extreme fire risk because of their ridge-top location and the propensity of the trees to cast burning embers for miles in the event of a fire in the canopy. The project will also remove some non-mature Monterey Pines (*Pinus radiata*), along with Coyote Brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) and Poison Oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), around the base of the trees.

The grinding process should not harm any burrowing animal. The heavy vibration of the equipment, coupled with its lumbering pace, provides wildlife ample warning to move elsewhere during operations. The site has been surveyed for nesting raptors and reptiles, and a wildlife biologist is assisting in project monitoring and mitigation measures. The overall impact of the project will be to reduce wildfire risks and enhance wildlife habitat, particularly for the endangered Alameda Whipsnake and for several species of raptors.

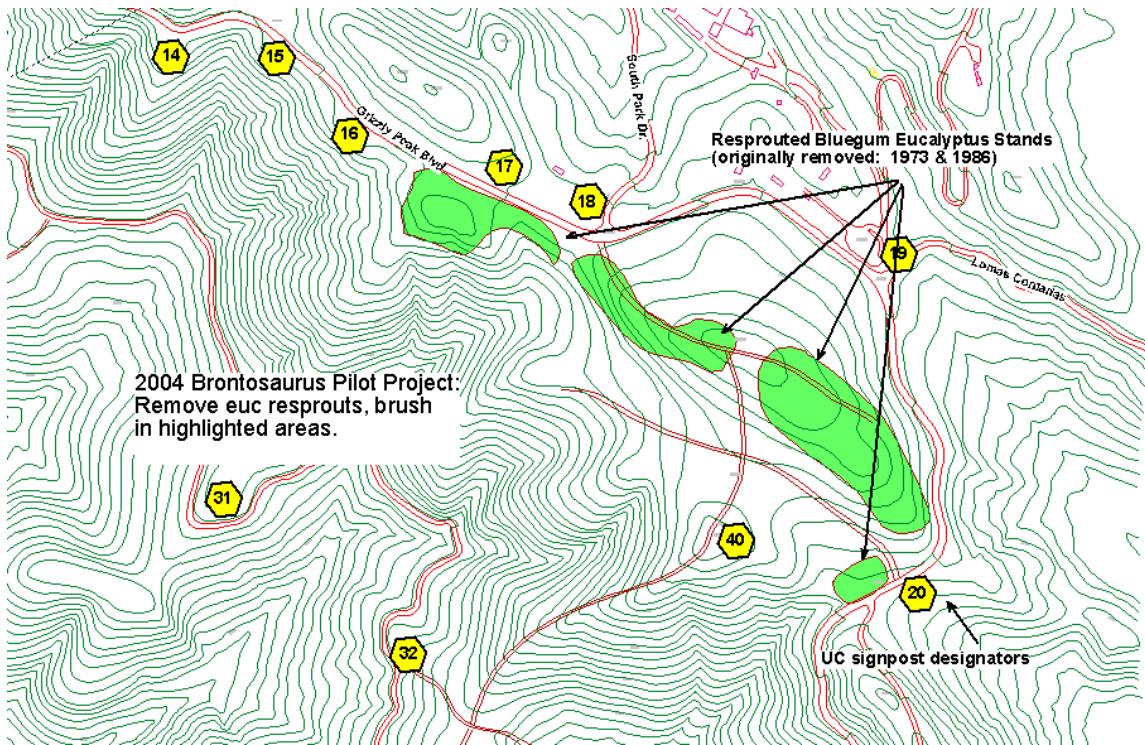
The project duration will be about one week (weather permitting) and work will take place from 7am – 5pm. The project team will adhere to regulations concerning safety, dust, dirt, exhaust fumes, and storm water runoff. If you have questions or concerns about the health and environmental impacts of campus construction, please contact UC Berkeley’s Office of Environment Health & Safety at 642-3073.

The work is being coordinated with regional public landholders and cities represented on the **Hills Emergency Forum**: Cities of Oakland, Berkeley, El Cerrito, East Bay Regional Park District, East Bay Municipal Utility District, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, UC Berkeley and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Project planning has also included the Claremont Canyon Conservancy, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

The University of California, Berkeley Fire Mitigation Program is providing funds for this work. For additional information, please contact Tom Klatt, Manager – Emergency Planning and Fire Mitigation (642-1258 or tklatt@berkeley.edu)

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Project Location:



Brontosaurus at work clearing Eucalyptus

