

## **Ideas for the Wildfire Prevention Coordinating Group**

The citizens committee co-chairs Lisa Jacobs and Jon Kaufman had a series of one-on-one meetings with several potential members of the Coordinating Group and fire chiefs to solicit their thoughts on what the Coordinating Group might undertake. Here is a summary of those ideas.

### **Shorter Term**

It was suggested that initial programs that the Coordinating Group adopt should be more easily achievable so that it can establish itself and score some initial successes. The ideas offered include:

- Criteria for defensible space and home hardening and enforcement that are uniform throughout the jurisdictions represented in the MOU membership.
- A uniform program to clean up the understory among the member jurisdictions.
- Using the new state fire code as a model and as a starting place, urge all Coordinating Group member agencies to adopt the same language in their fire codes. Fire code enforcement becomes easier if all jurisdictions have the same requirements and all enforce them.
- Uniform local ordinances on a range of subjects including parking, defensible space from structures and roads, vegetation types, limits on new construction.
- Highlight firesafe gardens, educate gardeners on what to plant and what not to and certify gardeners that have been through a training program.
- Recognizing that a professional staff is necessary, pool resources to write grant applications to fund Coordinating Group programs. Agencies with known relevant grant writing expertise include Berkeley, Diablo Firesafe Council, East Bay Regional Park District, Hills Emergency Forum and Oakland.

### **First Step in a Longer-Term Program Idea**

In addition to managing the ground fuels noted above, to prevent wildfires, attention to reducing the danger posed by tree canopies is also necessary. Efforts to reduce or eliminate risks posed by tree canopies requires major funding for both environmental impact reports and implementation programs.

- A first step may be to conduct a historical ecology study to understand what would be necessary to establish or reestablish a landscape with a reduced threat of wildfire. Such

studies have been conducted on the Peninsula, in Silicon Valley, in East Contra Costa, and in Sonoma County.

### **Non-Prevention Shorter Term Ideas**

While not explicitly fire prevention ideas, the following were suggested:

- Clean up vegetation along obvious evacuation routes.
- Install outdoor warning speakers with both voice and tone capabilities.
- Establish regionwide parking restrictions on days with very high fire danger.
- Work with the State Insurance Commissioner to allow insurers to increase rates if they agree to remain or re-enter the market and offer discounted rates to homeowners to comply with stricter vegetation management standards.