

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
University of California at Santa Cruz
Lick Observatory Vegetation Management Project
PDMC-PJ-09-CA-2005-065
February 2007

The University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) has applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the State of California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) for a Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) Program grant to implement a vegetation management project. UCSC's PDM Program grant application seeks FEMA funding to reduce future wildfire risks to the University of California Observatories Lick Observatory (LO) and appurtenant facilities.

UCSC would conduct vegetation management at LO facilities and the surrounding areas. The action area encompasses approximately 48 acres that would be divided up into 35 treatment units. Treatment units would consist of 100-foot-wide defensible spaces around structures and "area treatments" that would be outside of these spaces around structures. To create the 100-foot-wide defensible zones surrounding structures, vegetation management techniques would consist of brush cutting and pruning canyon oaks, blue oaks, and foothill pines to a height of 8 feet; removing dead materials; and mowing brush along roadways. Flammable ornamental vegetation such as rosemary and juniper shrubs would be removed, including rootballs, and replaced with lower-hazard shrubs. Area treatments would be conducted in locations beyond the 100-foot-wide treatment units surrounding structures. Vegetation management techniques at area treatments would generally consist of thinning oak trees and mechanical mowing of brush. Hand equipment and tractor-mounted brush mowers would be used for mowing. Herbicide would be hand-applied to the stumps of scrub and canyon live oak on 33 acres where future vegetation management maintenance by UCSC staff is infeasible due to the steepness of the slopes. Herbicides would not be used where hand maintenance by UCSC staff is feasible. Hand labor would be utilized to perform the proposed action.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, FEMA has prepared a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for the Lick Observatory Vegetation Management Project (February 2007) to evaluate the impacts of the Proposed Action on the human environment. The SEA tiers from the Final Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for Typical Recurring Actions Flood, Earthquake, Fire, Rain, and Wind Disasters in California (December 2003) as Proposed by FEMA. The PEA and SEA are available online at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region9.shtm>.

Based upon the conditions and the information contained in the PEA and SEA, and in accordance with FEMA's regulations in 44 CFR Part 10 (Environmental Considerations), the following is concluded:

A Finding of No Significant Impact. Therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared, based on the fact that there will be no long-term adverse impacts to the natural environment resulting from the Proposed Action. This Finding of No Significant Impact serves as the final notice for compliance with Executive Orders 11998 and 11990. Information required by 44 CFR Part 9.12(e) is provided in the SEA. For more information, contact the undersigned at (510) 627-7027. No action will be allowed to occur until 15 days after publication of this Finding of No Significant Impact.


Alessandro Amaglio
Region IX Environmental Officer

02/05/07
Date