

The Lookout

muir woods park community association

40 RIDGE AVENUE OFF PANORAMIC HIGHWAY • MILL VALLEY CALIFORNIA 94941



SEVERE DAMAGE FROM FALLING TREES LEADS TO PROPOSED AREA TREE POLICY

APRIL 1995 ISSUE:

Bramell house burns during March 9 storm.

Severe storm damage brings in FEMA help.

April 18th may be Park's burn day.

Insert: Muir Woods Park Community Tree Policy

Tree Policy survey form

First local artists show is April 29 & 30

Spring fundraiser dinner/dance is April 29

MUIR WOODS PARK ART SHOW April 29-30

In conjunction with the Spring Fundraiser Dinner/Dance on April 29, MWPCA will sponsor a showing of local artists' works. There will be for-sale pieces as well as those not for sale. The purpose is to showcase local talent. Participating artists include:

Clare Cooley	Painter, porcelain & glass
Etta Deikman	Painter, abstracts
Roy Forest	Metal sculpture
Del Goetz	Glass forming & etching
Elly Graham	Painter, photography
Suki Hill	Photography
Ann Nisson-Hokanson	Painter
John Hokanson	Wood crafts
Bonnie Himberg Mumford	Soft sculpture
Alison Shapiro	Painter
Fran Thompson	Painter

Coordinating the event is Ding Ansel. Gari Thompson is doing graphics and Barney Lenheim is helping to arrange lighting.

If you are an artist and would like to participate in the show please contact Ding Ansel at 388-8367 or Del Goetz at 388-8493.

Save Mount Tam *Spring Benefit*

Dinner Dance



Saturday—April 29

Art Show



No-host bar at 6
Dinner at 7
Dancing at 8

Dinner & dancing—\$20 per person
Includes choice of entree (vegetarian and meat), salad, bread, wine with dinner, dessert & coffee or tea

Entertainment by jazz musician **STEVEN WYNN** (Alto Records)
Three sets of music—cocktail hour, dinner & dancing

Master Chef for the evening—Keith Papulias

Art Show

Saturday and Sunday

Local Mount Tam artists display their work

Painting / Drawing
Photography / Sculpture
Glass / Jewelry

at the Community Center • 40 Ridge Avenue

Reservations Essential

RSVP—Keith Papulias at 388.9219
or Stella Winn at 388.3394

PARK SERVICE CONTROLLED BURN SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 18 OR THE FIRST DAY WEATHER PERMITS THEREAFTER

Be sure to mark your calendar and don't panic if you see smoke. Mt. Tam State Park will be burning the broom and tree slash starting on the 18th of April, weather permitting. *Burn Window: April 18-30.* Anyone with questions should call the California State Dept. of Parks and Recreation at 456-1286.

LEPRECHAUN SHENANIGANS

The Clubhouse was bursting at the seams on Saturday, March 18, during our annual St. Patrick's Day dinner festivities -- in spite of the mischievous little fellows who evidently closed the fireplace damper.

Lynn Hindley orchestrated a fabulous feast featuring the classic corned beef and cabbage menu and bonus pots-of-gold such as fresh baked soda bread, two kinds of Irish stew, grasshopper pie and Irish Coffee. St. Patrick's influence notwithstanding, a rent-a-snake was even provided for those needing an excuse to indulge in a little snake-bite remedy.

The Hindleys, the Lenheims, Myra Bicknell, Del Goetz, Lila Daniels and many others helped out with the cooking and cleanup. The new-to-us Wolf Range is a great addition, especially for large affairs such as this. The \$350 we netted on the dinner will go towards more kitchen improvements. More than sixty dinners were served. Not a shillelagh was raised in anger, and people pitched in over \$500 to help the Bramells deal with their fire damages.

-- Peter Hindley

MARIN DECLARED DISASTER AREA

Our area qualifies for FEMA financial aid

Barbara Boxer's office was able to brief Assn. president, Del Goetz, on FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) disaster assistance for homeowners. Residents may be eligible for low interest, long-term loans for repairs and, in some cases, outright grants. MWPCA has requested FEMA assistance with tree and debris removal and is inventorying storm damage on roadways and easements (not private property). If you have storm related damage call:

FEMA telephone registration: 800-462-9029

FEMA help line: 800-525-0321

If you have damaged or leaning trees on a roadway that need to be trimmed or taken down, call Del Goetz at 388-8493.

MARCH STORMS WORSE THAN JANUARY

March 9 brought 100 mph winds that ripped through our neighborhood toppling and uprooting trees. Power in many areas was out for 3 days.

Hit hardest was the home of Ruth & Jim Bramell on Mt. View, which sustained heavy fire damage after a neighbor's tree sheared, dropping a 12" diameter tree top onto power lines that ripped loose from their cross bar creating a power surge. Apparently the power lines crossed with Viacom and telephone lines, which charged the cable TV lines going into the house and destroyed telephone service. Jim and Ruth were awakened by their smoke detectors. They tried to call 911 but all phones on the street were out, so it took a while to find a working phone. (See *Firehouse Corner* article for more information about the fire.)

Winds roared through Ridge Ave. once again with tornado type winds that felled a dozen trees on properties owned by Godfrey Tencer and John Barnes. Foo Kennedy's house took a direct hit by a 2 ft. diameter pine. His roof was demolished.

Monte Cimas residents were trapped for most of the day by fallen power lines tangled in fallen trees on MMWD property at the corner of Panoramic and Monte Cimas. They were without power for 72 hours.




Trees fell across Mt. View blocking the road but Jack Helsper and Pat Teahan cleared the blockage.

Some residents on Mt. View, Wash. Park and Hamilton Lane were without power for 72 hours because of the tree that fell on Les Draper's house, which caused the Bramell fire. Five pittisporen trees on Hamilton lane fell over taking out telephone and cable lines. Some are still leaning on PG & E lines.

Steve and Gari Thompson experienced a slide at 90 Adams. Many homes were hit by falling branches and had fences blown down as well. Some residents had trees come down on their property as well as on local roadways. North Edgewood Ave. was almost impassable because the road was totally covered with mud and water. It was barely passable in a 4 wheel drive vehicle.



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FIREHOUSE CORNER

-- *Capt. Frank Neer*
Throckmorton Ridge Fire Station

For those of you who missed the March 15th meeting, I thought it would be worth repeating the discussion of the fire at 241 Mt. View.

At 12:37 AM on Thursday, March 9th we received a report of an "unknown type fire in the area of 241 Mt. View." Upon our arrival approximately 4 1/2 minutes later we found fire visible from the second story front porch windows. We laid a supply line from the intersection of Hamilton Ln. and Marin View and drove as close to the involved structure as we could get.

We immediately laid an attack line to the second floor front door and just as we got water to the nozzle the front windows blew out. We achieved rapid knock down of the visible fire on the second floor and attempted to search for fire on both the first and second floors. Our efforts were badly compromised by the wind (clocked at 85 mph) pushing the smoke back into the building.

It took more personnel than usual to search out all of the fire in hidden spaces (due to the construction of the residence) and finally bring the fire totally under control about 1 1/2 hours later.

There were some lessons learned that need passing along:

1. A smoke detector alerted the residents to the fire and due to its timely alarm they were able to get out safely.
2. Due to extremely tight access, our ability to get the necessary equipment off our engine was hampered. The situation was twofold. First, the vehicle access to the area was extremely narrow. Second, the resident, attempting to ensure that his vehicles would be safe, moved them out of the carport further blocking our access.
3. Posts or steel "I" beams placed at the intersection of Marin View and Hamilton Ln. caused further difficulties in being able to make the turns (causing damage to our engine).

The cause of the fire was determined to be electrical in nature. A power surge due to a broken cross member on the pole nearest the residence caused a failure in the house wiring near the furnace room.

(Ed. note: the broken cross bow occurred when the neighbor's tree broke off and fell on power lines, which were ripped from the post, arcing to cable TV and phone lines.)

BRAMELL ASSISTANCE NEEDED

Luck was with the Bramells when their house burned. They lost a lot of treasured memories and the fruits of a lot of labor. But, the one thing that was spared was one copy of the 20 chapter manuscript of Jim's book. Unfortunately, the computer was melted.

When we asked the Bramells what help they needed or wanted most, Jim said a computer and a volunteer to help him get the manuscript back where he could work on it. Ruth said that she really misses having a VCR (electronic babysitter for John?).

If anyone has a *personal computer* they'd like to find a home for, Jim will give it a good one.

If anyone is just learning computer skills and would like to practice by donating *time to key in Jim's manuscript*, it would be much appreciated.

If anyone has a *VCR* they can give or lend to Ruth, I'm sure she'd appreciate it.

You can contact the Bramell's at 388-6176.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE

Whole House Surge Protectors Available

Whole house surge arresters for installation in the main circuit breaker box are available from Yard Birds in San Rafael. They cost about \$80 and fit most boxes. You need to know what kind of box you have. And, it should be installed by a licensed contractor -- not a job for amateurs. This is the same kind of system used in portable circuit surge protection for electronic devices but will protect the whole house from the kind of power surges that caused 2 house fires in our neighborhood in the last year.

-- *Barney Lenheim*

TREE CUTTING COMPANIES Specializing in Big Trees

Names supplied by David Boyd, Resource Manager,
Calif. State Dept of Parks and Recreation.

Brian Gates
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(did trees at ranger's house on Panoramic)

Fred Wetzel
(209) 295-3666

(will take down little groves of Eucalyptus for logs)

**VEGETATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE'S
PROPOSED VEGETATION MANAGEMENT
PLAN GETS GREEN LIGHT FROM BOARD --
WILL GO TO MEMBERSHIP WITH THIS ISSUE
OF LOOKOUT**

The January and March storms made it apparent that we must take steps to reduce the hazards that result from overgrown vegetation. Trees and limbs fell on homes, power lines and roadways causing major damage and inconvenience. After the January storm cycle, Robert Rydjord, Jim Bramell, Marlene Baar, Jean Sublett and Peter Cunningham volunteered to help forge a Vegetation Management Policy Statement -- *Muir Woods Park Community Tree Policy*.

After 5 edits, a draft of the policy statement was presented to the Board of Directors at their March meeting. The Board unanimously approved the proposed policy with one change. It now goes to the membership for discussion. A survey form is included to give Board Members direction.

A General Meeting will be held Friday, May 19 at 8 PM to discuss the proposed policy.

**NON-NATIVE VEGETATION BEING REMOVED
FROM MT. TAM STATE PARK**

*Monterey Pine
Blue Gum eucalyptus
Acacia
Catoneaster
Pampas Grass
Arundo (Bamboo like plant)
Broom
Monterey Cypress*

SAFETY COMMITTEE REPORT

**JUNE 16TH, 8 PM -- GENERAL MEETING
HOUSEHOLD EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS**

Is your house prepared for the *Big One*? Do you have disaster supplies properly stored? The experts say that an earthquake similar in scope to the recent Kobe, Japan quake is imminent. Emergency services will be overwhelmed. In our area, because of our small population and remoteness, we will not see help for a week or more. You will have to depend on your own resources.

Come find out what you need to know to be prepared.


Speaker for the meeting will be Darlene Jan, owner of the *Earthquake Outlet Store* in Albany. She will show you the latest in emergency preparedness supplies -- things like state of the art hardware to make your house safer, food and water with maximum shelf life, and supply kits to put in your car in case you are stranded. You'll find it all interesting and you'll be able to order your own supplies.


Please attend this important meeting. Your life could depend on how prepared you are!

-- *Randy Barrow,
Safety Committee*

GENERAL MEETING
FRI., MAY 19, 8 PM
MWPCA COMMUNITY CENTER
40 RIDGE AVE.
**TREE POLICY
FORUM**
SURVEY RESULTS WILL BE PRESENTED
PROPOSALS WILL BE DISCUSSED
CHANGES CAN BE MADE
PLEASE FILL OUT THE TREE POLICY
QUESTIONNAIRE & RETURN
NO LATER THAN APRIL 22

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	Bernie Moss	388-8131
	Bob Olson	388-3911
	Kathleen Delehanty	388-4516

Alternate
Lookout Editor: Del Goetz FAX: 388-9600

Copy Deadline for May Issue: April 24

BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Wednesday, March 1, 1995

Capt. Frank Neer of the Marin County Fire Dept. gave a status report on the defibrillator and discussed how the fire dept. has helped to get homeowners insurance reinstated. He reported on the forthcoming burns in our area at the edge of Ridge Ave., the understory burn at the Tourist Club and at Trojan Pt. He reported that antennas have been used to improved local resident's reception of our AM Emergency Radio Station.

Robert Olson was approved as a new board member to replace Dick Popson, who resigned.

The Vegetation Management Committee submitted its proposed Tree Policy. Robert Rydjord discussed various aspects of the policy. The board approved the draft with one change. It will be published in the *Lookout* and the May 19th General Meeting will be devoted to a discussion of same.

An *ad hoc* Highway Safety Committee was established to look into ways to improve road safety. The committee will work with the Stinson Beach Village Assn.

Board meetings are the first Wednesday of each month at 8 PM at 40 Ridge Ave.

-- Erika Teahan, Recording Secretary

DEFIBRILLATOR ARRIVED MARCH 23

Thanks to a cooperative effort between residents and government agencies, Throckmorton Ridge Fire Station has a new tool in its lifesaving kit -- a defibrillator.

The family of Carter Collins, who died of a heart attack last year, felt that his life might have been spared had there been a defibrillator close at hand. The family established a memorial fund at Bank of Marin which generated \$1500. MWPCA then agreed to donate up to \$1000 and solicited other agencies to do likewise. The Board of Supervisors contributed. The GGNRA agreed to make a donation out of next year's Burton Funds. Mt. Tamalpais State Park is also planning to make a contribution. Only the Marin Municipal Water District declined to contribute to the program, which benefits all who use Park and Water District lands as well as Muir Beach and the Panoramic area.

According to Brian Meuser, Training Officer for the Marin County Fire Dept., personnel at our fire station have been trained in the use of the equipment. Southern Marin Paramedics System in Marin City contributed the use of their emergency monitoring with Marin General Hospital. Dr. Dietz, who is responsible for overseeing the program, contributed his professional time to the program as well.


*** * 1995 DUES ARE DUE * ***

MOUNTAIN EMERGENCY TEAM NEWS

Forty MET members attended a skills update meeting on Wednesday evening, March 15th at the Community Bldg, 40 Ridge Ave, 8:30 PM. Capt. Frank Neer, our local Disaster Council coordinator, passed out information on neighborhood liaison duties and a checklist for neighborhood liaison volunteers to use after a disaster has occurred. He also covered post disaster procedures and communications.

MET members who couldn't attend should contact Del Goetz at 388-8493 to receive copies of the passout information.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Rachel Tucker & Bob Tesch, 233 Mt. View Ave.

Congratulations to Rachel & Bob -- they were married March 25 at the Clubhouse

MWPCA 1995 CLUBHOUSE SCHEDULE

<i>April</i>			
1	10 AM	CPR Training	Wk
5	8 PM	Board Meeting	M
7		Betsy Bechert	W
8	Day	Sandra Wilson	Pk
16		Divide Meadows Picnic/Winn	
22		Stephanie Goering	W
29	6 PM	Save Mt. Tam Dinner Dance	D
30	11-4	and Local Artists Show	
<i>May</i>			
3	8 PM	Board Meeting	M
5	9 AM	Gari Thompson	Wk
13	6 PM	Turn Around Dinner	D
19	8 PM	MWPCA General Meeting <i>Vegetation Management</i>	M
20		Adam Winstral	W
21		Tourist Club Fest	Pk
<i>June</i>			
7	8 PM	Board Meeting	M
10	9 AM	Chipper Day	
16	8 PM	General Meeting <i>Earthquake Preparedness</i>	M
17	Day	Pilar Montaine	Wk
24	Day	Jeannie Beachner	W

(D=Dinner; M=Meeting; P=Party; Pk=Park; W=Wedding Wk=Workshop;)

CLUBHOUSE RENTAL RATES

Working member rate*:	Weekdays	Weekends
Group of 30 or less	\$50	\$85
Group of more than 30	\$75	125

Member & Non-Profit Rate:		
Group of 30 or less	\$75	175
Group of more than 30	150	250

Commercial Rate: \$750 - \$1000

All Others:		
Group of 30 or less	100	300
Group of more than 30	200	450

**To qualify for working member rates requires 24 hours of work over the last two years. If any questions about work time, call Del Goetz at 388-8493.*

Damage/cleaning deposits are required on all rentals

For rental information please call Clif Davenport at 383-3892.

FOR RENT FROM MWPCA

Weed Wrenches Rates: \$5 first day; \$2.50 each additional day; \$15/week; maximum rental period is 2 weeks. Call Clif Davenport at 383-3892.

FOR SALE FROM MWPCA

Metal Road Signs "Maintain 12 Foot Fire Lane Clearance; Violators Will Be Towed per MCC 15.33.010" (18"x 24") \$20. "No Parking - Fire Lane" (12"x18") \$12. Contact Del Goetz at 388-8493.

Mountain Emergency Team Shirts \$10 for tee shirts; \$20 for sweatshirts. Kelly green with white lettering. Your tax deductible purchase helps offset the cost of community organizing for public safety. Available from Del Goetz at 388-8493 or at Dowd's Barn, 157 Throckmorton, M.V.

CLASSIFIED

Seeking local teenager for babysitting, occasional evenings. Experience with infants desired. Mt. Tam area. Call 388-5450.

CURRENT REAL ESTATE LISTINGS

Thanks to Kathleen Delehanty of Pacific Union of Marin for this update of listings on the Mountain. For more details call Kathleen at 388-4516 or 383-1900 ext. 107. For current interest rates call Keith Papulias at 388-9219.

New Listings		
388 Edgewood (2 houses)	2br/1ba 1br/1ba	\$625,000.

Active		
25 St. Jude	2br/2ba	349,000.
602 Panoramic	3br/2ba	\$535,000
6 Walsh Dr.	5br/4.5ba	1,380,000.
73 Ridge Ave.	3br/2ba	1,395,000.

Lots		
Lot 1 Edgewood		369,000.
Lot 2 Edgewood		379,000.
11 Walsh Dr.		399,000.
720 Edgewood		400,000.
000 Panoramic		450,000.

Pending		
484 Panoramic	Lot	109,950.
693 Edgewood	2br/2ba	499,000.

Kathleen says: "Now's the time to list and sell property - inventory is low and demand is high."

MWPCA WISH LIST

VGA 15 pin color Monitor
Side-by-side refrigerator
Wood kitchen cabinets
Linoleum for bathroom floors
Bricks for outdoor BBQ Pad
Outdoor Gas BBQ

Contact Barney Lenheim at 383-1447



**TURNAROUND
DINNER**

Sat., May 13, 1995

MWPCA COMMUNITY CENTER

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EVERYONE IS WELCOME

Information Keith Papulias 388-9219
& Reservations: Stella Winn 388-3394

An open letter from the Bramells:

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

We would like to thank you all for your wonderful support during this stressful time. We appreciate the gifts of clothing, cash and personal assistance.

The support has made us appreciate, more than ever, the Mountain and its people. It exemplifies the sense of caring and community that has emerged over the years.

The Mountain is our home and it always will be. Now we turn our feet down the trail of rebuilding our Mountain Home.

Gratefully and lovingly,

-- Ruth & Jim Bramell

P.S. Our dog, Marley, says "Hi".

FROM THE PRESIDENT

There are those who live on our hill who hold a *laissez-faire* attitude toward vegetation management. "Let them fall where they may" is their attitude. But I know of no-one who would advocate totally restoring our hill to grasslands (except maybe the Park Service). Somewhere between the two extremes is a position that the Board of Directors seeks to achieve with the proposed *Muir Woods Park Tree Policy*.

I urge you all to please read thoroughly the enclosed proposed policy. Please, please, fill out and return the enclosed questionnaire. We cannot make policy in a vacuum. We need your input.

A lot rides upon having a tree policy. Without it, it's unlikely we'll get any FEMA help. Without it, we have no guidelines for government and utilities to follow for managing vegetation along our roads and utility easements. Without it, insurance companies will continue to red-line our area because they believe we aren't fire safe. Without it, we don't have any guidelines for our neighborhoods.

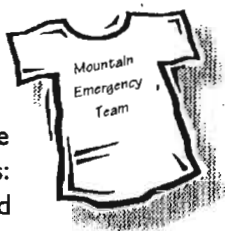
The policy being proposed is not law. No one is forced to agree with it or act upon it except in so far as they violate already existing fire codes. What it is is a means of communicating to our politicians, public agencies and utilities what we expect them to help us achieve: fire safety. If a wildfire occurs, we must have safe passage out. If the high winds come in the dry season, we must be sure that limbs and trees don't cause power lines to spark like they did last October.

What do you think? Call me -- 388-8493.

-- Del Goetz, President

Mountain Emergency Network Shirts are still available!

Sweatshirts are \$20; T-shirts \$10;
available at Dowd's Barn. Shirts are
Kelly green with white lettering. Sizes:
large & X-Large. T's: medium, large and
X-Large.



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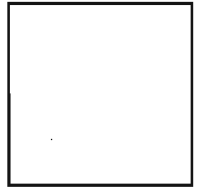


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BULK RATE

The Lookout

muir woods park community association
40 Ridge Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941

Address Correction Requested

MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY TREE POLICY SURVEY

The purpose for creating a vegetation management policy is to create a guideline for public agencies, utility companies and residents. These roads are our lifelines during emergencies; it is essential that they be usable. High winds recently toppled dozens of tree in our area, some blocking our side streets and Panoramic Hwy. As a result of these recent storms, we qualify for FEMA assistance with storm damage and debris removal on public rights of way. A vegetation management policy will help us get the assistance we need to make our community a safer place.

-- Please read the enclosed Tree Policy, then fill out and mail us this questionnaires by April 22 --

Do you think the **PUBLIC SAFETY MISSION STATEMENT** adequately reflects public sentiment in our community?

yes no

What are your opinions about **PROJECT DEFINITION**?

Part 1: Establish a 100 ft. firebreak corridor along Panoramic Hwy where hazardous or inappropriate trees are trimmed or removed.

agree disagree

Please comment: _____

Part 2: Establish a 25 ft. zone along side roads where hazardous trees are removed or trimmed

agree disagree

Please comment: _____

Part 3: Identify and remove/trim trees along utility easements that present a danger to lines.

agree disagree

Please comment: _____

Part 4: Limit trees other than Redwoods to a maximum height of 75 feet.

agree disagree

Please comment: _____

Part 5: Make specific recommendations to property owners about fire resistant vegetation; native vegetation for windbreaks and privacy barriers.

agree disagree

Please comment: _____

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM TREES

What is your opinion of the definition of vegetation known to cause a particular hazard in our community?

agree disagree

Comments: _____

Please turn page -- more on reverse side

AGREEMENT OF PROPERTY OWNERS

What is your opinion about soliciting property owner participation?

agree disagree

Comments: _____

What is your opinion about the proposal for dealing with property owners who refuse to cooperate?

agree disagree

Comments: _____

PROJECT PHASES

Do you feel the priority established is appropriate (1: Panoramic; 2: Side Streets; 3: utility and trail easements)

yes no

GENERAL COMMENTS

Should our community have vegetation management guidelines? (tree policy)

yes no maybe don't care

If yes, do you think the proposed tree policy is acceptable?

yes no maybe

If you think we should have a policy, how do you think this policy could be improved?

more comprehensive less comprehensive

Please comment: _____

Name _____ **Address** _____ **Phone** _____

Please return this questionnaire by April 22, 1995 so that we'll have it for the public forum on May 19.

**MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY ASSN.
40 RIDGE AVE.
MILL VALLEY, CA 94941**

MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY TREE POLICY

OVERVIEW

The October 1991 Oakland Hills fire and the recent Malibu fire and slides have caused many here to rethink how to make our own community a safer place. Along with the landslides, wind storms, fallen trees and broken power lines occurring each year, a perennial danger exists of major wildfire and earthquake that communities such as ours need to take far more seriously. The horrible Kobe earthquake of 1995 showed what havoc a level 7 quake can create if its epicenter is close by.

The Muir Woods Park Community is located at the urban/wildlands interface between the city of Mill Valley on the east and Mt. Tamalpais State Park on the west. About 350 homes make up the community in a rather heavily wooded area on the southern flanks of Mt. Tamalpais, although historically this ridge was primarily a grassland.

A review of potential hazards caused by the uncontrolled growth of trees and other vegetation has led to the development of a comprehensive plan by the Muir Woods Park Community Association. Proposed improvements will remove hazardous vegetation along community road and power corridors, resulting in far greater public safety in the event of high winds, heavy rains, earthquake or wildfire.

A one hundred foot corridor can be established for fire safety and safe passage along Panoramic Highway by clearing dangerous trees within fifty feet of the road centerline. After this is accomplished, the project will focus on improving the safety of the side streets used for neighborhood access by clearing hazardous vegetation within twenty-five feet of their centerline.

In spite of the seriousness of these threats to public safety, proposals to take action to remedy them are all too often met with excuses. Land owners cite sacrosanct "property rights" to avoid facing the need for tree work. Agencies almost always protest that they "have no money". But since lives depend upon this, we must find ways to cooperate and find innovative ways to accomplish this project.

CONTENTS

	Page
The Hazards of Living on Mt. Tam	2
Public Safety Mission Statement	3
Defining the Project	3
Identifying the Problem Trees	4
Agreement of Property Owners	4
Project Phases	5
Support of Community Plan	5

MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY TREE POLICY

THE HAZARDS OF LIVING ON MT. TAM

Winter storms buffet the ridge with winds that can exceed hurricane force. Gusts known to exceed one hundred miles per hour hit the ridge in January 1995, when numerous pines, eucalyptus and cypress toppled in the community. Several homes were hit by falling trees. Trees are especially vulnerable to being blown down by high winds when the ground is saturated by heavy rains, often closing roads and tearing up power lines. Such events are direct threats to life and property, as well as cut off power, communications and possible escape in emergencies.

Winter storms here typically produce twice or three times the inches of rainfall per storm that San Francisco receives. This causes recurring mud slides and landslides, especially along road cuts. Over the past decade a warming of ocean temperatures in the Pacific has produced extended periods of El Nino weather, when winter storms from the tropics carry much more rainfall than the traditional winter storms coming out of the Gulf of Alaska. The California floods of 1995 suggest that we may have entered a new weather period, perhaps influenced by progressive global warming. Each winter Panoramic Highway is frequently closed to the West of us by slides and fallen trees, eliminating one of the two possible escape routes during an emergency. When slides or trees close the highway towards Four Corners the community can become completely cut off.

The long dry season we get in the region each year culminates in autumn with a period of tinder dry vegetation and hot easterly winds. This creates an annual threat of wildfire that could devastate the community. The Oakland Hills firestorm was the most devastating and expensive fire in the American history. The narrow roads crowded by vegetation that made it so dangerous are very similar to the conditions in our community. This has made us far more determined to initiate joint action by residents and public authorities to open effective fire breaks within our community. We need to establish far more dependable roadways through and within our neighborhoods for use during emergencies.

Earthquakes are an ever present threat here since the community sits less than three east of the San Andreas Fault, which caused a tremendous quake ninety years ago and could rupture again at any time. A major quake on the Hayward Fault, only thirteen miles to the East, also threatens our area. An earthquake measuring at least 7.0 on the Richter Scale is expected to occur on the Hayward Fault within the next three decades. Experts now place the probability of this variously between 67% and 90%. Quakes may cause even greater devastation if they occur either when the ground is saturated by heavy rains, uprooting trees and dislodging foundations, or during the extreme dry season, when fires could result from downed power lines or broken gas lines could sweep through the neighborhood.

MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY TREE POLICY

PUBLIC SAFETY MISSION STATEMENT

The trees introduced in the Muir Woods Park neighborhood over the past sixty years pose numerous hazards from wind and rain storms, earthquakes and fires. The limited tree cutting in past road and power line maintenance has been inadequate to abate these substantial threats to public safety. The proposed project will substantially reduce obvious hazards along our road and utility corridors. What we as a community do with our trees will determine how well prepared we are for predictable emergencies and catastrophes, and how well we will survive them.

Our vision is to redefine community landscaping along our roads and rights-of-way in a manner that will help maintain roads that are essential escape routes during emergencies. To execute such a plan it will take the cooperation of the neighborhood, its property owners and the public agencies that are here to serve us.

We envision establishing the only through road in our community as a safe corridor for access or escape of residents, parkland visitors, and emergency vehicles in times of fire, high winds, quakes and other catastrophes. Appropriate tree removal will reduce our frequent power failures, as well as reduce the exceptional hazard of wind-driven fire caused by sparks or downed power lines in storms. To accomplish this goal, Panoramic Highway should become a hundred foot wide corridor free from hazardous trees. Similar improvements need to be made along our side streets, utility access corridors and designated community trails on public rights-of-ways.

DEFINING THE PROJECT

The following actions will make our community a far safer place for residents, visitors and emergency crews coming to our assistance.

1. Establish a corridor within fifty feet of the centerline of Panoramic Highway where trees identified as hazardous or inappropriate are removed and the urban/wildlands firebreak is improved.
2. Establish a zone twenty-five feet from the centerline of side streets providing residential access, where inappropriate or hazardous trees are likewise identified and removed.
3. Identify and remove trees along utility lines which grow beneath the lines, overhang them or otherwise jeopardize these by their size or proximity, or obstruct public pathways.
4. Limit trees on residential lots to a maximum height of seventy-five feet, either by elimination of inappropriate trees or by topping them so that they do not exceed that height even when expected regrowth occurs. Native redwood groves will be exempt.
5. Make specific recommendations to property owners for replanting vegetation which is appropriate in this region as well as relatively fire resistant for use along property lines as windbreaks, for privacy or to screen the sight and sounds of traffic.

MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY TREE POLICY

IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM TREES

State Park contractors are continuing to remove inappropriate trees and shrubs in the parklands along Panoramic Highway as planned in their Grasslands Restoration Project. The community now should attend to the residential areas. In a phased approach, each street and easement will be surveyed and the trees proposed for removal will be marked by representatives residing in the neighborhood.

Trees known to cause a particular hazard in these corridors are:

- Overgrown masses of trees crowding and overhanging Panoramic Highway.
- Trees planted directly under or close to utility lines that naturally grow to considerable height. Offending trees include most of the species planted in the community.
- Any tree of size directly above a road cut undermining its roots or footing.
- Trees so tall as to cause exceptional danger of toppled in high winds or prone to shedding large limbs that may block roads, hit buildings or cars, knock out power lines and possibly kill or injure hikers or residents. Limbs from eucalyptus are especially hazardous in this regard.
- Trees that spread vigorously but are characteristically so poorly rooted that they slump or fall as they get older. Acacias and bay trees are especially prone to such failures.
- Leaning trees or trees that have been cut so that their main growth remains on one side, leaving them out-of-balance and especially vulnerable to uprooting.
- Large trees with a known tendency to topple upon reaching maturity. Monterey pines grow rapidly but then uproot or snap off without warning at an age of only fifty or sixty years when their roots weaken.
- Trees that are exceptionally fire prone, such as cypresses originally planted as hedges but now overgrown and flammable at all seasons.

We endorse the California State Parks and Recreation designation of undesirable vegetation for this region. This list will be available to the owners of properties surveyed as well as to anyone upon request.

AGREEMENT OF PROPERTY OWNERS

Since this policy involves an unincorporated area it is not proposed to implement it by means of an ordinance. Instead, property owners with trees designated for removal will be approached by community representatives to explain the problem and the proposed solution. A release form will be provided them to solicit their agreement as it affects trees on or by their property. If the owner(s) signs the release, tree removal will proceed when the public agencies taking responsibility have crews available for the work. Trees will be cut and removed, not topped or groomed.

MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY TREE POLICY

If an owner refuses to cooperate, they will be notified by certified letter specifying that a significant hazard to public safety has been identified on their property and that they can expect to assume full liability for related problems on public or adjacent properties caused by their refusing to mitigate that hazard. These letters will be kept by the MWPCA Corresponding Secretary to be used in the event future litigation results.

PROJECT PHASES

This is clearly a major undertaking, and so completion of the actual tree clearance will be paced by the amount of time and effort that can be devoted to it by local residents, PG&E, Marin County Public Works and other cooperating agencies. It is therefore necessary to proceed in phases.

- Phase I:** Clear the prescribed corridor along Panoramic Highway.
- Phase II:** Address in turn the clearance of residential side streets.
- Phase III:** Clear utility rights-of-way and easements designated as community trails.

SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY PLAN

The Muir Woods Park Community Association is requesting support in planning and implementing this vegetation management policy from **Firesafe Marin, Tamalpais State Park, Marin County Board of Supervisors, Marin County Public Works Department, Marin County Planning Department, Marin County Fire Department, Marin Municipal Water District, the City of Mill Valley, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, Pacific Bell Telephone and Viacom Cable Company.**

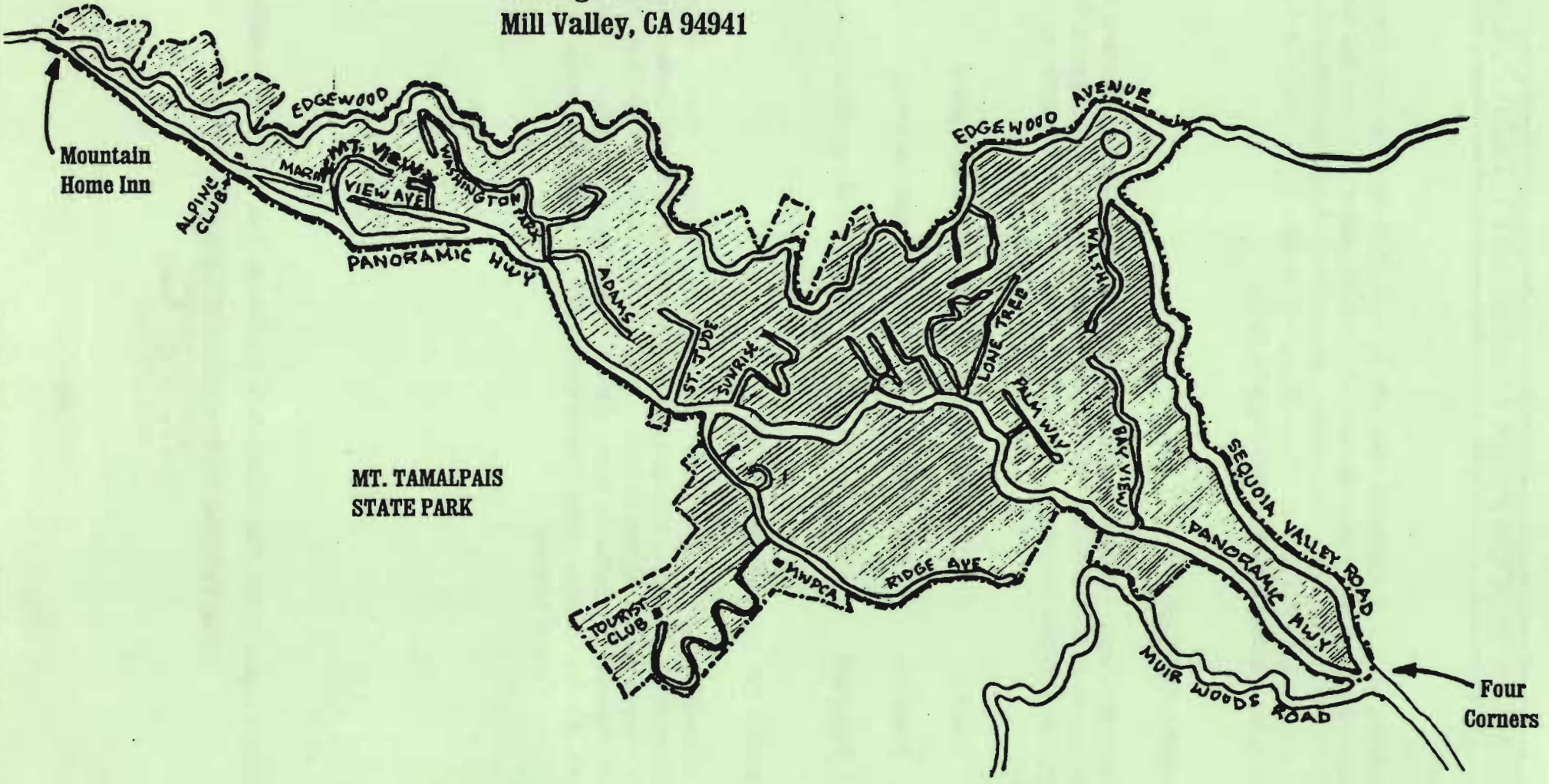
Additional copies of the Muir Woods Park Community Tree Policy are available from:

MUIR WOODS PARK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

40 Ridge Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941
(415) 383-9955

Muir Woods Park Community Area

Muir Woods Park Community Association
40 Ridge Avenue
Mill Valley, CA 94941



MT. TAMALPAIS
STATE PARK

MUIR WOODS