

PROJECT SUMMARY 2016

From 2014 to 2016, the Association ran a large project to reduce fuels in the canyons that traverse Carmel Views and build defensible fuel breaks between the canyons and our homes. The project was funded by a grant from the Cooperative Fire Program of the U.S. Forest Service, and it was managed by the California Fire Safe Council.

This map shows the location of the fuel breaks. It divides the common lands in Carmel Views into several areas. Below the map is a description of the work that was done in each area.



Area 1: 11.9 Acres. This is a long narrow area with extremely dense undergrowth. It is almost flat at the south end of the canyon, and climbs sharply in the north. With excellent access, we utilized all available mechanical equipment: chippers and self-propelled mulchers (called masticators). Working off a sewer road, we opened this entire area to almost park-like status, felling dead, diseased and dying hazard trees, thinning vegetation while favoring retention of native species (oak and toyon), limbing trees up to 16 feet above ground, and chipping and broadcasting debris.

Area 2: 17.75 Acres. This is the largest and most difficult area in the project. It is an extremely steep canyon, with a 40-foot setback for the riparian area at the canyon's base, and no access for mechanized equipment. On the west side, we cleared a fuel break below Outlook Court and Outlook Terrace, up to and along the northern boundary of Carmel Views. Dead and dying trees were felled, boles were stabilized, material was lopped and scattered, and a large field of poison oak and

brush was reduced. On the east side, we felled numerous dead trees below Pine Hills Drive, except where the hillside is too steep to work safely.

Area 3: 5.98 Acres. This is a narrow strip along the sewer road off Outlook Terrace. It drops into a steep canyon toward the chalk cliff on Outlook Drive. There was adequate access for both equipment and hand crews off Outlook Terrace. We cleared from the sewer road below and above the surrounding houses, felled dead and dying trees (mostly on the down slope of the canyon), removed and masticated brush, and limbed trees to open the canopy.

Area 4: 10.38 Acres. We treated this as two areas: 1) the western end, following a sewer road below Outlook Drive and above Canada Court, and 2) the eastern end, following a PG&E access road above their substation and looping around Pine Hills circle. This area had a huge concentration of dead and dying pines, and subsequently a large amount of hazardous debris on the ground. We treated this area (and other areas) several times: first with a hand crew to consolidate the debris, second with hand crews and chippers, and third with tree fallers and mastication equipment. We removed hazardous trees, masticated brush, opened the canopy, and treated invasive weeds.

Area 5: 6.65 Acres. This includes the western most common lands in Carmel Views. The hillside on the west was covered with an overgrowth of coyote brush, genista and poison oak. The southeastern portion followed an old sewer road and was heavily treed. We used a masticator to clear half of the brush in a mosaic pattern and broadcast debris. On the east side, we felled as many dead trees as possible, limbing up the remaining trees, and lop and scattering the branches. This created a fuel break directly below homes on Outlook Drive.

Area 6: 2.74 Acres. This area was chosen by Cal Fire to demonstrate the various types of equipment that would be used throughout the project. However, the extreme steepness of the hillside precluded use of mechanized equipment and the vast undergrowth of poison oak kept all but the best of contractors at bay. We cleared and chipped all brush (including poison oak) and limbed up all trees for approximately 40 feet up the hillside from Canada Court. This includes an area under the PG&E lines.

Acknowledgement

This project would not have happened without the dedication and hard work of several people in both Carmel Views and our larger community. It began in 2012 when Peter Nosler wrote a grant application and submitted it to the California Fire Safe Council. They did not accept that application, but it established Carmel Views as a contender for federal fire abatement funds. A year later, we had learned enough about the process to submit an application that they accepted. However, there is no way we could have done it without the help of Robin Hamelin, a

battalion chief at Cal Fire. He spent countless hours developing a detailed project plan as part of the application, something that nobody in Carmel Views knew how to do. Meanwhile, Susan Greenbaum convinced the Cypress Fire Protection District to give us a separate, supporting grant if our application for federal funds was successful. That is one of the reasons that we got the federal grant. Finally, we were fortunate to find Pam Peck to run the project. Pam does not live in Carmel Views, but she knows most of the people who do. She also knows every dead tree and patch of poison oak in our community, from the many days she spent directing work crews. In addition, she helped write the project plan for our next grant.

What can you do to help? Probably the most important thing is to maintain a fuel break around your own home. Our grants allow us to reduce fuels in the common areas, especially the canyons. However, they do not provide money to treat fuels on privately-owned land. That is our responsibility as individual homeowners. If you have a dead tree on your property, please cut it down. If you need help, the Association can help you find a tree service that will do the work for a reasonable price. If you have flammable plants on your property, especially genista, please remove them. That makes the entire community safer, but the home you are most likely to save is your own. Finally, please support your Association's efforts to maintain the fuel breaks. That will cost money, and probably will result in increased dues. However, the alternative – increased vulnerability to wildfires – is worse.