

REPORT TO THE CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE AND THE MARIN OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE

MARCH 2001

UPDATES

NEW HOSTS –

Marin County –the new *Phytophthora* causing Sudden Oak Death (SOD) has been isolated from dying **huckleberry plants** (*Vaccinium ovatum*) at Muir Woods and Mt Tamalpais. The fungus causes twig dieback and in advanced stages kills the plants down to the ground. The significance of this new host is several fold:

- 1) Areas where huckleberry grows are at increased risk for Sudden Oak Death – it is a common plant in Northern CA, OR, WA and British Columbia.
- 2) It raises a threat to the commercial blueberry industry, and since it is closely related cranberry is also potentially threatened. Commercial cultivars of these crops will be tested for susceptibility. Wild huckleberries are also a large cottage industry, where they are harvested for jams, and other products in several western states. Native Americans harvest and use wild huckleberries.
- 3) The addition of huckleberry has impacts on wildlife that depend on the berries or twigs of *Vaccinium*. Evergreen huckleberry is an important browse for elk in the Coast Ranges and southern Oregon. In other areas, particularly those with heavy snow pack, other species of *Vaccinium* serve as a critical winter browse for deer. The addition of evergreen huckleberry suggests others may be susceptible. This compounds wildlife impacts due to the reduction of acorns from tanoak and oak.

Santa Cruz -The SOD *Phytophthora* was also confirmed by **Garey Slaughter** and **Dave Rizzo** on a new oak host, *Q. parvula* var. *shrevei* (Shreve's oak), from a sample in Santa Cruz County. This host is also in the red oak group and apparently is locally common in coastal areas. Symptoms on Shreve's oak were the same as noted on coast live oak.

SPREAD

Fairfield Osborne Preserve, Sonoma – Jenny Davidson, recently recovered the SOD *Phytophthora* from rainwater and soil. These findings indicate the potential for pathogen spread via soil and splashing rainwater.

Sheets of plastic were set up facing the bleeding cankers on diseased coast live oak trees to capture rainwater that bounced off trees and potentially carried spores. The collected rainwater was then filtered, and the filter placed on petri plates containing a medium selective for growing *Phytophthora*. Rainwater produced new *Phytophthora* colonies on the petri plates, showing that the disease could be spread in rainwater.

The *Phytophthora* pathogen also was isolated from soil and litter collected from the base of diseased coast live oak trees. The collected soil was placed in a plastic bag with a pear and young rhododendron leaves, favorite food items of most *Phytophthora* species, to coax or “bait” the SOD *Phytophthora* from the soil. The identity of the pathogen recovered from rainwater and soil was confirmed in the lab of **Matteo Garbelotto**, UC Berkeley, using species specific molecular methods.

DISTRIBUTION

Santa Clara County was added to list of infested counties bringing the total to seven (Marin, Sonoma, Napa, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Mateo, Monterey).

QUARANTINE

OREGON– A hearing will be held March 14 in Salem to determine if the temporary emergency quarantine for Sudden Oak Death that expires April 4, 2001 will be continued. Members of the COMTF plan to be present at the hearing however the COMTF does not have an official position on the quarantine.

FEDERAL and STATE REGULATION - The USDA convened its New Pest Advisory Group for Sudden Oak Death to discuss status of current research given the infestation in rhododendron and what it means for regulating the pathogen (on Feb 21-22 outside of Washington DC). At the meeting representatives from CDFA and USDA agreed to put together a management plan for Sudden Oak Death including a regulatory component. A subcommittee will meet in California on March 13, to put together the rule and management recommendations.

FUNDING

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE – Both AB62 and SB31 passed unopposed out of the Senate and Assembly Natural Resources Committees. Both these bills contain the \$10,265,000 spending plan recommended by the COMTF. Wiggins has dropped AB53 since it is duplicative and signed on as a co-author to AB62. The bills move on to the Appropriations Committees.

- **Migdon, Wiggins– AB 62 \$10,265,000.**
(**Coauthors:** Assembly Members Alquist, Chan, Keeley, Maldonado, Nation, Richman, Salinas, Vargas, Washington, and Wayne)
(**Coauthors:** Senators Kuehl, Ortiz, and Torlakson)

- **2001**
 - Feb. 28 Re-referred to Com. on APPR.
 - Feb. 27 Read second time and amended.
 - Feb. 26 From committee: Amend, do pass as amended, and re-refer to Com. On APPR. (Ayes 11. Noes 0.) (February 22).
 - Feb. 20 Joint Rule 62(a), file notice waived. (Page 348.)
 - Feb. 5 Re-referred to Com. on NAT. RES.
 - Feb. 1 Referred to Com. on NAT. RES. From committee chair, with author's amendments: Amend, and re-refer to Com. on NAT. RES. Read second time and amended.
 - **2000**
 - Dec. 6 From printer. May be heard in committee January 5.
 - Dec. 5 Read first time. To print.
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EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Fairfield – There was an initial meeting between the task force, CDF and CDFA to coordinate the educational program. Roles and responsibilities are being worked out and a plan of audiences, messages and methods of contact are being developed in coordination with the education committee of the task force. One of the first areas to be targeted will be specialization and distribution of management recommendations (attached) to key audiences. Distribution methods are being reviewed. These include but are not limited to the Web, direct mailings through existing newsletters and regular publications. The task force will use existing communication vehicles wherever possible.

Marin Municipal Water District – Trailhead posters have gone up at trailheads on MMWD land. The posters warn users that the area is infested with the new SOD Phytophthora and educate visitors on how they can reduce the spread. An invitation has gone out to all landowners to post in their areas. Sausalito will soon be posting these.

MEETINGS

- The next **Executive Committee** (Board + Chairs) Meeting will be March 22nd in Vallejo.
- **Committee Meetings:**
 - Education -March 12, 10-3 pm in Novato
 - Fire – to be announced
 - Funding - to be announced
 - Management - to be announced
 - Monitoring - to be announced
 - Research March 19, University of California Berkeley
- The next full **California Oak Mortality Task Force** meeting is **April 25 and 26th in Santa Cruz**. Information on this event will be posted as it becomes available.