

HUMBOLDT COUNTY REMOVES SUDDEN OAK DEATH-INFECTED TREES

Date: February 19, 2004

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HUMBOLDT—Today the Humboldt County Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) will begin removing and disposing of 20 California bay laurel trees infected with *Phytophthora ramorum*, the pathogen known to cause Sudden Oak Death, in Redway—the County's only known area of infection. This is the first experimental effort in California to control the potential wildland spread of the disease. "We are really grateful that the landowners are supportive of this project. Our intentions are to reduce the potential for disease spread," said USDA Forest Service Pathologist Susan Frankel.

Sudden Oak Death was found on California bay laurel in a forested rural residential area of Redway on several homeowners' properties in 2002. Extensive surveys throughout Humboldt County and the North Coast have found no further areas of infection. "The geographic isolation of the Redway site presents a unique opportunity to try to minimize and localize the pathogen's presence in Humboldt County," said CDF Forest Pathologist Jack Marshall.

The Humboldt County Agricultural Commissioner, California Department of Food and Agriculture, University of California scientists, and pathologists from CDF and the USDA Forest Service have agreed that the geographic isolation of this infestation provides an opportunity to attempt to suppress or control the spread of the pathogen. This experimental project will attempt to remove the majority of the trees known-to-be-infected, reducing the disease's ability to spread to the surrounding area. Soil, water, and plants in the area will be monitored carefully by University of California scientists to determine if this procedure is effective and if it can be applied to other isolated areas with the disease. In addition, several more intensive ground-based surveys to look for the pathogen will take place throughout the North Coast this coming spring and summer.

Sudden Oak Death affects nearly 40 plant species worldwide, causing mortality in several species, including coast live oak and tanoak, as well as minor cankers or leaf lesions on other trees and shrubs, such as rhododendron and camellia. The disease is found in 12 California coastal counties and is a potential threat to the horticultural and timber industries. International, federal, and State quarantines are in effect to minimize disease spread.

For more information about the control project, contact Katie Palmieri, COMTF Public Affairs Officer, at (916) 747-1924. For more information about Sudden Oak Death, go to the California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF) website at: www.suddenoakdeath.org .

Please note that access to the treatment area is by permission from the property owners ONLY and is discouraged during wet times of the year to reduce the chance of spreading the disease.

