



CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE

News Release

SUDDEN OAK DEATH BLITZ 2009 THE SANTA LUCIA PRESERVE TAKES ACTION

Date: March 30, 2009

**Contact: Katie Palmieri
Public Information Officer
(510) 847-5482**

MONTEREY: The Santa Lucia Conservancy, in cooperation with Dr. Matteo Garbelotto, UC Berkeley, and the California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF), finished conducting its second annual Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Blitz at the Santa Lucia Preserve March 27, 2009. The event was attended by 37 Preserve landowners, Preserve staff, and arborists, and resulted in the collection of 250 symptomatic plant leaves suspected of being infected with the SOD pathogen, *Phytophthora ramorum*.

Last year's first annual blitz produced 253 samples, of which 15 percent tested positive for Sudden Oak Death, and two new infection sites were identified. In an effort to contain the disease, immediate steps were taken to try and eradicate the pathogen from the new sites. "This year's blitz will build upon the knowledge base of last year, allowing the preserve to detect changes in the distribution of SOD on the Preserve, for a continued early detection and rapid response plan where new outbreaks are identified. It will also provide us with valuable information for further development of the most effective Preserve management plan possible in those areas known to be infested on our property," said Jim Sulentich, executive director of the Santa Lucia Conservancy.

Based on the best science available, the Conservancy's SOD management plan for the Preserve encourages landowners to adopt a comprehensive, conservative approach to lot-based SOD management. Large-scale management of SOD is neither practical nor cost effective for the Preserve. However, lot-based management can be successfully implemented if the disease is detected early, and management prescriptions are conducted in a preventative manner.

A sister SOD Blitz is planned for the Carmel Valley and Northern Big Sur area on May 2, 2009. The event, spearheaded by the Santa Lucia Conservancy, is co-sponsored by the Big Sur

MORE...MORE...MORE

Intermountain Management Team (IMT), and in cooperation with Dr. Garbelotto, UC Berkeley, and the COMTF.

SOD is a serious exotic disease that is killing tanoak and several oak species in California. Currently, the disease is present in 14 coastal California counties, from Monterey to Humboldt.

For more information about the Santa Lucia Preserve or Northern Big Sur/Carmel Regional Blitz, contact Cheryl McCormick at cmccormick@slconservancy.org. For more information on Sudden Oak Death, contact Katie Palmieri at (510) 847-5482 or Palmieri@nature.berkeley.edu.

#####