

# **“SOD-BLITZES”**

## **Communities Coming Together in the Fight Against Sudden Oak Death**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sudden Oak Death (SOD), a serious exotic disease, is threatening the survival of tanoak and several oak species in California. Currently SOD is found in the wildlands of 14 coastal California counties, from Monterey to Humboldt. While patchy in distribution, with each passing year, the swath of infection continues to become more contiguous. Researchers have discovered that *Phytophthora ramorum*, the pathogen that causes SOD, spreads most often on infected California bay laurel leaves. Symptomatic bay leaves are often the first sign that SOD has arrived at a location, and generally precedes oak infections. Some management options are available (sanitation, chemical preventative treatments, bay removal), but they are effective only if implemented before oaks and tanoaks are infected; hence, timely detection of the disease on bay laurel leaves is key for a successful proactive attempt to slow down the SOD epidemic.

### **WHAT ARE SOD-BLITZES?**

SOD-blitzes inform and educate the community about Sudden Oak Death, get locals involved in detecting the disease, and produce detailed local maps of disease distribution. The map can then be used to identify those areas where the infestation may be mild enough to justify proactive management.

### **HOW ARE SOD-BLITZES STRUCTURED?**

**1.** A community meeting is held on a Friday evening (or Saturday morning). The goals of the meeting are to:

- a) Train participants to identify SOD symptoms on CA bay laurel and other hosts
- b) Explain the details of the sampling/collection process (number of samples, bagging, storing, tagging, distance between sampled trees)
- c) Explain how to record the sample location (address, GPS, etc)
- d) Explain how to fill out the collection form
- e) Define collection areas for each participant
- f) Distribute necessary materials to participants (forms, bags, markers, GPS units, laminated pictorial identification cards)

**2.** Collection of samples: On Saturday and Sunday, samples are collected by the individual participants. Samples and accompanying forms are then turned in at a central location Saturday and Sunday evenings.

**3.** The UC Berkeley diagnostic laboratory will analyze each collected sample through microscopic and DNA analyses to determine the presence or absence of *P. ramorum*/Sudden Oak Death. Once all samples have been tested, a map will be generated highlighting the areas sampled, and the presence or absence of the disease at each location.

4. 1-4 months later (dependent upon workload and number of samples collected) a follow-up community meeting will be organized. At the meeting, results will be presented and management options will be discussed.

#### **WHERE WOULD A SOD-BLITZ BE APPROPRIATE?**

- In a community where SOD is at a low or intermediate level
- In an organized community, where a meeting location is available, a system is in place to inform community members of the events, and community interest and involvement is likely
- In areas where communities can mobilize neighboring communities (multiple townships, parks and preserves, etc.)

#### **WHEN TO ORGANIZE A SOD-BLITZ**

Keeping in mind that 4-8 weeks are necessary to advertise the event, late spring is the best time to organize SOD-Blitzes. The UC Berkeley Forest Pathology team is available every weekend of May (except for Memorial Day weekend) and the first two weekends of June. Availability is on a first-come, first-served basis.

#### **HOW MUCH DOES A SOD-BLITZ COST?**

SOD-Blitzes are **COMPLETELY FREE** thanks to funding from the US Forest Service to the UC Berkeley Forest Pathology Lab!!!

#### **WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT?**

Email Dr. Matteo Garbelotto at [matteo@nature.berkeley.edu](mailto:matteo@nature.berkeley.edu). Please include in the subject the word "SOD-Blitz." Requests need to arrive at least 6 weeks before the desired date to allow for proper organization.