



Education and Outreach Activities of the California Oak Mortality Task Force: 2009 Summary

by

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Reaching an estimated 100,000 people in 2009, California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF) education and outreach activities were focused on reducing human-caused spread of *P. ramorum* to uninfested areas, and minimizing the spread and impacts of Sudden Oak Death where tree mortality has already occurred.

Workshops, tours, training sessions, and public presentations: The COMTF outreach team coordinated or presented at over 20 separate events, totaling an audience of more than 850 people. Groups included Master Gardeners, college classes, “Bay Friendly” landscaping classes, PAPA, the California Native Plant Society, and more. One highlight was the “Science for Managing the Big Sur Ecosystem” workshop in Big Sur on May 27, 2009, where approximately 60 participants heard the latest science on *P. ramorum*, wildfire, and treatments, and engaged in a panel discussion of long-term management goals.

International, national, and state conferences: Our team coordinated the Fourth Sudden Oak Death Science Symposium in Santa Cruz, CA with over 200 participants from 7 countries and 18 states. Work for the conference included everything from creating and maintaining the conference website, to planning the agenda and meeting logistics, to presenting talks during the session. In addition, we helped to coordinate and present the national Fifth Meeting of the Continental Dialogue on Non-Native Forest Insects and Diseases in San Francisco, as well as the 2009 meeting of the California Forest Pest Council.

Sudden Oak Death prevention and treatment outreach: The COMTF outreach team worked closely with the Garbelotto lab at UC Berkeley to coordinate and support monthly Agri-Fos® treatment training sessions on the Berkeley campus. These sessions reached approximately 150 people. In addition, we held three



community treatment training sessions in Scotts Valley, Carmel, and Pt. Reyes Station for approximately 45 people total. We also worked with the Marin Municipal Water District to include treatment information in their bi-monthly water bill insert, which reaches all of the households in southern Marin County. Finally, we assisted in developing and coordinating community SOD-Blitzes with the Garbelotto lab; these events help provide communities with the pathogen distribution information they need to make effective treatment and management decisions.

Monthly newsletters: The monthly COMTF newsletter remains one of our most important means of providing updates to all those interested in Sudden Oak Death and *Phytophthora ramorum*. In 2009, we published 11 issues (February-December) which were presented to the Board of Forestry and distributed to our listserv of approximately 1100 people. The current newsletter and all past issues are available on the COMTF website. In addition, a North Coast-specific update is emailed quarterly to local individuals and agencies there.

COMTF website and online outreach: The COMTF website has had approximately 40,000 page views this year. We added videos and reorganized our multimedia offerings to make them easier to find and view; we continued to post both audio and visual files from conferences and workshops, where available. Regular maintenance includes: preparing and posting all monthly COMTF reports to the website and the listserv; posting all upcoming events to the *Calendar of Events* page; and posting all News Advisories available. This year we also began exploring other online media for our outreach messages. In an effort to expand our audience, we created and populated a SOD blog (<http://ucanr.org/blogs/SODBlog/>) with tri-weekly musings on forestry, gardening, invasive species, and other related topics – this new blog attracted over 48,000 page views in the 6 months it was active. In an effort to spread our message through new avenues, we also created a YouTube channel (<http://www.youtube.com/COMTF>) with over 250 views.

External and media relations: The outreach team represented the larger COMTF during APHIS regulatory calls, at the Board of Forestry meetings, and other events (e.g. the grand opening of the National Ornamentals Research Station at Dominican University of California (NORS-DUC)). For media, we provided



interviews and information to more than 40 media contacts, and also distributed 14 New Advisories or Releases. We also provided services as a Tribal Liaison for the COMTF.

Publications and materials: A new “SOD and the North Coast” poster for parks and forests of the North Coast was unveiled, along with a letter/fact sheet on the “Top Ten Facts about SOD” for these land managers. We updated the Spanish language and general fact sheet handouts about Sudden Oak Death; formatted and posted online two chapters of the SOD Literature Summary; submitted SOD reports for both the 2008 and 2009 CA Forest Pest Conditions Report; and continued work on additional peer-reviewed documents to be published in the coming year. The “Fire and *P. ramorum* summary” document was updated with new information. We also developed and piloted a joint program for youth education with the UCCE 4-H program, the “Can My Tree Catch the Flu?” activities and workshop, which will continue into 2010.

General education and outreach: The combined COMTF outreach team responded to more than 500 individual phone calls and emails from the public and from other agencies, and provided hundreds of copies of literature and outreach materials to 7 separate agencies/events.

Coordination and support services: In our support and coordination capacity, the outreach team facilitated connections between more than two dozen individuals or groups working on *Phytophthora ramorum* research, management, or education. We also consulted on developing projects, such as the worldwide *Phytophthora* website. Finally, we facilitated communication and meetings for the COMTF Executive Committee.

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