CALIFORNIA OAK MORTALITY TASK FORCE REPORT
NOVEMBER 2001

NEW HOSTS

Three new species have been identified as hosts of *Phytophthora ramorum*: *Rhamnus californica* (California coffeeberry), *Heteromeles arbutifolia* (Toyon) and *Lonicera hispidula* (California honeysuckle). These latest additions raise the number of hosts to fifteen (three oaks, tanoak, rhododendron, manzanita, huckleberry, madrone, bay laurel, buckeye, big leaf maple and viburnum).

Phytophthora ramorum causes leaf spots on each of these new hosts; in addition, on toyon, it appears that branch dieback is also associated with infection. Branch and stem death have not been noted in the field for honeysuckle and coffeeberry. Infection information is currently limited, but research is continuing to further characterize symptoms and the effects of the disease on these hosts. Positive samples were determined by DNA probes. Lab inoculations support the field sample findings.

Rhamnus californica (California coffeeberry), a native shrub of California, develops leaf spots when infected. Positive samples were collected in Marin and Napa counties, but symptoms have been observed in areas where it is found in association with infected oaks and other known hosts. Coffeeberry occurs outside of California but is restricted to western North America.

Heteromeles arbutifolia (Toyon, Christmas berry) is a native shrub that occurs only slightly beyond California's borders. *Phytophthora ramorum* causes both leaf spots and branch dieback in this member of the Rosaceae family. Positive samples were found in Marin and Sonoma counties, but symptoms have been observed wherever it is found in association with infected oaks and other known hosts.

Lonicera hispidula (California honeysuckle, hairy honeysuckle, pink honeysuckle) is a vine or shrub member of the family Caprifoliaceae. Leaf spots develop in association with *Phytophthora ramorum* infection. Positive samples were found in Marin and Sonoma counties, but symptoms have been observed wherever it is found in association with infected oaks and other known hosts. California honeysuckle's distribution is limited to western North America.

The findings came from a collaboration of researchers under the direction of Matteo Garbelotto (UC Berkeley) and Dave Rizzo (UC Davis) and with Steve Koike (UCCE Monterey County).

NEW EMPLOYEES

Katharine (Katie) Facino has been hired as the SOD **Public Information Officer** (PIO). She is working in the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection headquarters in the Public Affairs office with Karen Terrill. As PIO, Katie will serve as the first point of contact for all media inquiries. She will be responsible for press advisories, releases, follow-up letters to the editor, and coordinating public awareness campaigns. As Katie's familiarity with Sudden Oak Death grows, she will work with Nicole Palkovsky, assuming greater responsibility in drafting task force documents and serving as editor for existing and future technical documents.

Katie comes from the California Department of Education Communications Office where she regularly handled media inquiries and wrote press releases and media advisories. She also participated in the design and promotion of department campaigns and was assistant publisher of the *Fact Book, Handbook of Education Information*,. She brings with her a great enthusiasm and a fresh perspective that will be a welcome addition to the task force. Katie can be reached via **email at**: katharine_facino@fire.ca.gov or by **phone**: (916) 651-9182.

Using support from CDF, the California Oak Mortality Task Force has hired a new **GIS analyst**, **Karin Tuxen.** Karin has a Master of Science degree in Public Policy and Management with a concentration in Environmental Policy from Carnegie Mellon University. Since graduating in 2000, she has been working at Levine Fricke in Emeryville, where she managed GIS and WebGIS projects, as well as report production for efforts in the environmental consulting industry. Karin will be based at UC Berkeley, assisting Maggi Kelly in all mapping and database efforts associated with Sudden Oak Death.

DISTRIBUTION

Phytophthora ramorum has been identified in three hosts species: 2 California bay trees, 1 buckeye, and 1 rhododendron, near Faculty Glade on the UC Berkeley campus. The lack of infected oaks suggests that the pathogen has only recently arrived on campus, prompting strong measures to protect the hundreds of plants that grow on the university grounds.

Management efforts will include a training session in early detection of SOD symptoms for landscape staff, followed by two weeks of intense surveys. Regular monitoring of campus grounds will also be done in the future. In addition, UC Berkeley staff and the Alameda County Agricultural Commission will conduct a cooperative survey of lands adjacent to the campus. For a detailed press release go to: http://www.berkeley.edu/news/

EDUCATION

The **5th Oak Symposium** took place Oct. 23-25 at the Bahia Resort Hotel in San Diego. The conference, titled "Oaks in California's Changing Landscape", featured talks in concurrent sessions on oak woodland ecology, oak restoration, wildlife relations, oak conservation policy, urban forestry, grazing relations, fire relations, damaging agents, genetics and monitoring. The final day closed with a plenary session on Sudden Oak Death that featured many of the key researchers working on the problem in California.

Symposium organizers Doug McCreary, director of the UC Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program (IHRMP) and Rick Standiford, Associate Dean of Forestry for College of Natural Resources at UC Berkeley, are both key members of the task force and leaders in statewide efforts geared toward ensuring sustainability of California's oak woodlands. The papers will be available on the web and in printed proceedings this spring.

The **University of California Cooperative Extension** and the **East Bay Regional Parks District** hosted a workshop on recognizing, monitoring, and reporting Sudden Oak Death. The workshop took place at the Oakland Zoo with over 100 participants from East Bay Regional Park's District, Contra Costa Water District, University of California Berkeley Grounds Department, the City of Oakland, and East Bay Municipal Utility District. Speakers reported that there was a great exchange of information with lots of questions and comments.

Nancy Brownsfield, IPM specialist with East Bay Regional Park District, also informed staff of new policies on firewood and mulch. Staff are to discontinue cutting host material into firewood for the public use and the park is no longer receiving mulch from outside sources.

MONITORING

Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space District (MPROSD) is continuing sampling and verification of Sudden Oak Death in the San Mateo and Santa Clara County region along the Santa Cruz Mountains. To date rangers have collected 8 positive samples, representing 6 significantly different areas. The majority of positive samples have been found within a 5-mile radius of the Highway 9/Highway 35 area. Matt Ken, a ranger for MPOSD, estimates that there are over 500 dead or infected trees in the area.

MARIN COUNTY

China Camp State Park, located on San Pablo Bay, has temporarily closed it campsites due to due to hazardous conditions caused by failing oaks. The campsites will be closed while crews remove dead and dying trees in areas where they pose a hazard. An estimated eighty trees will be removed. According to an IJ article, several close calls occurred over the last few weeks, with trees crashing down near campsites. This prompted officials to take action.
http://www.marinij.com/news/stories/news1002077.shtml

Several research trees had to be removed due to hazard. The removal of trees is unfortunate from a research perspective; however, there is accumulating evidence that trees exhibiting advanced symptoms of Sudden Oak Death are more prone to catastrophic structural failure than healthy trees. The factors causing the weakening of the wood are not well understood. A consistent feature of these broken trees is the presence of bark and ambrosia beetle tunnels below the bark and in the sapwood. Hypoxylon reproductive structures are also often associated with the point on the main stem where breakage occurs. Further research will be done to determine what effect the Sudden Oak Death complex of organisms has on tree failure.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

4th COMTF Meeting, Nov. 15, 2001 in Petaluma CA The morning will open with concurrent committee meetings from 8:00 – 10:00 am. Mid-morning and afternoon sessions will convene the entire COMTF, highlighting Oregon's response to Sudden Oak Death, and some of the SOD regulatory issues that agencies, businesses and individuals face. Practical answers to "operating under the quarantine" will be provided. The agenda and registration form can be found in .pdf format at: http://www.suddenoakdeath.org/ Click on "Events". Contact: Nicole Palkovsky at palkovsk@nature.berkeley.edu for more information.

2nd Annual Sudden Oak Death Summit, Nov. 16, 2001 in Petaluma, CA. The purpose of this meeting is to provide decision makers at the local level with information and resources to help them respond to Sudden Oak Death or the prospect of Sudden Oak Death in their counties. Representatives from all affected, as well as bordering, counties are invited. US Senator Barbara Boxer is scheduled to give a keynote address. Contact: Kim Keirnan at kkeirnan@marin.org for event information and to register for the Nov 16th Summit.

Please note that registration for Nov. 15th and 16th are separate. Please register as soon as possible so we know how many people to expect.

KUDOS TO THE…..

Responsible Organized Mountain Pedalers (ROMP) for informing their membership about Sudden Oak Death and giving them some tips on post ride clean up.
http://www.topica.com/lists/romp/read/message.html?mid=702699081
http://www.romp.org/rides/list.html

If you know of a group that is working to minimize the impacts of Sudden Oak Death email the Nicole Palkovsky at palkovsk@nature.berkeley.edu and we'll be sure to include them in our Kudos section.