



CITY OF MORRO BAY

FIRE DEPARTMENT

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hazard Fuel Reduction on Black Hill in Morro Bay State Park

MORRO BAY, Calif., March 4, 2015 –

The Morro Bay Fire Department in partnership with the California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks), Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and the Air Pollution Control District are conducting prescribed pile burns and field burns of diseased, dead and downed Monterey pines and woody materials on Black Hill in the Morro Bay State Park this week until March 24, 2015.

These burns are part of the prescribed fire program for vegetation management and fuel load reduction. The Monterey pine forests are experiencing major die-offs due to pine pitch canker disease, compounded by years of drought. This treatment will enhance the health of the forests by removing diseased materials, restoring essential nutrients to the soil, and reducing the chance of a catastrophic wildfire. The Morro Bay Fire Chief Steven Knuckles states, "Not only will this work benefit the health of our southern forest but it will also reduce the dangerous fuel loads adjacent to many homes in south Morro Bay."

Please note that these prescribed burns are planned and coordinated with the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District and the California Air Resources Board in order to minimize the smoke impacts on surrounding communities. The burn is dependent on weather and air quality conditions that are favorable for smoke dispersal. If the conditions are not as desired, the burns will be rescheduled. Once the burn date has been established, a media advisory and social media advisory will be released 12 – 24 hours before the burn piles are ignited, to inform neighbors, residents, and visitors.

The Morro Bay Fire Department and County officials will continue to closely monitor air pollution levels throughout our region and provide updated forecasts on the APCD website. For more information regarding air quality and related issues, please go to the APCD website at: www.slocleanair.org or call (805)781-4390.