

**SAN DIEGO REGIONAL URBAN FORESTS COUNCIL  
MINUTES  
August 5, 2009**

**Welcome and Introductions:**

President Mike Palat welcomed all and introductions took place.

**Presentation:**

Lynnette Short, Cal Fire and Mark Wisniewski, Consulting Arborist, presented the power point *San Diego Regional Urban Forest Council – Tree Pruning Standards for Clearance, San Diego County, CA.*

Due to the past devastating fires in San Diego County, and an effort to address trees and other vegetation within wild land urban interface and improve community safety these standards were developed. A task team was formed and developed the draft standards proposal in 2008. The first presentation was to SDRUFC in spring of 2008. Revisions occurred and were presented in today's meeting. Once revised based on today's comments from members, Lynnette and Mark will hopefully be presenting the standards at the CaUFC Conference in Ventura 2009.

Application: these standards apply to the pruning of all trees in San Diego Co. maintained as part of a landscape setting. The standards are not intended to supersede any more stringent clearance requirements of any fire department or other governmental agencies.

The purpose of the standards is to:

- improve public safety
- reduce the spread of fire
- provide required clearances
- improve defensible space
- reduce the risk of tree failure
- maintain and/or improve tree vigor and structure
- fulfill specific requirements of tree owners

The benefits of having properly pruned trees may aid in:

- safer evacuation routes
- access for emergency responses
- increase defensible space
- planning tool
- reduced development costs
- reduced management costs
- reduced maintenance costs

Although initially costs may be slightly higher to provide clearances and maintain trees and other vegetation, all users benefit from properly maintained vegetation such as:

- tree care contractors
- urban foresters and tree managers
- architects and landscape architects
- planners and planning departments
- public works, streets and park departments
- fire departments and fire authorities
- landscape contractors
- property managers, homeowners and homeowner associations

Additional pruning standards shall be current with the American National Standards Institute ANSI A-300 (Part 1) Pruning, ANSI Z133.1 Safety Requirements and the ISA, Best Management Practices – Tree Pruning. Minimum tree canopy clearances are to be achieved at the time of pruning and should last for at least one year, one pruning cycle, whichever is greater. Individual species and growth should be taken into consideration.

Clearances listed in order of priority:

- streets, roads, fire lanes and traveled way in parking lots: 14' above the paved surface
- driveways: for driveways 50' long or less, 8' overhead clearance
- driveways: for driveways 50' long or greater, 14' overhead clearance
- buildings & structures: 3' min. for the sides and 5' min. over the roof
- chimneys: 10' min. from the side or above the outlets from chimneys or flue pipes
- safety signs, signals and informational road signs: shall not be obstructed from view by motor vehicles operators as detailed in local codes or ordinances
- approaching vehicle traffic at intersections and turn lanes: shall not be obstructed by tree growth from a clear view by motor vehicle operators as detailed in local codes or ordinances
- street light and light poles: 5' min. from the sides, above and below the light fixture or the pole supporting the fixture
- sidewalks, walkways and parking spaces in parking lots: 8' above the paved surface

Input and discussions by various members included:

- Should horizontal clearances from the sides of streets and roadways be a part of the standards? Rancho Santa Fe Fire Prevention District requires both 14' to 14.5' vertical and horizontal clearances from sides of streets
- At corner intersections, should a clear line-of-sight be included?
- Should the title of the standards be expanded to mention safety and fire prevention?

- Consult with homeowner's insurance and fire insurance companies

Type of pruning should be accomplished by:

- cleaning
- raising
- reducing
- thinning or a combination of the above-mentioned
- **DO NOT TOP** trees to achieve the clearances

Should crown pruning or a combination be specified as a selective type of pruning? The word "thinning", in forests terms means removing entire tree. Clarification in standards is needed when speaking about "thinning". Some member suggested using the term, "crown pruning".

Inspection is equally as important prior to starting work in trees. You must document in writing any hazardous conditions and limitations of what can be seen or can not visually be seen in the field. Include documentation if it was impossible to inspect the root collar due to the obstruction of plant material or soil. Note girdling or root bounded type of roots.

Vines were noted to be removed from trees. Members questioned whether or not this pertained and related to clearances. Lynnette stated that vines may act as a ladder to tree tops.

*Washingtonia robusta*, Mexican Fan Palms, are noted in the standards to be pruned by removing dead fronds by "skinning", "peeling" or "shaving". All agreed that if the dead palm fronds are left on palms they can ignite and spread fire and are hazardous to tree workers pruning palms.

**Actions:** Lynnette and Mark will take members comments and revise language in preparation of the CaUFC Conference.

### **Business Meeting:**

- **Grants** - Lynnette reiterated from last meeting that any grants from Prop 12 can go forward. IOUs were issued but municipalities were reluctant to accept. Credit unions are willing to accept IOUs. CaReleaf doesn't know if they can offer grants with the current economic situation, contracts will be on hold until a later date.  
**Action taken:** Tyler Overton, Urban Corp of S.D. is presently trying to work with IOUs.
- **CCFAC** - Delia reported no future meetings scheduled.
- **CaUFC** – Brooke reported the conference in Ventura will be on-line starting Monday. There have been many strategic planning sessions. The main subjects this year will be in the areas of advocacy, education, and research. United Voices will be launching another tree planting project but on a smaller scale with Federal funding. This will be the end term for

Brooke as President. In-coming President will be Cindy McCall. Mike announced that SDRUFC will be hosting the reception/cocktail hour and need volunteers to help organize and work at the event. Suggested a sub-committee be formed.

**Action Needed:** Encourage all members to sign up for the upcoming conference and check out the new Web site. Volunteers need to sign-up for the conference sub-committee.

- **SDRUFC Executive Board** – Mike spoke about the function of the Executive Board that meets prior to the general meeting (10:00 a.m.). Those interested in being a part of the Executive Board speak with Mike. The “Water-wise Workshop” was an example of a successful endeavor by the Board to plan and organize the event. There was great attendance and \$160 was made as profit to go back into our reserves.
- **Change of Venue** – Mike spoke about changing the location for the Oct. meeting largely due to CCSE not being able to accommodate our meeting room and lack of funding. Attendance is down, may be due to the recession and charging for attendance and lunch. Several suggestions were made at the Ex. Bd. meeting such as: looking into a more centralized location, rotating meeting locations, and finding alternative funding or subsidizing.

**Action Needed:** Ex. Bd. to look into alternatives and report back to council.

**Gold Spotted Oak Borer:** Danielle Campbell, Forester for Resource Conservation District, spoke about the Gold Spotted Oak Borer native habitat - Arizona and Mexico; meetings with the Dept. of Agriculture; spread of infestation and detected in Julian; IPM and biological controls; susceptible trees such as the Coast Live Oak, Black and Valley Oak; not connected to drought; may have come into CA on fire wood; attacks both healthy and stressed trees; found to infest 4”-9” trunk diameter trees; feeds on cambium (under bark); June – Nov. is the flight period; May – late Oct. larvae appear; mortality happens quickly; funding for more research and detection may be provided through Cal Grants – Economic Stimulus.

**Action Needed:** Danielle to give update at next meeting. Check links on SDRUFC Web site for more information.

**Trees of Merit:** Delia spoke about our opportunity to present an article in *City Trees* magazine called “Tree of Merit” sponsored by Society of Municipal Arborists. As a council we can select a tree(s) that is best suited for the San Diego area. One tree can be an ornamental and the other tree a native. By submitting the “Tree of Merit” article our council would get recognition on an international level.

**Action Taken:** All were in favor of participating in the “Tree of Merit” article.

**Action Needed:** All members are to email Mike with their nomination for the best suitable trees.

**P.T.C.A. Seminar & Field Day** – Mike announced the seminar and field day to be held on Aug. 21 -22.

**Action Needed:** Check Web site and register.

**T.E.R.R.I.** – Mike received an article from T.E.R.R.I, a non-profit organization which the council previously donated a sum of money to help buy seedlings for their nursery. A thank you was sent and an open invitation to visit for a tour of their facility and nursery.

### **Regional Updates:**

- Sam announced the renewal of UCSD “Tree Campus USA” which was advertised in the newspaper.
- Stan announced the Municipal Forestry Institute (MFI) for Feb. 2010 in Nebraska.
- Red Gum Psyllid reported from Rancho Santa Fe task force, 300 notices were sent from the Fire Dept to clear dead trees from private and public property; forest restoration project is under way.
- Mark has been monitoring water usage for newly planted trees, watering 1x/wk utilizing 1.78 gals of water/week.
- Delia reported about her trip to Kelowna, B.C. as a participant in the Municipal Arborist Exchange Program, sponsored by S.M.A., encouraged those to take advantage of the opportunity to learn about urban forest practices from other countries.
- Robin, having recently been unemployed has taken advantage of doing several educational presentations on subjects such as: watering trees during a drought; benefits of trees; proper tree planting techniques; developing wildlife habitats and using native plants and tree species selection. Robin has also been participating in the Master Gardener program.

### **Open Discussion:**

Nothing reported.

### **Next Meeting and Adjournment:**

Next meeting is scheduled for October 7, 2009. Location to be determined.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.