SDG&E Wildfire Fuels Management

Pilot Program for Ecologically-Based Wildfire Fuels Management

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Overview: Fuels and Ignition Management Programs

- This effort is in partnership with fire departments, fire safe councils, and other stakeholders
- The programs lower risk of catastrophic wildfires by reducing and removing wildland fuel accumulations
- Through these programs, SDG&E assesses 4,000 acres of right of ways, easements, and fee-title lands for hazardous fuel reduction

Purpose of Pilot Program

- In response to SB 901 and CPUC Wildfire Mitigation Plan (WMP) requirements
  - SDG&E plans to proactively manage wildfire fuels near our infrastructure
  - Extensive engagement with state and federal agencies
  - Wildfire fuels dominated by chaparral vegetation communities within the SDG&E service territory

- How to comply?
  - Primary wildfire fuels in San Diego are both native and nonnative plant species
  - Reducing densities of native or nonnative species could be considered an impact
  - Develop program that does not result in effects to functionality or ‘take’ of sensitive species

Scientific Study Approach

- Intent is to establish efficacy of treatments and demonstrate viability of the program (e.g., no or low effect on listed species, heritage resources, habitat, etc.)
- Review of existing resource information in SDG&E's GEARS/eTS, the SDG&E environmental tracking system and GIS map viewer
- Pre- and post-treatment data collection and analysis
- Multi-year treatment and habitat enhancement activities
- Type-conversion away from nonnative and invasive vegetation
- USFS prescribed burns and other potential ways to test efficacy

Methodology

- Three tiers:
  - Removal of nonnative species
    - Manual and chemical control
  - Removal of dead and down material
    - Removal of dead branches on live vegetation
    - Dead tree branches and trees left in place
  - Thinning of dominant native shrub species
    - Dominants are determined during baseline surveys
    - Species diversity is preserved
    - Sensitive species are avoided

Fuel Modification Areas

- Use individual pole height to determine initial radius of work area
- Line orientation
  - N-S, work shifts to the west
  - E-W, work centered around pole
- Topography
  - Steeper slopes require more clearance distance from pole
  - Flat areas require less distance from the pole
- Vegetation
  - Dense vegetation communities require more thinning
  - Open vegetation communities require less thinning
- **ALL POLE LOCATIONS ARE UNIQUE**

Pre-thinning

Post-thinning