

TO: Dan McCormick
Carol Johnson

... I am responding to the email sent ... by Carol Johnson, Assistant General Manager, and written by Dan McCormick, Fire Chief (see below) regarding “herbicide use and clearcutting in the hills.”

Mr. McCormick says, *“EBRPD’s fuels reduction focus is on selectively removing or thinning non-native or dead trees and brush on hundreds of acres...”*

I have read EBRPD’s “Wildfire Hazard Reduction Plan and Resource Plan,” including all of its specific recommendations for treatment areas. All eucalypts will be removed in some areas (especially ridgelines), thinned to a distance of 25 feet in some areas, and thinned to distances of 35 feet in other areas. The average tree density after implementation would be approximately 60 trees per acre. The District’s response to comments on the EIR for its “Wildfire...Plan” reports that the density of eucalypts is presently from 400 to 900 trees per acre, which averages to 650 trees per acre. In other words, trees per acre will be decreased by over 90%. Such an extreme reduction in tree density cannot be accurately described as “selectively removing or thinning.”

Mr. McCormick says, *“To eliminate re-growth of non-native vegetation, the herbicide Garland is applied by hand only, with a small brush, to freshly cut tree trunks to prevent re-sprouting. About 15 gallons total will be used throughout EBRPD’s wildlands. Garland is similar to store brand treatments sold to the public and has been approved by independent experts, including a panel of UC experts. The product has been deemed safe for use in all planned application settings and around natural environments.”*

There is a great deal wrong with this statement, starting with the name of the herbicide Mr. McCormick claims EBRPD is using. There is no herbicide called “Garland.” The herbicide that EBRPD has used to prevent resprouts of eucalyptus is Garlon with the active ingredient triclopyr.

Garlon is sprayed onto the stump with a back-pack sprayer. It is not “applied by hand...with a small brush.” Here are the sources that confirm the method of application of Garlon to prevent the regrowth of eucalyptus:

- The final EIS says repeatedly that herbicides will be sprayed on cut-stumps of eucalyptus to prevent regrowth. It also says that retreatments will be required as needed to prevent resprouts and herbicide will also be sprayed for retreatments.
- The final EIS also says, “As during the initial treatment, herbicide application would be conducted in accordance with the instructions on the product label...” (page 3-11) The manufacturer’s instructions for applying Garlon shows photos of the herbicide being sprayed onto the cut stump and on the bark for basal bark treatment of resprouts:
http://msdssearch.dow.com/PublishedLiteratureDAS/dh_08aa/0901b803808aa10c.pdf?filepath=ivm/pdfs/noreg/010-50685.pdf&fromPage=GetDoc
- Mr. McCormick says that Garlon use to prevent eucalyptus resprouts was approved by a panel of experts at UC. Attached is UC Berkeley’s letter regarding retreatment of eucalyptus resprouts which was submitted with their FEMA grant application. It says that basal bark retreatments will be required twice per year for 10 years. UC Berkeley destroyed about 18,000 trees about 10 years ago. Their herbicide use records for that project (attached; obtained by public records request) says that both cut-stump and basal bark herbicide applications were **sprayed**.

Mr. McCormick claims that “about 15 gallons [of herbicide] total will be used throughout EBRPD’s wildlands.” This is an egregious misrepresentation of the reality of EBRPD’s pesticide use.

EBRPD’s “Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan” was approved in 2011. EBRPD began to implement that plan when it was approved because roughly half of the project acres are being funded by Measure CC, which EBRPD has in hand. We can therefore see how much pesticide EBRPD has been using to implement its “Wildfire...Plan” thus far. EBRPD reports using 157 gallons of triclopyr (Garlon) from 2011 to 2014. Its pesticide use reports also say specifically that, “Triclopyr is a broadleaf, selective, post-emergent herbicide used principally for the control of resprouts from woody plant species such as eucalyptus, mayten, acacia and broom species.” In other words, EBRPD has used 10 times more Garlon than Mr. McCormick claims it will use for the entire project, before even beginning the implementation of the FEMA grant project areas.

Needless to say, it is very disturbing that EBRPD’s pesticide use is being misrepresented by its management staff. Given the apparent ignorance of EBRPD’s management staff about the pesticides used by EBRPD, it seems wise to say a few words about the toxicity of Garlon before moving onto the foliar spraying of non-native vegetation with glyphosate.

- The Material Safety Data Sheets which are mandated by the EPA state that Garlon is very toxic to aquatic life and slightly toxic to birds.
- The risk assessment of herbicides used to eradicate plants considered “invasive” done for the California Invasive Plant Council (available here: http://www.cal-ipc.org/symposia/archive/pdf/2014/Law_Johnson.pdf) says that both formulations of Garlon (4 and 3A) pose “developmental and reproductive risks” to female applicators. It also reports that Garlon is moderately toxic to bees.

Finally, Mr. McCormick makes no mention of the herbicides being used by EBRPD to eradicate non-native weeds. The herbicide used most frequently by EBRPD for that purpose is glyphosate. EBRPD’s pesticide use reports inform us that 333 gallons of glyphosate were sprayed by EBRPD from 2011 to 2014. The FEMA EIS states that herbicide will be **sprayed** for the purpose of eradicating non-native vegetation and EBRPD’s pesticide use reports state that it does so.

Glyphosate was recently classified as a “probable human carcinogen” by the World Health Organization. The City of San Francisco responded by changing its classification of glyphosate from Tier II (more hazardous) to Tier I (most hazardous). Marin Municipal Water District responded by announcing that it will quit using herbicides to kill non-native vegetation on Mt. Tamalpais (<http://marinindependentjournal.ca.newsmemory.com/publink.php?shareid=2d56f8cae>).

The implementation of EBRPD’s “Wildfire...Plan” will require more herbicides, specifically more triclopyr and more glyphosate. The more trees that are destroyed, the more triclopyr will be needed to prevent them from resprouting. The loss of the tree canopy will promote the growth of non-native weeds because the shade suppresses weed growth. Therefore, the more trees that are destroyed, the more glyphosate will be needed to kill non-native vegetation which will occupy the bare ground.

EBRPD’s management staff is either ignorant of these facts or they are being dishonest with the public. I ask that EBRPD inform its staff of its pesticide use and policy and that the staff be required to report honestly about that use. As you surely know, there is widespread concern about this project. Over 13,000 comments were submitted on the FEMA draft EIS. FEMA reports that about 90% of those

comments are opposed to this project. The public's concern about this project is increased by misrepresentations about the project by the land managers who will implement this project.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Mary McAllister

Cc: Robert Doyle, General Manager
Board of Directors, EBRPD

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Carol Johnson** <Cjohnson@ebparks.org>

Date: Fri, Jun 5, 2015 at 6:43 PM

Subject: RE: herbicide use and clearcutting in the hills

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Thank you for writing to EBRPD Board expressing your thoughts on the care and management of trees in our regional parks. I'd like to respond to your comments with the following information and correct some misleading messages recently seen in print:

1. EBRPD is neither widely clear-cutting trees nor removing all eucalyptus trees in the Oakland/Berkeley Hills.
2. Large amounts of herbicide will not be broadly used throughout EBRPD forested areas.
3. Given the very serious drought conditions we are continuing to face, all fire prevention efforts are urgent, particularly in the dry East Bay hills.
EBRPD adopted a Wildfire Hazard Reduction and Resource Management Plan in 2010 after thorough research, review and public input -- as a guiding tool for fuels management approaches throughout the East Bay Regional Parklands. EBRPD's fuels reduction focus is on selectively removing or thinning non-native or dead trees and brush on hundreds of acres in 11 regional parks including Sibley, Tilden, Anthony Chabot, Wildcat Canyon and Claremont Canyon that are adjacent to tens of thousands of nearby residents and businesses.

EBRPD's well researched plan does not use a "clear-cutting" approach. Rather, our goal is to reduce fire hazards on District-owned lands while maintaining and enhancing ecological values for native plant and wildlife habitat. Preserving the aesthetic landscape values for park users and neighboring communities is also a significant priority as well as encouraging homeowners to keep their properties fire safe.

To eliminate re-growth of non-native vegetation, the herbicide Garland is applied by hand only, with a small brush, to freshly cut tree trunks to prevent re-sprouting. About 15 gallons total will be used throughout EBRPD's wildlands. Garland is similar to store brand treatments sold to the public and has been approved by independent experts, including a panel of UC experts. The product has been deemed safe for use in all planned application settings and around natural environments. This will be done in select project areas that are spread throughout thousands of acres across the entire fuels reduction area.

Like you, our agency and others care deeply about the land we manage, the protection of wildlife, the environment, and the safety of our park users and employees. We also have a responsibility to manage the native and non-native forests and grasslands, and protect lives and property. We look forward to continuing our efforts to make the East Bay Hills safer for everyone.

Last month, the East Bay Regional Park District took a major step forward in its long-term public safety efforts to reduce fire hazards in the East Bay Hills by accepting a \$4.65 million federal grant to thin dangerous trees and foliage in the hills above Oakland/Berkeley through El Sobrante/Richmond. This grant is only one of the multiple funding sources the District uses to continue its daily fire prevention and forest restoration efforts. The Park District's Measure CC is another important funding source that provides significant annual funding to allow for this work to continue. In the past eight years, the District will have invested more than \$10 million on its fuels management program aimed at protecting lives and properties in high fire risk areas contiguous to regional parklands. For further information, please contact:

Dan McCormick

Fire Chief | Fire Department

East Bay Regional Park District

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