

# Community Fire Fuel Reduction Chipper Event Guide

## Providers of chipping services:

- Sonoma County Free Chipper Program – it's free
- Geyserville Fuels Reduction Crew – exceptionally skilled, in high demand
- Eric Dicke – has working relationship with Healdsburg Fire – requires funding source. Masticator, chipper, capable in rough terrain.
- Other private companies e.g., Fitch Mountain Tree Service – requires funding. Masticator, chipper, capable in rough terrain.
- Rent your own – plan on \$700/day for equipment only. Try BlueLine Rental, Cloverdale 707-894-8880

## Setting up a Chipper Day(s) Event using Sonoma County Free Chipper Program:

- Contact Steve Mosiurchak [Steve.Mosiurchak@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Steve.Mosiurchak@sonoma-county.org) at Sonoma County Fire Code Enforcement early in the calendar year assuming you want to have your event in the late spring after the winter growth spurt.
- Once you have a date contact Brandon Hart [Brandon.Hart@sonoma-county.org](mailto:Brandon.Hart@sonoma-county.org) at the County Integrated Waste Division to arrange to have your disposal fees charged to the “community cleanup account”.
- Then contact Casey Williams [CWilliams2@recology.com](mailto:CWilliams2@recology.com) at Recology to see if they will donate debris boxes for your event. There will be non-chippable material that is desirable to clear and accepted at the disposal site (e.g., vines, oleander, large limbs >4”). Thirty-yard boxes are the largest they will donate; they have same footprint as 40yd and are only 6’ tall so debris can be thrown over the sides.
- It's possible that the disposal fees and the debris boxes can be acquired free of charge even if not using the County Free Chipper Program; call and ask.
- You will also need at least one truck and trailer to haul non-chippables to the debris boxes and to haul some chippable piles that cannot be chipped in place, to a suitable chipping location. You may have a suitably equipped volunteer in your community. If not line up a contractor.

## Things to consider:

- Funding – if you're not using the County's free chipper program, you will need funding in the neighborhood of \$2,000/day for a chipper crew.
  - There may be grants available for this type of event. Fire Safe Sonoma is a good source of information about grants. Contact Roberta MacIntyre [inspect2901@gmail.com](mailto:inspect2901@gmail.com) their CEO.
- Scheduling challenges:
  - Lock in dates for your chipper crew way ahead; at least a couple months.
  - There are downsides to engaging your community too early. Some eager beavers will start building piles right away. If they start piling near access roads, the piles can become traffic hazards.
  - On the other hand, some people need to hire crews to do the clearing for them and they need lead-time to hire them.
  - If you have trash pickup by e.g., Recology, don't schedule your chipper days to overlap.
  - You know your community; use your judgement.
- Deadlines
  - You'll want to do a drive-thru with the chipper crew leader a few days before the event so they have a sense of how many piles there are, how big they are, how they will get the chipper to each of them, where they will chip to, places where they can turn the chipper around, locations that will require traffic control. The organizer needs to know how many piles of unchippable material are going to need to be hauled to the debris boxes and how many chippable piles need to be hauled to a location where they can be chipped.
  - So you need to communicate a firm drop-dead, final deadline of the day before this drive through. Your crew will plan their day(s) based on what they see during the drive-thru. If there are surprise piles or known piles become twice as large by the day of the event, their plan and schedule can be blown up.

- Promotion
  - A sample flier is at the end of this document.
  - Use all manner of distribution to get the word out. COPE leaders, email, listservs, bulletin boards.
  - The flier gives deadlines and describes to community what is allowed in chipper piles and what else can be in piles and what is totally verboten.
- You must have a plan for material that cannot be chipped.
  - Forbidding it means property owners cannot clear common material that is within defensible space – vines, thorny bushes, oleander branches, bamboo.
  - Debris boxes are the best alternative if you are in the Recology service area. They will donate them for volunteer community events.
  - Truck it to a transfer station yourself – very labor intensive.
- “Registration” and pile tracking
  - You need to keep track of which property owners are going to create piles, what addresses, where the piles will be located and whether the piles are chippable or not.
  - This spreadsheet helps you plan for resources and is used during the event by you and the chipper crew to ensure you get all the piles.
  - Folks need to know that the pile must be in a location accessible to the chipper. If they start building it in the wrong place it can get too big to move.
  - A simple spreadsheet:

Zone	Property Owner	St#	Street	Notes	Chip/Non/Both	On-site Y/N
1	5 Smith	640	Alta Vista	Small pile in city limits - will haul Friday	N	N/A
2	5 Jones	2794	Hilltop	Small pile at intersection of Spring St & South Fitch.	B	Y
3	5 Kronkite	2675	North Fitch M Rd	Pile includes logs	C	Y
4	5 Woodruff	2040	Redwood	in carport. Big pile. Nowhere to chip Need to haul.	C	N

- Tasks for Volunteer Helpers
  - Leafleting and canvassing
  - Liaison with “vendors”
  - Liaison with property owners – answer questions, maintain spreadsheet
  - monitoring pile creation and growth, loading and transport of debris
  - Truck/trailer driver
  - Trailer and debris box loaders
  - Consider asking property owners to bring their own unchippables to the debris boxes.
  - Consider asking property owners with no suitable location to broadcast the chips to haul them to a designated chipping site.
  - Debris box security – anything sneaking into the debris boxes that is not vegetation can cost you money when the boxes are emptied.
    - Securing the locations the night before delivery with cones, caution tape, signs if there is any chance cars could be parked there
    - “GREEN WASTE ONLY” signs
    - Tarping at night
- Post Event
  - If you can, plan for one follow-up pass-thru by the chipper crew the following week for any missed piles.
  - Plan for a follow-up pass-thru by the truck & trailer crew the day after the event before the debris boxes are picked up to get any missed unchippables.
  - Take notes about what worked and didn’t to help with next time.

\* Smaller, do-it-yourself, fuel reduction projects can be done by 4-10 residents with much less hassle and cost if people plan, coordinate their individual clipping efforts and have a chipper lined up. These events can be limited to chippable material only, or piles can be created and burned later in the year when burn permits become available.

# Fitch Mountain Chipper Days

## June 26 & 27, 2020

### Goal:

Provide a way for Fitch Mountain homeowners and residents in the unincorporated county to clear vegetation and create defensible space and have the results chipped or hauled away.

### What you need to do:

#### 1. Create a pile that conforms to the County's rules for the Chipper Program:

##### Things that can go in your chipper pile:

- The chipper can handle material UP TO four inches in diameter and UP TO ten feet long.

##### Things that cannot go in your chipper pile:

- No nails, wires, or any metal pieces!!!
- No roots or stumps
- No Poison Oak
- No Oleander
- No poisonous species or other vines
- No spiny plants, roses or blackberries
- No Scotch/French broom or gorse
- No construction-type wood such as fence posts or 2x4s.
- No rocks, dirt or mud
- No rakings or piles of needles, leaves or grass

#### 2. Create a second pile if you have unchippable materials. These will go in debris boxes being donated by Recology:

##### Things that can go in your UN-chipper pile:

- Broom
- Spiny plants like blackberry, rose (but not cactus)
- Oleander



##### Things that cannot go in your UN-chipper pile:

- No nails, wires, or any metal pieces!!!
- Nothing but vegetation so NO animal waste, ashes, plastic (even biodegradable), glass, liquids
- No rocks, dirt or mud
- No tree stumps
- No poison oak
- No sudden oak death infested material
- No Arundo, pampas grass, cactus or bamboo

3. Email [patabercrombie@comcast.net](mailto:patabercrombie@comcast.net) Include your name, the address where the pile(s) will be & whether you have both chippable and non-chippable piles.