



City of Morro Bay
Fire Department
715 Harbor Street
Morro Bay, CA 93442
(805) 772-6242



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Steven Knuckles, Fire Chief
(E) sknuckles@morrobayca.gov
(T) (805) 772-6242
(C) (805) 440-4544

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hazard Fuel Reduction on Black Hill in the Morro Bay State Park, Morro Bay

The California Department of Parks and Recreation (State Parks) in cooperation with the Morro Bay Fire Department, and the Air Pollution Control District have announced plans to conduct prescribed pile burns of diseased, dead, and downed Monterey pines and landscape burning in the Black Hill and campground areas of Morro Bay State Park. The pile burn project and landscape burning is scheduled to start Wednesday March 15, 2017, and continue for the next two weeks. Preparation of the burn piles have taken place last fall and winter.

This burn project is part of the *Hazard Fuel Reduction and Prescribed Fire Program* for vegetation management, fuel load reduction and structure protection to numerous residences and businesses in Morro Bay. Monterey pines are experiencing major die-offs due to pine pitch canker disease and prolonged years of drought. In addition, our recent storms have weakened many dead or near dead trees where the removal is needed for safety. Burn pile operations will be conducted to maintain defensible space on areas adjacent to neighborhoods and park facilities per Morro Bay Fire Department permit conditions. This treatment will greatly reduce dead, downed and diseased fuels in the wildland-urban interface, decrease potential for wildfires, enhance the health of the native plant communities, encourage increased species composition, restore essential nutrients to the soil, and aid in the control of pine pitch canker.

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 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 desirable, the burns will be rescheduled. State Parks will issue a Media Advisory 12 – 24 hours ahead of the actual burn time. The Morro Bay Fire Department will post updated information via Facebook, Twitter and City website.

Please use extreme caution while driving near Hazard Fuel Reduction operations.

City 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.

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