

2020 Page Mill Rd (Los Altos Hills) Escape Route and Fuel Reduction Project Report and Summary

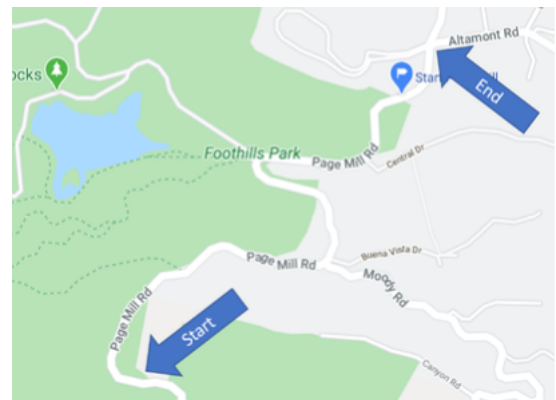
Project Dates

June 8– June 10, 2020

The Page Mill Rd escape route and HFR project was completed on June 10th, 2020. The treated area of Page Mill Rd runs through Santa Clara County from the start of the edge of 11100 Page Mill Rd, and end on the corner of Page Mill Rd and Altamont Rd. The project area is represented by the two arrows on the map to the right.

The road is narrow and winding and runs through a long stretch of residential area with a total of 15 residents. There is one water tower. The road generates a constant flow of light traffic and serves hundreds of both vehicles and bicycles daily.

The vegetation in the project area is a combination of mostly grasses, weeds (thistle mustard), french broom, coast live oak, blue gum eucalyptus, coyote brush, california sage, douglass fir and laurel bay trees. The project treatment plan called for roadside mowing, brush clearing and pruning trees along a 1.0 mile section of Page Mill rd. Most of the work was done in the Right of Way (10 feet).



The majority of the work is clearing and lifting the canopy of the trees 14-15 feet in height.

This was done by pruning the canopy to that height with chainsaws.

We made sure to remove any dead limbs, snags, and dead trees that may impact the road.

We did look out for nesting bird habitats and did not removal those trees. Instead we pruned the trees up to 15 feet high to insure there is clearance for any large vehicles coming down the road.

Photo to the left shows workers prepping for road side clearance along the Right of Way.

The work also consisted of mowing long stretches of grasses and weeds up to the fence line on both sides of the road or 10 feet from the road. It was done by using several whackers. The end product is shown in the photo to the right.

In some areas where we had permission to enter we went beyond 10 feet from the road.

The final product is compressing the grasses and weeds down where it is not noticeable. However, in some areas where the terrain is more complex due to moisture levels and changes in elevation, it is difficult for the workers to weed whack in these areas.

In areas where there is no fence line clearly visible we push back all the vegetation to ensure a wild fire will not cross the road. Also, by doing this treatment it will help protect residential homes if a fire ignites along the side of the road.



In areas where there are fences and fence lines it was more difficult to work around.

Workers had to take more time when removing dead limbs and vegetation away from telephone poles. However, the workers were able to push back the tree limbs away from the road.

In the photo to the left, shows a worker pushing back eucalyptus trees along the side of the road located at the end of the project.

Eucalyptus trees are very combustible in an event. We made sure to remove all the exposing limbs and smaller saplings impacting the road way.

In the areas where there are small redwood groves (photo to the left), we removed all the red wood saplings and trees limbs by raised up the tree limbs up to 15 feet high. There were several dead limbs that where impacting the visibility on the road.

This treatment helps clear out lots of ladder fuel that accumulates around the base of the red wood tree. Pines needles that accumulated around the base of the tree where spread out.

This treatment area is important because it will make sure if a fire event occurs, the fire may not spread rapidly when all the ground fuel is removed. This treatment in the area also help with road visibility are sharp turns where drivers are able to see upcoming vehicles.



In areas where there are speed signs we made sure to clear out any vegetation that may impact driver's road visibility.

Also in the areas with fences we removed the vegetation that was overhanding onto the road and near telephone poles.

In more diverse terrains such of slopes that contained California sage, coyote brush, and coast live oak trees, we emphasize on thinning out the vegetation rather than clear cutting the Right of Way.

When an area is dense and contains sensitive shrubs near slopes, we leave a mosaic trail of shrubs. This allows for the roots system of trees and shrubs to maintain the slope intact.

Photo to the right shows an area at the start of the project where resident allowed us to treat up to 20 feet.



When an area of the road became narrower we emphasized on road safety by removing trees along the Right of Way and having a clearance of 14-15 feet high.

We empathized on removing smaller bay tree sampling like in the photo shown to the left.

In these areas we treated up to the fence. We did ask for permission from the residents, if they will allow us to clear pass the fence line. However, most residents agreed to treating to the Right of Way area only, and any limbs that are impacting the road.

Below are some before and after photos.



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After



Before



After

Lessons Learned:

1. Communicate more with team on permissions to enter forms.
2. Huerta's crew moves along quick, I would have them slowdown in some areas or have them go back to some areas they have missed.
3. Make traffic control gets good directions to arrive on site on-time.

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