

A close-up photograph of Eucalyptus tree branches and leaves, showing the characteristic silvery-green color and waxy texture. The branches are thin and reddish-brown, with long, narrow leaves. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light color.

Eucalyptus Tree Removal Pilot Program

Final Report
County of Monterey Board of Supervisors
March 24, 2026

PROGRAM PREMISES



North Monterey County (Supervisory District 2) is home to thousands of Blue Gum Eucalyptus

Eucalyptus trees pose fire and falling risks, based on:



High oil content



Shedding bark



Considerable height



Shallow root systems

PROGRAM PREMISES

Where these trees grow near homes and driveways, there is concern about the danger they would pose to property and life in case of wildland fire.

By eliminating Eucalyptus from "defensible space" around buildings and driveways, fire threat would be significantly mitigated.

Private property owners should have maximum agency when choosing tree removal contractors.



PROGRAM HISTORY



Eucalyptus trees were introduced to Monterey County for several reasons, most commonly as a fast-growing source of timber for construction.

Wildland fire in the region has been uncommon over the last 150 years causing eucalyptus trees to grow taller.

PROGRAM HISTORY



California Senator John Laird shares Supervisor Church's dedication to addressing this concern; he secured a **\$1 million pass-through grant** for a Pilot Program in which private property owners would receive **50% of total tree removal cost**.

PROGRAM PARTNERS



Supervisory District 2 Office (D2)

Application management, data tracking



Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCD)

Fiscal management, review of work plans, tracking of stump removal, date tracking



County of Monterey Housing and Community Development (HCD)

Work with California Coastal Commission, development of application



North County Fire Protection District (NCFPD)

Review of work variances; identification of tree removal needs in addition to the Program



Aromas Tri-County Fire Protection District (ATCFPD)

Identification of tree removal needs in addition to the Program

PROGRAM FUNDING MODEL



- 1** | RCD acted as fiscal agent between owners and contractors
- 2** | RCD verified removal plans and stump treatment
- 3** | Property owners paid 50% to tree contractor, then notified RCD
- 4** | RCD initiated final payment to tree contractor

APPLICATION PROCESS



Property owners complete completed applications on paper



Applicants secured quotes from two tree contractors before selecting one of their choice



RCD staff visited sites to verify consistency of work



NCFPD worked with the property owners to remove dangerous trees growing outside of defensible space

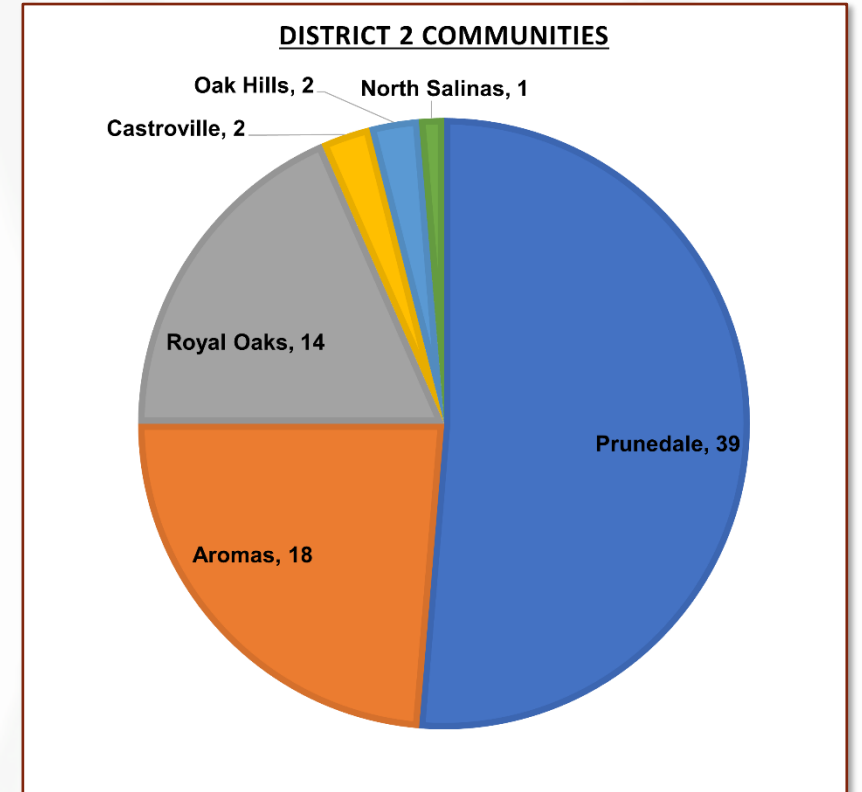
91

A total of 91 applications for 88 unique properties were approved for the Pilot Program

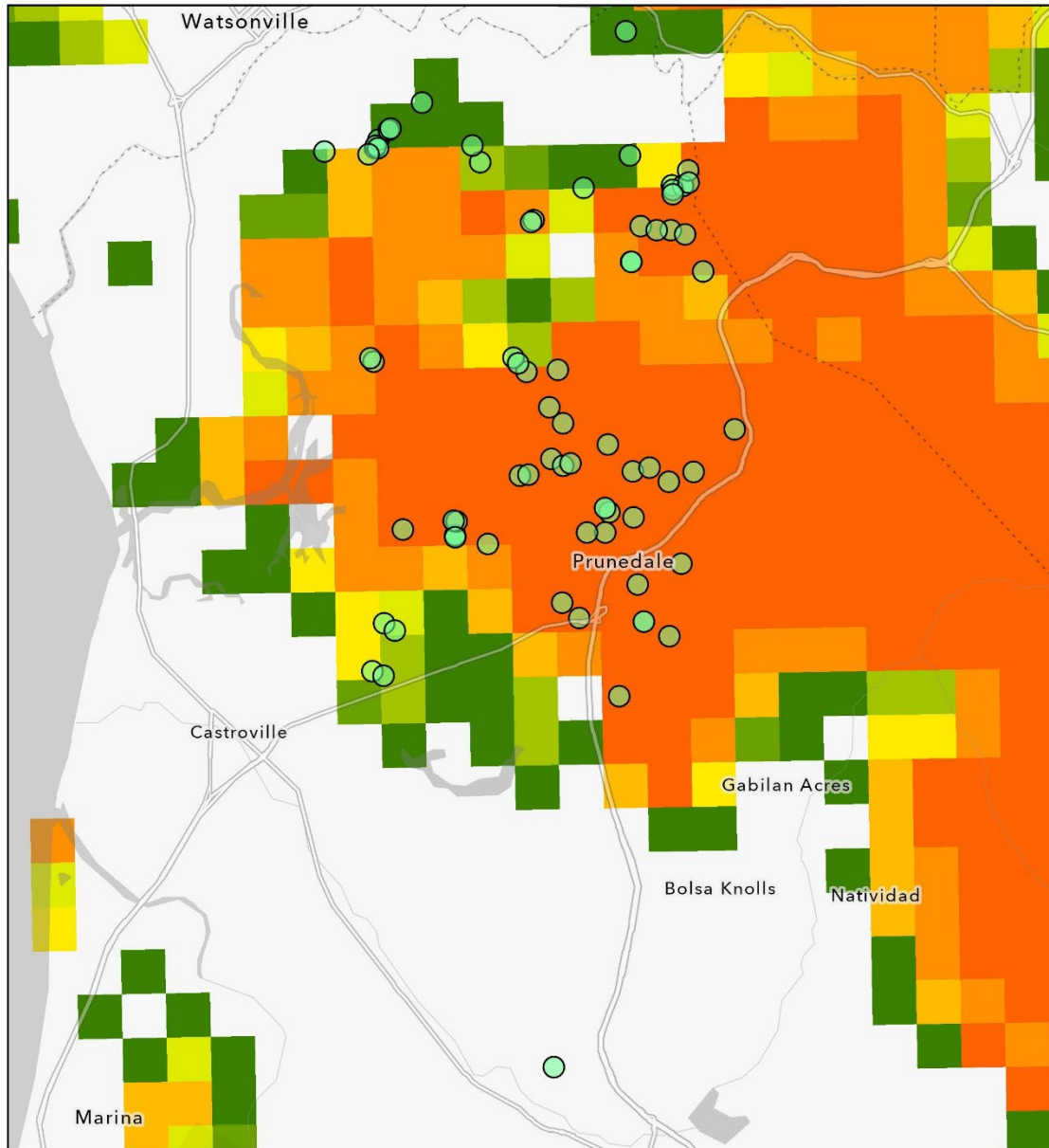
PROGRAM OUTCOMES: PARTICIPATION

The most significant Eucalyptus removal occurred in the Prunedale area.

Aromas and Royal Oaks followed distantly and in close succession.

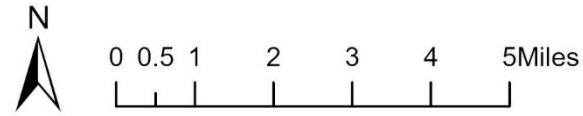


Eucalyptus Removal Pilot Program Sites



 Eucalyptus Removal Sites

Annual Probability of Wildfire Occurance 2021-2050

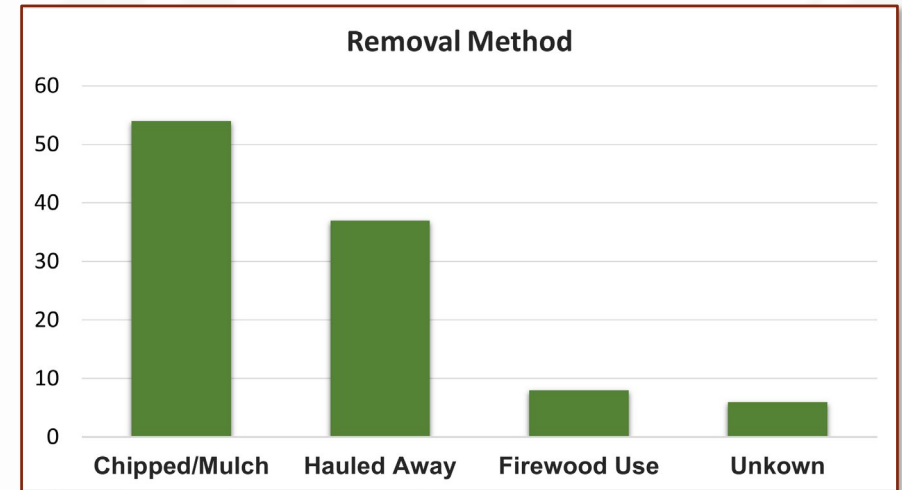


California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE). (2019). Annual probability of wildfire occurrence, 2021–2050 [GIS layer]. California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. <https://egis.fire.ca.gov/portal/home/item.html?id=5467252fb504496f9a2786f9b172fa67>, California State Parks, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

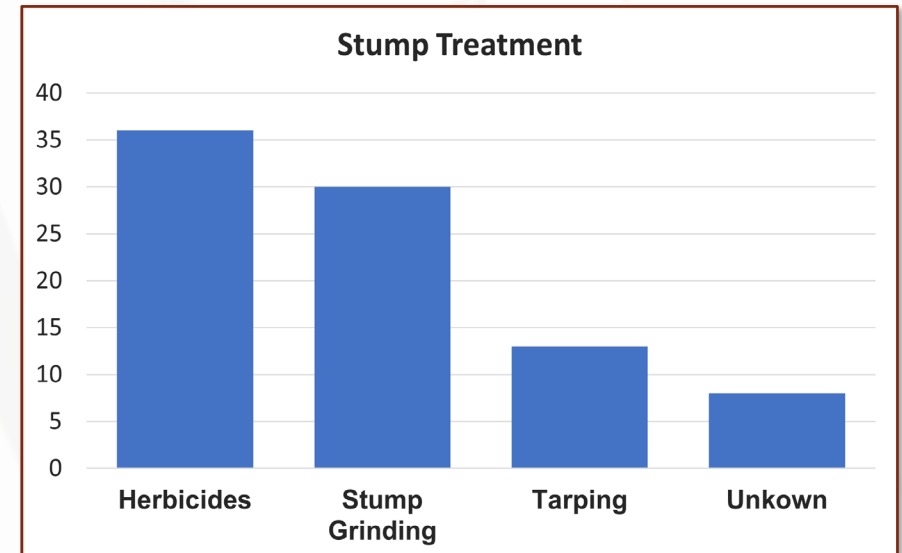
PROGRAM OUTCOMES: TREE REMOVAL DATA

Approximately **816 full-grown trees** and an undetermined number of smaller trees were removed from private properties.

An essential part of the Pilot Program was **stump treatment** to prevent regrowth.



Removal Methods, Final Report, p. 10



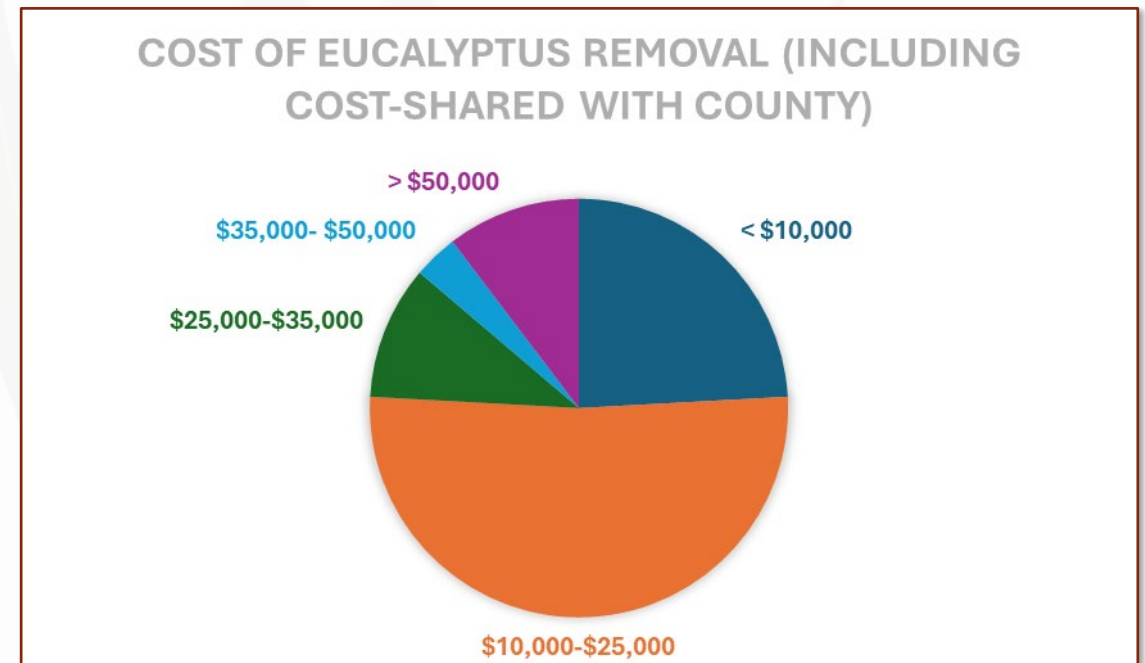
Stump Treatment, Final Report, p. 11

PROGRAM OUTCOMES: FISCAL DATA

Most applicants agreed to tree removal quotes of between **\$10,000 and \$25,000**.

The size of trees varied widely and were not inventoried by diameter.

Removal of large trees cost approximately **\$2000 each**.



Cost Chart, Final Report, p. 25

SUMMARY

SUCCESSSES

50-50 cost sharing model

Reinforcement of awareness of the safety risks of eucalyptus trees

Thoughtful environmental timing to avoid nesting season and Monarch butterfly overwintering locations

Strong interagency collaboration

Direct constituent engagement and support of property owner agency

LESSONS

Include funding for participants who cannot afford 50% of the cost.

Spending remaining funds on tree removal where fallen trees might affect public safety

When developed into a permanently funded program, it should be a permanently-funded and county-wide.