

Exhibit D

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THOMPSON
WILDLAND MANAGEMENT

Environmental Management & Conservation Services

International Society of Arboriculture Certified Arborist # WE-7468A

Department of Pesticide Regulation Qualified Applicator Lic. #QL50949 B

Arborist & Environmental Assessments, Protection, Restoration, Monitoring & Reporting

Wildland Fire Property Protection, Fuel Reduction & Vegetation Management

Invasive Weed Control, and Habitat Restoration & Management

Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control

Resource Ecologist

May 2, 2016

Mr. Anthony Nicola

113 San Benancio Road

Salinas, CA. 93908

APN: 416-221-041-000

Subject: Fuel Management Plan for 113 San Benancio Road

The following are fuel management recommendations and prescriptions in preparation for the property development project located at 113 San Benancio Road in Salinas (APN: 416-221-041). Per Monterey County permit requirements, fuel and vegetation management zones are identified as the Green Zone (0-30 feet from structure) and Management Zone (30-100 feet from structure or to the property line) on the corresponding site plan (refer to *Exhibit A, Fuel Management Zones*). Photos depicting current vegetation types and conditions on the property are provided at the end of the report (refer to *Figures 1 & 2*). As described in the *Forest Management Plan* that was prepared to address tree removal associated with proposed home construction, this property is located in a woodland habitat area that is dominated by numerous mature Coast Live Oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*). Woodland understory vegetation primarily consist of non-native annual grasses.

Fuel management is generally defined as the planned altering and manipulation of the amount, composition and structure of vegetation communities occurring in wildland and/or wildland-urban interface environments for the purpose of mitigating fire hazards and modifying potential fire behavior. Common goals include reducing potential fire intensity and rate of spread through proper utilization of vegetation management best management practices (BMP's) that will serve to reduce the severity of hazardous wildland fire events.

The objective of the *Fuel Management Plan* is to provide prescriptions and recommendations for reducing combustible vegetation materials and fuel loads on the property. These recommendations will assist in improving defensible space and

safeguarding property and the surrounding community, as well as protecting natural resources and nearby habitat in the event of a wildland fire. Prescriptions and recommendations are as follows:

1) California law (PRC 4291) requires property owners to create and maintain adequate defensible space around homes and buildings. Defensible space is created through proper implementation of fuel modification and management practices around structures. This includes the removal of highly flammable and dead vegetation, the thinning and proper spacing of densely vegetated areas to disrupt the continuity of combustible fuel loads, and the proper execution of firewise landscaping practices and principals. Firewise or firesafe landscaping practices include utilizing plant types, planting configurations and arrangements, and landscaping materials and design concepts that are less combustible and more resistant to fire that will assist in reducing the ability of fire to spread horizontally and vertically. For example, a firewise landscape should consist of properly spaced and maintained shrubs and trees, as well as lower growing native perennial grasses, groundcovers (including mulches), succulents and/or herbaceous perennials that are generally less flammable. Mass plantings and dense vegetation groupings that are commonly more combustible and flammable should be avoided.

2) The *Green Zone* is the area 0-30 feet immediately surrounding the proposed home (refer to *Exhibit A, Fuel Management Zones*). This area is composed of native oak woodland overstory and canopy cover, and the understory primarily consist of non-native annual grasses. Following home construction activities this *Green Zone* area will consist of firesafe landscape materials and low combustibility drought tolerant flora. This firesafe landscape will be designed and maintained in a manner to provide sufficient horizontal and vertical spacing between various vegetation types, and larger growing trees and shrubs will be properly maintained to remove dead and unhealthy combustible materials.

3) The *Management Zone* (also known as the *reduced fuel zone*) is the area 30-100 feet (or to the property line) around the home. As with the *Green Zone*, this area is composed of native oak woodland overstory, and the understory primarily consist of non-native annual grasses, patches of shrubby Poison Oak growth, and some indigenous forb and wildflower species (e.g., Lupine and California Poppy). Prior to the dry season highly combustible non-native annual grasses will be mowed to a height of 4 inches; dead materials that pose a fire hazard will be removed and properly disposed; shrubs will be thinned and maintained to provide adequate horizontal and vertical separation (amount of space between shrubs and plant groupings depends on steepness of slope and size and type of plants); and dead, unhealthy and/or structurally problematic tree limbs will be removed to a height of 6 feet above grade or to 3X the height of understory vegetation (whichever is higher) to reduce potentially hazardous ladder fuels. It should be noted that excessive pruning and removal of healthy and structurally sound limbs should be avoided, particular limbs that are 6 inches diameter or larger.

4) In regards to landscape improvements and enhancement use native or non-invasive ornamental plants that are appropriate to the site. Plants and materials selected for landscaping operations should be of lower combustibility and volatility, drought tolerant, and should not be potentially degrading (e.g., invasive) to surrounding habitat. Healthy indigenous flora occurring on the property should be retained and preserved. Remove and manage highly combustible and habitat degrading exotic invasive weeds, and promote the establishment of native vegetation that generally tends to be less flammable.

5) Design driveway to allow safe and effective access and egress from the property. Upon completion of the home, prior to fire seasons' remove dry leaves and biomass from roof and rain gutters, maintain adequate clearance around structure, and keep tree branches a minimum 10 feet away from chimney or stove outlets.

Proper implementation of the above mentioned fuel and vegetation management guidelines and firesafe practices will assist in protecting the proposed home, property, community and natural resources from potentially destructive wildland fire events.

Thank you and please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Best regards,

Rob Thompson
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Resource Ecologist

Date

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Figure 1. This previously managed and mowed property is primarily composed of Coast Live Oak canopy cover and non-native annual grass understory.



Figure 2. Oak canopy overstory with exotic annual grasses dominating understory vegetation.