



News Release

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Infested Trees to be Cut Down at Torrey Pines State Natural Reserve

As many as one-hundred (100) Torrey pines that have become mortally infested with bark beetles will be cut down at Torrey Pines State Natural Preserve beginning this month, through February 2015. This loss represents about two-percent (2%) of the current population within the park (about 4580 trees).

“The infestation of these trees has unfortunately reached a point of no return status, and it is critical we act quickly to avoid infestation to other nearby Torrey pines,” said Clay Phillips, San Diego District Superintendent.

Tree removal will be conducted by CalFire and inmate crews, with monitoring and technical support from California State Parks staff. Workers will fell trees and cut lumber into smaller pieces that will be hand carried to green waste roll-off containers. Extreme caution will be taken to prevent expanding the infestation of the beetles.

The bark beetles (California five-spined engraver beetle and red turpentine beetle) are native insects that can multiply rapidly in dry and warm conditions. The sustained drought and higher temperatures of the past couple of years have reduced some of the Torrey pine’s ability to resist bark beetle infestations. In addition, reduced or eliminated irrigation of neighboring landscape trees in commercial and residential landscapes can lead to large beetle infestations that can quickly spread to wild or native trees. In low numbers, the bark beetles would not represent a danger to the Torrey pines.

California State Parks staff historically use non-toxic beetle traps to help control the infestation. However, the infestation spread enough this year to merit additional tactics, such as the removal of mortally infested trees, to prevent more infestations.

While some of the aesthetics of Torrey Pines State Recreation Area will change once the trees are removed, State Parks expects to repopulate affected areas with the remaining sub-adults and seedlings. Infested areas will be monitored to determine if future reforestation or re-vegetation efforts are warranted.

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