

Protect Your Trees

PG&E's "Wildfire Safety Program"

This program, which is failing miserably to provide safety from utility-associated wildfire, is avoiding real safety measures of upgrading faulty infrastructure

Many residents throughout Santa Cruz County have expressed concern regarding irresponsible and excessive tree clear-cutting by PG&E, both in regard to gas pipelines in the past and power lines now. The San Lorenzo Valley Women's Club and the local Sierra Club chapter are helping the County to arm itself with accurate information. Visit: www.valleywomensclub.org

Residents can refuse or negotiate tree removal. PG&E may ask property owners to sign a statement to that effect. PG&E will continue trying to educate property owners about the vegetation removal program.

Here are some actions you can take:

1. Check for power lines/poles on your property. If there are trees or vegetation within 15 feet on either side of the lines or poles, they may be trimmed or completely removed by PG&E. This includes large redwood and other heritage trees.

Markings: **Painted "X" on a tree** = it will be removed completely

Painted "X" on the street = indicates a tree set back from the edge of the road that will be removed completely

Painted Dot on a tree = it will be trimmed ground-to-sky = "limbing" where all/ almost all branches are cut and the tree likely dies

2. Immediately contact PG&E (wildfiresafety@pge.com, written notice is important) to let them know:
 - a. That you need to be contacted before anyone sets foot on your property, and that you need to be physically present when any tree work on your property is conducted.
 - b. There are trees or vegetation on your property that you want to protect. Take photos. Put signs on specific trees to let ground crews know which trees you want to protect. You can state your consent to removal of select branches from a tree but that you do NOT consent to "limbing" or complete cutting of the whole tree.
 - a. Demand that PG&E provide you the timetable for their safety installation in your neighborhood of insulated lines, modern more reliable/safe transformers, and high impedance arc-fault interrupters to ensure that a broken wire will not electrocute anyone or set dry grasses on fire (which can happen regardless of any tree removal!)
3. Email the office of County Supervisor Bruce McPherson (jm.brown@santacruzcounty.us); his office is tracking concerns from local property owners and residents. Let him know if PG&E staff or ground crews have threatened you with adverse action for trying to protect your trees. Please also cc Nancy Macy (nbbm@cruzio.com) at the SLVWC.

Santa Cruz County has stated that under current permits PG&E has the authority to cut 4 ft around power lines. This is NOT the 12-15 ft that PG&E is claiming.