

RESPONSE TO GRAND JURY REPORT FORM

Report Title: **MARIN ON FIRE! Not if, but when.**

Report Date: **April 1, 2008**

Response by: **Governing Board, Kentfield Fire Protection District**

By: July 01, 2008

FINDINGS

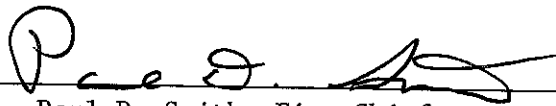
- I (we) agree with the findings numbered: F2, F3, F4, F7, F9, F12
- I (we) disagree wholly or partially with the findings numbered: F1, F5, F6, F8
(Attach a statement specifying any portions of the findings that are disputed; include an explanation of the reasons therefore.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommendations numbered R1 have been implemented.
(Attach a summary describing the implemented actions.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ have not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future.
(Attach a timeframe for the implementation.)
- Recommendations numbered R2 require further analysis.
(Attach an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or director of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.)
- Recommendations numbered _____ will not be implemented because they are not warranted or are not reasonable.
(Attach an explanation.)

Date: 06/18/2008

Signed: _____


Paul D. Smith, Fire Chief

Number of pages attached _____

F1 – Compliance with vegetation management codes and the threat of wild land fires in Marin are not top-of-mind public concerns. The perceived threat of a wild land fire greatly increases during and immediately after a wild land interface fire event in California. The District receives an increase in the number of requests for home inspections and code compliances immediately after a news worthy event. The public seems to lose touch of the importance of consistent vigilance and compliance rapidly after a serious event. Some District neighborhoods, however, make vegetation management an annual priority.

F5 – There is inconsistency in various vegetation management codes throughout the County. All State Responsibility Area (SRA) zones fall under Public Resource Code (PRC) 4290. This is a California State Standard. Granted, most Local Responsibility Area (LRA) zones located in Marin cities and towns have similar, but not consistent, codes and ordinances.

F6 – Most vegetation management codes and homeowner educational materials are difficult to interpret and confusing to the layman. The District has put forth concerted effort with “FireSafe Marin” and “Get Ready Marin” to ensure that homeowner educational materials regarding vegetation management are easily understood. FireSafe Marin makes themselves visible and approachable at local and countywide events. These include a range of venues, such as local property owners’ meetings and the County Fair. “Get Ready Marin” offers one-hour classes throughout the County.

F8 – Not all Marin County fire jurisdictions proactively inspect for vegetation management code compliance without a complaint or owner request. The District partially disagrees with this finding because the Fire District conducts annual vegetation management inspections and re-inspects non-compliant properties. However, as pointed out in the Grand Jury report, access to private property is sometimes limited. Staff time dedicated to vegetation management, although substantial, is somewhat limited and concentrated during the spring and summer months.

Recommendations:

R1 – The Kentfield Fire Protection District feels that a wild land-urban interface fire would be a devastating blow to the County. Working with the Marin County Fire Prevention Officers’ Association, the Fire District adopted the International Urban Wild land Interface Code on December 10, 2007. This code effectively addresses long-term wild land-interface building. Vegetation management and defensible space issues are resolved in the code adoption.

R2 – The Grand Jury recommends that all fire agencies develop plans with specific goals for compliance and enforcement of vegetation management and defensible space codes by June 30, 2009. The District will continue with the current program and policies. The District may wish to formally address this recommendation during its 2009 Strategic Planning session when appropriate and measurable goals and objectives are discussed.

Paul D. Smith
Fire Chief

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June 19, 2008

The Honorable Verna Adams
Marin County Superior Court
PO Box 4988
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

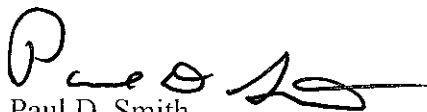
Roberta Robinson, Foreperson
Marin County Grand Jury
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 275
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Adams and Foreperson Robinson:

The Board of Directors of the Kentfield Fire Protection District held a regular meeting on Wednesday, May 21, 2008 to review and discuss the Marin County Civil Grand Jury Report "Marin On Fire: Not if, but when." The Board directed me to draft a response to the Grand Jury.

The Board again reviewed the report with my drafted responses during its June 18, 2008 meeting. The "Response to Grand Jury Report Form" and attachment with explanations to response is included.

Sincerely,



Paul D. Smith
Fire Chief

enclosure