

Hazard Tree Policy

Intent:

- 1) Provide visitors on Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS) owned land with a reasonable level of safety from tree failures.
- 2) Maintain the health and longevity of trees within developed areas through proper International Society of Arboriculture practices and retain trees outside developed areas for habitat benefit.
- 4) Comply with all other applicable laws and regulations including state and federal endangered species acts.

Liability

MCAS shall make attempts to control or eliminate to the greatest extent practicable hazardous tree conditions in areas frequented by the public.

Inspection Cycle

1. An annual systematic scheduled inspection by a Certified Arborist shall be made of trees or limbs that are capable of falling on any developed areas of lands (i.e., trails, property boundaries, parking areas) owned by MCAS.
2. All scheduled inspections shall be documented including those where no recommendations for mitigation action are required.
3. Only trees that can directly strike a target will be inspected. There shall be no attempt to predict or reduce indirect risk such as the "domino effect" of a tree striking a tree causing the latter to hit the target zone.
4. Inspection scheduling shall take into account the importance of mitigating hazardous trees as soon as possible following detection (approximately 3 months) and thus timed accordingly to accomplish work before threat to sensitive species or high visitation times.
5. If a tree or tree limb in a developed area dies in between scheduled inspections, or appears to exhibit a recent structural defect, MCAS shall have a Certified Arborist inspect it as soon as possible and follow through with necessary action to reduce the hazardous condition.

Targets

Targets shall be identified as boardwalks, trails, parking areas, neighboring property, sign boards and benches. Consideration shall be given to the value of the target that

would be injured, damaged or destroyed by a failed tree or tree part. If the target is property-only a comparison of costs of the target damage versus the cost to prevent the damage should be considered. It is often easier and cheaper to replace the property than to remove the tree. If humans occupy the target zone for more than 1% of the time it shall be considered high risk.

Professional Arborist

1. All inspections, mitigation recommendations, and specific pruning or bracing specifications shall be conducted by a professional arborist.
2. Professional arborist shall be a Certified Arborist of the Western Chapter of the international Society of Arboriculture (WC-ISA).

Tree removal / Trimming contract

1. Tree work such as bracing and pruning of limbs over 20 feet from the ground, shall be conducted under contract by a professional arborist/tree contractor having a business license for San Luis County and a C-61 (Limited Specialty Contractor) / D-49 (Tree Service) license; or a C-27 (Landscaping Contractor) license and insurance.
2. The California Conservation Corps (CCC) may be used for pruning lower limbs, felling trees, cutting firewood, and chipping. The CCC should be consulted prior to hiring an arborist to determine work they can complete, as they can perform work at a lower cost.
3. All removal of trees or tree limbs in Morro Shoulderband Snail (MSS) habitat shall be coordinated with a MSS monitor. The areas where limbs or trees are likely to fall shall be surveyed prior to cutting and all snails moved out of harm's way.
4. The Lands Committee shall determine, with the approval of the Board, all contract specifications including, but not limited to: removal, pruning, bracing, disposal, timing and language indicating that the contractor shall pay for all damage done by the contractor or his agents to non-contract trees.

Disposal

1. Debris from the removal or pruning of trees shall be disposed of through utilization on site (e.g. trail borders, mulch), firewood, aesthetically pleasing habitat or green waste. It is also acceptable that any tree debris be removed from the site if disease/ insects in that debris could be transmitted to nearby healthy trees.

Stump treatment shall consist of stump grinding, herbicide treatment, removal or other methods, whichever are fiscally reasonable and preclude re-sprouting.

Permits

1. All tree work shall be consistent with San Luis Obispo County and Coastal Zone regulations where applicable.
2. Necessary permits shall be obtained from and notifications shall be conducted for agencies including, but not limited to: County of San Luis Obispo, California Coastal Commission, California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (Note that any hazardous living tree in the Coastal Zone requires a tree removal permit from the County). Only dead trees can be removed without a permit.
3. Some trees may be historically significant and consideration shall be taken before removal.

Document

1. Annual inspections and all tree work performed shall be documented and retained on file for a minimum of five years.
2. The decision process for determining the risk assessment of developed areas shall be documented and retained on file for a minimum of five years as well.

Mitigation

1. Mitigation options may include removal of the tree, pruning the limb, mechanical stabilization of the tree, or closure of the area for safety (if funding is not available for other mitigation options).
2. The surrounding natural, cultural, and aesthetic values of the property shall be considered before the removal of trees or tree parts. Other mitigation measures should be used if possible to retain significant natural, cultural and aesthetic value.