

I was pleased to have an opportunity to address the Board of Supervisors on May 3, 2022 concerning the growing fire danger posed by dead trees. The danger is very apparent to anyone who drives along Highway 29 between Kit's Corner and Lower Lake or along Soda Bay Road from Highway 29 to the State Park. The residential communities that lie along this Soda Bay corridor account for the second highest population area in Lake County making the threat from a dead-tree fueled fire storm a potential disaster on the scale of the Paradise, California fire. Dead trees are the major contributor to the spread of firestorms and the generation of volatile embers that spread wildfires.

Even more dangerous is the presence of hundreds of dead pine trees within the communities themselves. Dead trees stand within 50-100 feet of occupied homes. In the Riviera West community, we have currently tagged 70 very tall, very old dead trees and estimate that at least another 100 are dead or dying. Every two weeks 3-5 more trees die. The trees not only pose a fire hazard, they are positioned to block evacuation routes out of the community and along the single evacuation route that is Soda Bay Road. Although Riviera West is a Firewise community and maintains a rigorous fire safety program, the current epidemic of dying trees has overwhelmed our ability to control the problem.

We are turning to our County for assistance. We appreciate the understanding and support of our Supervisor Jessica Pyska but it is apparent that this problem is so broad that it taxes county resources beyond being able to take widespread effective action. Therefore, it seems time for the County to seek assistance from State and Federal sources. We understand and support taking an action that will notify State and Federal agencies of the imminent disaster by declaring a state of emergency.

For your information I have attached a small sample of the dead tree situation in Riviera West. We are happy to provide any further information that may assist you in your deliberations.

Philip L. Hartley, President

Riviera West Board of Directors

408-406-2003

**RIVIERA WEST – Current Dead Tree Samples Within the Community**



