

Dear USFS, District Ranger, Douglas Dodge,

As an owner of a private parcel, amongst a number of them located west of North San Marcos Road, we refer to our group as the "Blister Ridge Land Owners". It was noted that our roads provided access to areas otherwise inaccessible to ground crews and the Gap fire was stopped on my parcel because of the access and fuel breaking made possible there by hand. This prevented the fire from crossing the East Fork San Jose Creek watershed sparing the Trout Club Community from the fires devastation.

Our brush clearing efforts are ongoing. Access to the western parcels adjacent to the Forest lands is prohibitive to establishing effective fuel breaks there and this letter seeks cooperation to gain access and improving this situation protecting residential areas down-slope to the south.

Accordingly I request that the United States Forest Service coordinate with Santa Barbara County Long Range Planning pursuant to 16 USC 2106 - Sec. 2106 Rural fire prevention and control (4), coordination, to extend the historical benefits (a) to the public noted in that section. We propose that by developing access to provide adequate and effective fuel removal along the base of the Coastal mountains protecting the Patterson area to North San Marcos Road subdivisions and private parcels this can be accomplished. It has come to our attention that since the gap fire a number of residents have had difficulty obtaining fire insurance and when they do find it, the costs are much higher than in the past.

There is a zone approximately 1/2 mile long, east to west, which overlaps onto private land that has a historical road recently discovered. Included are letters to the County of Santa Barbara asking for their assistance with this proposal. This historical route is very manageable in slope and grade and is the only access used in the past prior to mechanized road building.

Currently the access route we use enters from North San Marcos Road. Large firefighting equipment cannot negotiate this route. However, crew trucks accessed the area in the gap fire effectively. We seek to improve access for larger fire fighting equipment generally and create access to areas for installation and maintenance of substantial fuel breaks for fire prevention.

The Code of Federal Regulations we reference are reproduced here for your convenience.

16 USC 2106 - Sec. 2106. Rural fire prevention and control

(a) Congressional findings Congress finds that - (1) significant accomplishments have been made by the Secretary and cooperating States in the prevention and control of fires on forest lands and on nonforested watersheds for more than fifty years;

(4) the effective cooperative relationships between the Secretary and the States regarding fire prevention and control on rural lands and in rural communities should be retained and

improved; (5) efforts in fire prevention and control in rural areas should be coordinated among Federal, State, and local agencies;

Thank you sincerely for your consideration of this proposal and coordinating with Santa Barbara County in pursuant of greater fire safety in our area.

*Jason  
Suler*