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—NEWS RELEASE—IMMEDIATE—

GROUP TO IMPLEMENT SUDDEN OAK DEATH MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN HUMBOLDT

Today, representatives from cooperating agencies and institutions are collaboratively beginning the implementation of an experimental treatment program to control the persistence and spread of *Phytophthora ramorum*, the pathogen known to cause Sudden Oak Death. The treatments are taking place on California State Parks property in the Jay Smith Road area north of Miranda, in Humboldt County.

Collaborators include California State Parks, University of California Cooperative Extension, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF), the Southern Humboldt Fire Safe Council, and the USDA Forest Service.

The project involves removal of infected tanoak, California bay laurel, and madrone trees and will also include pruning of coast redwood trees in a 50-acre area. The group hopes to follow up the treatment with pile burning and potential underburning in fall 2006; the likelihood of this will depend on permits and crew availability.

Tanoak and California bay laurel are being targeted for removal because they are the hosts most likely to spread of the pathogen. The group will intensively monitor project results for several years in the hope of finding a treatment program helpful in controlling Sudden Oak Death and the spread of this pathogen in forested settings.

Discovered last October, this site is thought to be the northernmost location of wildlands infested with *P. ramorum* in California. While it is not known how the pathogen established itself in this location, significant tanoak mortality has been observed at the site. The treatment effort will represent the second experimental effort and the largest in scale so far in the county. With recent pathogen spread, targeting the moving front is a high priority. “Given the high-quality resources on both public and private lands near the State Parks property where the experimental effort will take place, concern over pathogen spread is great,” said Stephen Underwood, Environmental Scientist with California State Parks.

With landowner permission, several other sites in the southern Humboldt region are scheduled for treatment within the next few months.

“We are pleased by the high level of commitment and collaboration of everyone on this project,” said Yana Valachovic, Forest Advisor for UC Cooperative Extension, pointing out

that funding is being provided by CDF and the Forest Service with in-kind matches by the University of California and California State Parks.

Phytophthora ramorum is an introduced pathogen affecting forest and nursery plant species. It was first observed in California in the mid-1990's and was found in Humboldt County in 2002 in one isolated area near to Redway. With the exception of a small scale treatment effort in 2004 in Redway, this is the first large scale forest treatment project attempted to date in the region. The pathogen can kill several oak species, such as tanoak, coast live oak and black oak. Numerous other plants can host and help to spread the pathogen with varying degrees of damage to the host plant.

For more information about this project, contact Susan Doniger, District Interpretive Specialist with California State Parks at (707) 445-6547 x20; or Jay Harris, Senior State Park Resource Ecologist with California State Parks at (707) 445-7547 x 19; or Katie Palmieri, Public Information Officer for the California Oak Mortality Task Force (COMTF) at (510) 847-5482. For more information about Sudden Oak Death and *Phytophthora ramorum*, visit the COMTF website at www.suddenoakdeath.org.

