

February 2013

Designated as permanent open space by the UC Regents in 1976, the Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve is enjoyed by hundreds of visitors each year. Named for former San Francisco Mayor Adolph Sutro, who donated 13 acres in 1895 to UCSF for its Parnassus campus, the Reserve now includes 61 acres.

Many of the hiking trails have recently been rediscovered and reopened, attracting even more visitors to the Reserve. With the increase in use of the Reserve and its continuing decline in forest health, UCSF is committed to maintaining a safe environment for visitors, neighbors and the campus community, as well as protecting adjacent buildings from a potential wildfire.

The 2001 Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve Management Plan recommended conducting forest management demonstration projects prior to taking any large-scale actions to improve the health of the forest. In 2009-2010, many of UCSF's neighbors participated in three community workshops and two walking tours in the Reserve to learn about the forest health, determine where the demonstration projects should be located and discuss what actions should be planned and evaluated in each of them. Documents related to the meetings and walks can be found on the UCSF Community Relations website, and a summary of the community planning process can be found here.

[see <http://www.ucsf.edu/about/cgr/current-projects/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve-documents> and http://www.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/documents/UCSF_SutroReport_111710.pdf]

UCSF hosted a scoping meeting for an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) in January 2011, which provided another opportunity for the community to voice concerns, offer suggestions and help UCSF identify what environmental information, feasible alternatives and potential mitigation measures should be included in the EIR.

In January 2013, UCSF released the Draft EIR for the Mount Sutro Management Project, which addresses thinning of the forest, removal of some invasive shrubs and vines, native plant restoration and construction of new trail linkages. The initial phase of the project includes four demonstration areas where different forest management actions will be implemented and evaluated before action is taken in the remainder of the Reserve. Chapter 2 of the Draft EIR gives a summary and description of the proposed project and demonstration areas.

[see http://campusplanning.ucsf.edu/pdf/Mount_Sutro_EIR_1-18-13_with_Appendices.pdf]

Neighbors have rightly expressed concerns about the number of trees that will be removed during this forest management project. One of two professional foresters that UCSF retained as a consultant explains many of the issues related to the health of the forest in this short video, and an extensive Q&A covers many of these issues. While a large portion of underbrush, including blackberry, ivy and poison oak, will be removed in the demonstration areas, the removal of trees, especially those larger than saplings, will be far more limited and selective, based primarily on their health, potential for long-term survival and potential for falling or posing a hazard. The forest is not being "clear cut." The appearance of Mount Sutro will not substantially change for those looking toward it from a distance, and it will remain a forest—a unique outdoor experience in the heart of the city.

[see <http://www.ucsf.edu/about/cgr/current-projects/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve> and <http://www.ucsf.edu/about/cgr/current-projects/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve-q>]

A public hearing on the draft EIR is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. in the Millberry Union Conference Center, 500 Parnassus Avenue. Those with concerns or questions regarding the Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve should contact Damon Lew, Assistant Director of Community Relations, at dlew@cgr.ucsf.edu.