

1. Is UCSF really going to cut down 30,000 trees?

No. There is no plan to cut down 30,000 trees in the Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve, and it is unfortunate that this misinformation continues to spread. UCSF does have a plan to manage the forest to improve forest health and to maintain a safe environment for visitors, neighbors and the campus community, as well as to protect nearby homes and other buildings from a potential wildfire. Before a management plan is designed for the entire Reserve, four demonstration projects (totaling less than 7.5 acres) with varying characteristics were chosen to evaluate different land management techniques, such as appropriate tree spacing, undergrowth removal, and native plant restoration.

2. So where did the number 30,000 come from?

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires UCSF to examine what the maximum impact of the most aggressive management practice contemplated would be in its Environmental Impact Report (EIR) of the Reserve, so someone may be confusing the report with a final forest management plan. Once the demonstration projects have been implemented and evaluated, a final forest management plan will be developed based on the effectiveness of the practices in the demonstration areas.

3. What are the demonstration projects?

Before a final forest management plan is designed for the entire Reserve, four demonstration projects (totaling less than 7.5 acres) with varying characteristics will be implemented to evaluate different land management techniques. UCSF and neighbors will evaluate the demonstration projects using evaluation criteria developed in the 2009-2010 community process. Vegetation management activities for the remainder of the forest will be based on these evaluation results. [see http://www.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/documents/UCSF_SutroReport_111710.pdf]

Demonstration project characteristics include tree spacing; amount of undergrowth removal; re-growth control strategies; native plant restoration and view corridor development. While a large percentage 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 if they pose any falling or other hazard.

4. What can the community expect at the February 25 public hearing on the draft EIR?

The public hearing for an EIR is very prescriptive under CEQA. At the meeting on February 25, UCSF will receive public testimony and evidence regarding the analysis of environmental impacts contained in the Draft EIR. The meeting will be structured, with time limits for public speakers, and will not be conducted in the interactive format of a typical UCSF community meeting. [see http://campusplanning.ucsf.edu/pdf/Mount_Sutro_EIR_1-18-13_with_Appendices.pdf]

5. Does UCSF really care about preserving Mount Sutro?

Yes, without question. UCSF is committed to maintaining the Reserve as a safe and accessible resource that San Francisco residents and visitors can enjoy. In 1976, the UC Board of Regents designated the Reserve as permanent open space, but management guidelines were not developed at that time. The Reserve, now an aging eucalyptus forest, has become a concern for many nearby residents, specifically regarding forest health and safety, including the potential for a wildfire.

6. Why doesn't UCSF just let Mother Nature take its course on Mount Sutro?

UCSF has a responsibility to maintain its facilities and properties so they are safe. If UCSF were to let the forest in the Reserve continue to grow untouched, it would become increasingly unhealthy and continue to be a safety and fire risk. That is not acceptable. UCSF's forest management goals are for the Reserve to be safe, healthy, aesthetic and usable.

7. Is UCSF planning to expand into the Reserve?

No, UCSF does not plan to expand into the Reserve, which was designated as permanent open space.

8. Has UCSF consulted with arborists and environmental specialists?

UCSF has worked with two certified foresters throughout this process, in addition to working with numerous environmental specialists in the process of drafting the EIR. The video, *Managing and Maintaining the Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve*, has segments that include one of the arborists discussing the health of the forest. [see <http://www.ucsf.edu/about/cgr/current-projects/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve>]

9. Will Mount Sutro still look like a forest from my house?

Yes. The forest is not being "clear cut." Many of the trees that would be removed are saplings, and there are several areas in the Reserve now where tree spacing is already optimal. Mount Sutro will retain the look of a forested mountain because many trees will remain after thinning and the trees will become healthier. The canopy and number of leaves produced per tree will increase in those areas where the forest is thinned, thus over time creating areas that appear more dense.

10. Why is UCSF doing all this without community input?

It's not. In 2009-2010, many of UCSF's neighbors participated in three community workshops and two walking tours of the Reserve to hear about the declining health of the forest, to learn about opportunities for managing it, and to determine where the demonstration areas should be located. A summary of this community planning process can be found on the UCSF website [here](http://www.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/documents/UCSF_SutroReport_111710.pdf). [see http://www.ucsf.edu/sites/default/files/documents/UCSF_SutroReport_111710.pdf]

11. Is UCSF siding with the "native plant enthusiasts" who want to replace all the trees with native species?

The existing Rotary Meadow in the Reserve consists of native plants, and during the community planning process, UCSF learned that some neighbors did want to see if additional native plants could be restored in the Reserve, so two of the demonstration areas will include this component. It would be unrealistic to expect that the entire Reserve would be restored to hold only plants native to this region.

12. How can a cloud forest like Mount Sutro catch on fire?

The forest located in the Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve is not a cloud forest. The moderate temperatures of San Francisco are neither tropical nor sub-tropical, which is the climate where cloud forests exist. Even with the dense fog that often blankets the Reserve, the area is comparatively dry due to the characteristics of the eucalyptus trees. Eucalyptus trees pull water from the soil, tying up the moisture in its roots. The forest in the Reserve is at risk of catching fire for just this reason, and our history tells us that the fog zone of the San Francisco Bay region is not immune to catastrophic wildfires. A pre-settlement fire history of Mount Tamalpais in Marin County shows that fires hot enough to scar Redwood trees occurred approximately every 25 years, so fires were not uncommon. More recently, the Bay Area coastal zone has suffered a number of catastrophic fires.

13. Are the herbicides going to expose visitors to toxic chemicals?

No. UCSF does not currently use herbicides in the Reserve and will restrict the use of herbicides to one acre in Demonstration Area 1 and possibly 2 acres in Demonstration Project Area 4, for a total of 1-3 acres in the 61-acre Reserve (i.e. 1 to 3 of 61 total Reserve acres). After cutting, targeted spot-application methods will be used on eucalyptus stumps, vine, blackberry and broom stems, and on poison oak base, root collar, or stumps. UCSF will clearly mark where herbicides are applied. Results of herbicides on this single acre and other re-growth control methods used in the remainder of the demonstration project areas will be compared and evaluated before developing a policy for the remainder of the Reserve.

14. What will happen to the hiking trails?

The trails will continue to be maintained by UCSF in partnership with the nonprofit organization Sutro Stewards. In line with its forest management goals, UCSF plans to maintain adequate path and trail clearance, to modify steep trail segments with switchbacks so they are more usable, place logs for seating along trails and to close unauthorized trails. These actions will enhance the outdoor experience for those who use and enjoy the Reserve.

15. Where can I get more information?

A video, *Managing and Maintaining the Mount Sutro Open Space Reserve*, which includes segments with a certified forester discussing the health of the forest, is [here](http://www.ucsf.edu/about/cgr/current-projects/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve), and a [Q&A about the Reserve](http://www.ucsf.edu/about/cgr/current-projects/mount-sutro-open-space-reserve-q), which includes information about the declining health of the forest and the location of the demonstration areas, have both been helpful to those unfamiliar with the history of the Reserve and the planning process that has been undertaken to plan for its care. 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.

[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>]