

# The CAO Weekly Report

The week of April 27, 2015



## *Monterey County Administrative Office*

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- Public Works partnership provides safety clean up
- Shelter feral cat project sees success
- CSS tests disaster plan



## Public Works Partnership Helps Aromas Community

A partnership between County Public Works and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire) helped the community of Aromas clean up a trouble spot.

Monterey County Public Works San Miguel Road District crew and Cal Fire's San Benito-Monterey Unit Crew 3 together tackled tree pruning and vegetation clearing from both sides of the Carpenteria Road right-of-way. The work on Carpenteria started at San Juan Road and moved north for approximately 1.5 miles. The work was funded by a state grant to reduce fire fuels along certain county roadways.

Cal Fire provided a supervisor and crew of 16 inmate laborers while the County provided a small crew to perform traffic control and operate heavy equipment, haul-trucks, chainsaws, wood chipper and aerial man-lift. The project began March 23<sup>rd</sup> and ended April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The project was a big hit with locals, who were pleased to see the improvements along the roadway. A letter from the General Manager of the Aromas Water District included her thanks as well as comments from residents who posted on social media.



View of Carpenteria Road where the vegetation removal project took place. Photo above is a Google image of the area before the work took place. The photo below is what the area looks like after the work was completed.



“I would like to personally thank you and your department for the outstanding project you have nearly completed on Carpenteria Road,” wrote Vicki Morris, General Manager of the Aromas Water District. “The massive tree branch and shrub clearing on both sides of the road has made a huge improvement in visibility, aesthetics and safety.”

Morris’ letter included comments from ‘Nextdoor Aromas,’ a popular social media site for community residents.

“A big thank you to Monterey County Public Works for their efforts to clear overgrown trees, shrubs and soil impeding walking traffic on Carpenteria. They are doing such a thorough job, it should be quite a while before it will need to be done again.”

“Thanks to Bill and Tom, and all the other hard workers out there!”

“And thanks to the inmates who did much of the labor.”

“Bravo!”

The County and Cal Fire will collaborate again in June for vegetation removal along portions of Cachagua Road, near Sky Ranch.



## ‘Community Cat’ Project a Success for Animal Services

A joint project between County and City of Salinas Animal Services has had dramatic results in changing the grim fate of feral or unadoptable cats in Monterey County.

The shelters shared a \$10,000 grant last year from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and teamed up for a pilot program called “Shelter, Neuter and Return.” Feral or ‘Community Cats’ as they are sometimes called, which were trapped, but otherwise healthy, were neutered, microchipped and then released back

into the areas from where they came. These cats had their ears ‘tipped’ to indicate they are part of the program.

The goal is to reduce the number of feral cats in the community over time.

With grant monies, the shelters were able to neuter and release a combined total of 244 cats over the last year, and county shelter staff says the neuter and release program is one of several factors contributing to lower numbers of feral cats facing euthanasia.



Look for the missing eartip. Cats who are spayed/neutered are marked this way

“We are now seeing a 45% reduction in the euthanasia of cats,” says Kate Davis-Hill, Operating Manager for County Animal Services. “In 2013 we were euthanizing about 500 feral cats each year. As part of a change in approach to feral cats, Animal Control Officers first stopped picking up healthy cats who were doing well in their environment, which dropped the feral euthanasia rate to about 200. Then the neuter and release project began. We expect to see the real impacts of that effort next year, but it is definitely working as we have only had to euthanize 50 cats so far this year.”



Two of the more than 244 cats which were returned to their communities.

Unfortunately, the grant money which covered these extra surgeries and treatments has run out, and the shelters will try to continue these efforts with available funds as best they can since they have seen such positive results.

Davis-Hill says another positive outcome of the program is the community support for this method of handling unadoptable cats. She hopes that will translate into donations to support the neuter and release program.

“Many of the cats being brought to the shelters are from people who didn’t want to see them euthanized but couldn’t pay for the surgeries, so the cats had been left to continue to reproduce,” she says. “Now the cats won’t reproduce and people are not out of pocket. It’s a win-win for the cats and the people.”

If you’d like to find out more about the neuter and release program or about how best to handle a feral cat situation, contact County Animal Services at x8850. The shelter is open Tuesday-Saturday 12-5:30 p.m. and online under Animal Services at [www.mtyhd.org](http://www.mtyhd.org).



## Child Support Services Tests Disaster Plan

During a disaster or community emergency, county departments may be places the community turns to for help, but would a department be able to operate and provide that assistance? That is the goal of a Continuity of Operations Plans or ‘COOP.’

Earlier this month, Child Support Services reviewed and tested its COOP with help from Sherrie Collins, Emergency Services Manager for the Office of Emergency Services (OES). Collins led a review of the plan and a tabletop exercise to test and train Child Support Administrative staff, Managers, and Supervisors on continuity concepts.



Sherrie Collins (center next to easel) from OES walks CSS staff through its COOP review and tabletop exercise.

The purpose of the exercise was to test the capability to maintain continuity of operations during a realistic disaster scenario. Lessons learned from this exercise will be used to refine the existing plan.

“Staff who participated in the exercise found it valuable in that it stimulated discussion and caused them to think more in depth about emergency situations,”

said Jody Holtzworth, Acting Department Director, who adds staff was pleased with Collins’ entertaining and thought-provoking presentation. “This was an important step in our process for emergency preparedness.”

“Child Support Services has done an excellent job in creating a COOP for the department,” says Collins. “The planning team has developed processes and procedures for identifying mission critical functions, vital records and procedures for relocations to alternate facilities. In the wake of the Napa County earthquake where many counties facilities were uninhabitable, county department COOP plans will provide the playbook for restarting your operation without wondering what to do now.”

Collins invites any department that would like to test its plan with a tabletop exercise to contact OES at x1905.

