



In the wake of recent fires in Napa County, as efforts shift from first response to long-term recovery, Napa RCD would like to share some guidance for managing burned properties in the coming months.

Inspect, Monitor, and Be Prepared

- In the vineyard, inspect all subsurface drainage inlets and outlets. Often these materials are made of a plastic that can melt or be damaged when exposed to extreme heat. See below for more detail.
- In the vineyard, implement typical annual vineyard erosion control practices such as applying seed and straw mulch to bare soils.
- Around the vineyard, inspect all roads on the properties you manage. Road systems may also have plastic culverts that could have been compromised by fire. See below for more detail.
- Monitor trees mortality. Don't be too quick to remove fire damaged trees. Many native tree species will re-sprout after wetting rains. Consider pruning first keep a chainsaw in your vehicle to keep access roads open.
- In waterways, expect more woody material and organics than has historically been observed. These materials can be a benefit to stream systems but they may also plug culverts and other drainage infrastructure. See below for more detail.

Vineyard Erosion Control – Mind your Drainage

It is important to implement typical annual vineyard erosion control practices such as applying seed and straw mulch to bare soils in the vineyard. This year in particular, we suggest that you carefully inspect all subsurface drainage inlets and outlets. These materials are often made of a plastic that melts or becomes damaged when in extreme heat. Damage to the drainage infrastructure can result in significant erosion. If you notice damage to your drainage infrastructure it should be addressed promptly. If you need advice or technical assistance the Resource Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service can assist you with one-on-one site visits.

Outside the Blocks, Evaluate your Roads

We recommend that you inspect all roads on the properties you manage. Road systems may also have plastic culverts that could have been compromised by fire. If a plastic culvert has melted, driving over these areas could be dangerous because the surrounding soils are no longer supported by the culvert and could collapse from the weight of the vehicle, potentially damaging the vehicle as well as injuring the occupants. If you notice damage to the road infrastructure or are more generally concerned about erosion from your roads, you may contact the Resource Conservation District or Natural Resources Conservation Service to assist you.

Monitoring Tree Mortality

Assessing tree mortality is an important step in determining the risk to life and property. Don't be too quick to remove fire damaged vegetation. Many of the scorched native plants will re-sprout. Dead trees that pose a threat to life or property may be located adjacent to homes, outbuildings, access roads and other structures. Consider pruning first before removing the entire plant. Work should be completed by qualified fallers and/or equipment operators. Inspect the tree prior to falling to identify any hazards such as cracks, mistletoe brooms or deformities in the bole or canopy that can increase the complexity of falling the tree. When cutting hazard trees, you should try to limit soil disturbance. All branches should be cut from the tree and the trunk of tree should lay flat on the soil surface. Cut-tree material is often more valuable left on-site because it can provide cover and nutrients to the soil.

Waterways May Carry More Woody Materials and Organics than Normal

You should expect waterways to carry more woody material and organics than has historically been observed. These materials can be a benefit to stream systems but they may also plug culverts and other drainage infrastructure. It is tricky to know whether to leave or remove woody vegetation from a stream. If the debris is not causing an immediate problem, you may contact the Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District for assistance. Throughout the winter, inspect your drainage infrastructure before and after storm events to ensure they are open and functioning.

Ground Disturbance Activities to Prevent Significant Erosion

If the property has suffered damage that could cause significant erosion if not treated, the Napa County Planning, Building, and Environmental Services (PBES) may provide exceptions to local regulations so that treatments can be implemented beyond Nov. 15th. Please contact County PBES before implementing any ground disturbance work.

Resources Available on RCD Website

For general information about road storm-proofing, seeding, hazard tree removal, and other post-fire recovery activities please see our [website](#) and our latest newsletter [RCD Newsletter](#)

Thank you,
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