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San Mateo Resource Conservation District Honors Local Nature Champion, Ricardo "Rico" Raya of Brush Hog Tree Service for the 19-Mile La Honda Fuel Break

November 8, 2024



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PRESS RELEASE. From the San Mateo Resource Conservation District on November 4th, 2024.

(Half Moon Bay, CA – [November 4, 2024]) Ricardo Raya is the inaugural recipient of the Nature Champion Award, part of an initiative of the San Mateo Resource Conservation District (RCD) to recognize the invaluable laborers who carry out critical conservation work on the

ground. The award was presented in collaboration with State Sentence English
Assemblymember Marc Berman in recognition of exceptional workers like ivir. Kaya who are advancing State priorities for natural resource protection.

Mr. Raya, a resident of Pacifica who was born and raised in Half Moon Bay, is an employee of Brush Hog Tree Care, Inc. and is leading the hand labor crew for an RCD project to create a 19-mile fuel break around the community of La Honda. As described by Kellyx Nelson, the Executive Director of the RCD, "Mr. Raya is being recognized for his exceptional thoughtfulness, curiosity, and meticulous care for sensitive resources that have been crucial in building community resilience to wildfire while protecting the local environment."

Senator Josh Becker and Assemblymember Marc Berman provided a joint certificate to Mr. Raya, recognizing him as a recipient of the Nature Champion award. Senator Becker commented, "I am pleased to honor Mr. Raya who highlights the exceptional workers essential to California's priorities for conservation and community protection." Assemblymember Berman echoed these sentiments, adding, "Mr. Raya is an example of how wildfire resiliency can be carried out with precision, dedication, and care for the natural world."



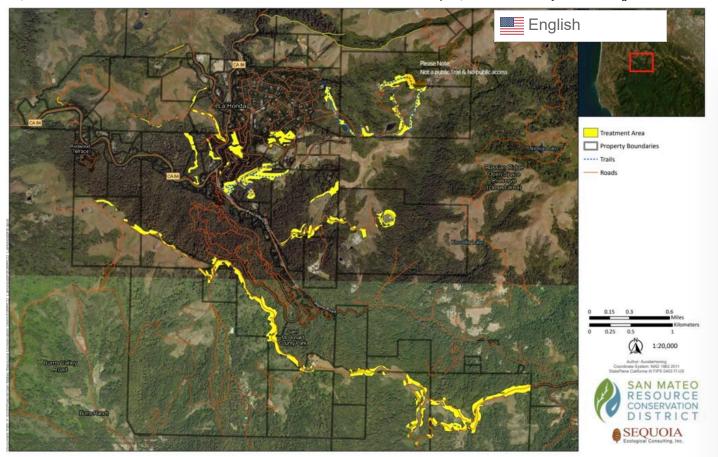
While Mr. Raya's excellence is being specifically recognized, the RCD also extends its appreciation to the many workers who tirelessly implement projects that improve conditions for both people and wildlife throughout San Mateo County.



From Left: Brush Hog President Krystle Reneir, RCD Executive Director Kellyx Nelson, Ricardo "Rico" Raya and Marc Berman.

About the RCD: The San Mateo Resource Conservation District is a local hub for conservation, helping the people of San Mateo County build a more thriving natural environment for all. The district provides comprehensive, non-regulatory services to protect, conserve, and restore natural resources in partnership with land owners and managers, technical advisors, area jurisdictions, government agencies, and others. For more information visit www.sanmateorcd.org.

About the La Honda Fuel Break Project: https://www.sanmateorcd.org/project/la-honda-fuel-break-project/ Funding for this project was provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Prevention Program.



CAL FIRE envisioned a strategic 19-mile (approximately 100,000 feet) <u>fuel break</u> around the community of La Honda to reduce the risk of fire, which the RCD is implementing.

La Honda is in the predominantly high-fire risk south coast region of San Mateo County. The local <u>CWPP</u> (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) has identified it as a High Priority area for fire prevention work to protect the approximately 1000 residents, recreational lands (county parks, open preserves, youth camps), community services (humane society, juvenile services), community assets, ranches, and businesses, which are tucked within the forested landscape of the Santa Cruz Mountains.

The RCD is partnering with 21 private and public landowners to complete this fuel break. The fuel break is expected to treat approximately 250 acres through the reduction of dense vegetation and removing ladder fuels (fuel that can carry fire into the trees canopy from the ground like a ladder) such as small-diameter trees and brush. In the event of a wildfire, this would provide safe access for fire engines and firefighting personnel, support the creation of firelines, and potentially slow the spread and lower fire intensity.

Project Overview Map

<u>Project Detailed Maps</u>

Timeline

Project



implementation: 2024 - 2025

Partners

- CAL FIRE CZU
- <u>La Honda Fire Brigade</u>
- Cuesta La Honda Guild
- Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST)
- San Mateo County Parks
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD)
- Other public and private landowners and land managers

Funders



Funding for this project was provided by the <u>California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Fire Prevention Program</u>.

Follow RCD on <u>Instagram</u> and <u>Facebook</u> for regular updates.

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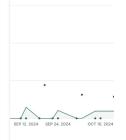
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