

WHY DO THESE PLANNED CHANGES TO MT DAVIDSON MATTER?

Whether you like trees or not, or certain types of vegetation or not, there are some very real consequences to radically altering the landscape in residential areas. The plan to remove trees and replace them with shrubbery and grass classified as native, will create some significant problems now and for future generations.

1. **Toxic chemicals in backyards, streets, nearby schools, children's and pets play areas:** The toxic herbicides from all these re-purposed parklands wash into the areas below the sprayings and contaminate yards and parks. It exposes children and pets to health dangers, who are especially vulnerable due to rapidly developing cells and close surface proximity, and a tendency to put things in their mouths. Garlon and Glyphosate are listed as probable carcinogens, and cause cellular and reproductive damage with very small doses. The chemicals and effects are cumulative. They are used in SF because Parks claim they need to protect native plants against other species. Don't be misled by claims that only a few quarts or gallons of the pure ingredient are used here and there, as this gets mixed with other chemicals and fluids before spraying, which can mean hundreds of gallons.
2. **Runoff and flooding:** Removing 1,600 trees on Mount Davidson will greatly increase the water and rain runoff from the mountain, into the surrounding area. The trees and supporting vegetation currently work like giant sponges to absorb and slow much of this runoff now. A mix of 3' tall bushes, poison oak, and grass do not come close to replacing the benefits of a forest of 200' tall trees and their associated vegetation, in this regard. Increased and accelerated runoff will result in more flooded yards, streets, and basements during wet periods.
3. **Contaminated drinking water:** In mid-2017, the SFPUC begins mixing local groundwater into the household water supply, up to 15%. These dangerous, cancer-causing herbicides used by SF Rec and Park to re-colonize and regularly maintain the native plant areas, contaminate the soil and also run off the areas in rains. This tainted water works its way into local aquifers all along the way, through the permeable layers of soil and sand in SF. A few ounces of this stuff can contaminate thousands of gallons of water beyond the level safe for drinking. These chemicals are not filtered out like bacteria are, and you will drink them. They affect all the SF wells in use.
4. **Mud, rockslides, erosion:** Large networks of integrated living tree roots below the surface, currently help to hold the soil of the mountain together and stabilize it, along with the rocks. The tree covered portion of the mountain is much more stable and currently experiences fewer mudslides and rockslides, compared to the open and exposed side with fragile vegetation. Sections of dirt and rock easily cleave and separate with heavy rains, and both come down the mountain more frequently, without a network of roots to hold it together. This also increases potential for compromised retaining walls, footings, and foundation failure of houses on slopes.
5. **Wind protection:** The current forest canopy makes a huge difference in buffering the wind for users of the mountain and nearby area. Visit both halves of the mountain and compare. Removing the trees will remove this wind taming buffer that makes the parks and area more pleasant.

Regardless of ideological stance on a debate of native plants and open mountains, compared to forested areas and established eco-systems that are here, there are real-world issues, dangers, and environmental impacts to consider. Before a radical re-purposing of local areas and land takes place, these risks to citizens and the environment should be mitigated. Not to mention spending taxpayer money and park funds, that should be used for the benefit of the parks and users. Let the Mayor, the head of SF Rec and Park, and your local supervisor hear from you, to influence this policy.

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