

PG&E: Retain 20 of Nevada City's Heritage Trees; Removal of the other 245 Provides Adequate Fire Protection, Arborists Agree

Citizens from all political stripes are unified in their support for fire protection, and their desire to steward and retain as many of the large old trees in Nevada City as is compatible with these goals. The solution is not complicated or controversial, but involves PG&E agreeing not to remove several of the 263 trees slated for removal.

Why Nevada City's Trees Are Important

1. Nevada City, California is an important historical location and tourist destination. Nevada City was an early capital of California. The downtown district is on the National Register of Historic Places.
2. The importance of historic trees to this district has been identified in Nevada City's Design Guidelines; at the height of the timber industry, some of the few trees remaining in the area surrounding Nevada City and Grass Valley were in the downtown districts.
3. PG&E's plan is overkill. Fuels reduction is important, but does not justify removal of more than 260 trees in our tiny historic district, within a town with a population of 3000.
4. The small town feel of this historic gold rush town depends on its large trees to distinguish it from more modern towns.
5. Fuels reduction around power lines is also important, but a number of independent certified arborists have provided expert opinions that several of the trees slated for removal are in good health and do not pose a risk to the power lines.
6. Because of the location in an historic district and the historic value of these trees, and the fact that this value is codified into Nevada City law and policy, significant impacts trigger additional CEQA requirements for this project.

What Nevada City Citizens Ask of PG&E

A local group has coalesced around the need to protect Nevada City's heritage trees while reducing the risk of a wildfire ignition related to PG&E's power lines. This group includes citizens from all parts of the political spectrum, and is non-partisan by its very nature. Together, Nevada City Citizens for Save NC Trees asks that PG&E do the following:

1. Agree to delay tree removal for all trees and stands that have been met with controversy, pending an agreement in consultation with the Nevada City Council to retain specific trees identified.
2. Agree to retain and trim, rather than remove, the following trees identified for removal:
 - a. the Blue Atlas Cedar on Broad and Bennett streets.
 - b. the large pines in Pioneer Cemetery, a registered California Site of Historical Interest. (Excepting one heavily leaning pine that may need removal)
 - c. the trees marked for removal on the north side of the Catholic Cemetery fence between West Broad and Spring.
3. Commence a process immediately for reevaluating the controversial trees. A re-evaluation process should be performed by an arborist retained by Nevada City, with access to all company records related to the original determinations. Determination should require approval of the Nevada City Council, or at least should be made in full consultation with the local political body. This process can run concurrently with removal of non controversial trees.

~ Save NC Trees Citizens Coalition

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