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## Fire at Fish Ranch Road

*By Lee Borrowman*

Winds and steep terrain caused a roadside vegetation fire, on the Fish Ranch Road onramp to eastbound Highway 24, to sweep rapidly up the hillside on the afternoon of Tuesday, September 29th. The dramatic column of smoke could be seen from across the bay.

The fire, the cause of which has been classified as "suspicious," started around 3:00p.m. Crews from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD), Contra Costa County Fire, CalFire, Oakland Fire, East Bay Regional Park District (EBPRD) and San Ramon Valley Fire responded and were able to get the fire under control by 4:30p.m. "An aggressive initial attack by all agencies and strong air support from CalFire and EBRPD helped keep this fire to thirty acres," said MOFD Fire Marshall Michael Mentink.

The speed with which the fire spread was due to a combination of factors, Mentink explained. "The grass and brush is very dry right now – the driest of the season – and the wind was blowing against the steep hillside. The convected current blew hot air up the hill, preheating the fuel so it was really ready to burn." According to Mentink, this natural convection was also the reason the smoke rose straight up in a column rather than dispersing.

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