

# CAL FIRE NEWS RELEASE

## California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

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**CONTACT:** Julie Hutchinson  
(951) 377-8380

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Kim Camilli,  
Forest Pest Specialist  
(805) 550-8583

### **Invasive Pest Found in Riverside County** Fire and Forest Officials Ask Public's Help to Stop Spread

**Idyllwild** - The goldspotted oak borer (GSOB) has been detected in a recently-killed California black oak tree in the Riverside County mountain community of Idyllwild. Larvae extracted from under the tree bark were subjected to DNA analysis at the University of California Riverside and confirmed to be *Agilus auroguttatus*, the scientific name for GSOB. This new detection of GSOB represents the first long-distance movement of the beetle from its known area of infestation in San Diego County, 40 miles to the south. It is believed to have made the jump from San Diego to Idyllwild through the movement of infested firewood. The infested tree is slated for immediate removal and disposal.

The GSOB is transported in oak firewood, so it is critical that Californians keep firewood local and not move it out of the area. Here are some immediate steps to help stop the spread of GSOB.

- Use firewood from local sources - "Buy it Where you Burn It"
- Leave firewood at home - do not transport it to recreational cabins, campgrounds or parks

"The public plays a key role in stopping the spread of the destructive GSOB," said CAL FIRE Director and State Forester Ken Pimlott. "When choosing firewood make sure you buy it from a local source and not from out of the area. This infestation could have devastating effects on California and we all must work to stop its spread."

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is collaborating with the University of California, the U.S. Forest Service and the County of Riverside to develop a rapid response plan for GSOB in San Jacinto forest communities. Surveys are already in progress to determine the extent of the infestation. Property owners in the Idyllwild area will be receiving additional information in the coming weeks on the GSOB and how to assess their own oak trees as well as a list of recommended contacts for questions. These infestations can be very destructive to our forests, communities, individual properties, and are extremely costly to control.

"This discovery of GSOB in Riverside County is of great concern," said CAL FIRE/Riverside County Fire Chief John R. Hawkins. "These mountain communities have endured years of drought and bark beetle infestation and we need to work collaboratively with the public and all stakeholders to stop the GSOB from further destroying our forest and oak woodlands."

Anyone planning to purchase or burn firewood is encouraged to visit [www.firewood.ca.gov](http://www.firewood.ca.gov) to learn how help stop the spread of GSOB and other pests through the movement of firewood. For more information on GSOB visit [www.gsob.org](http://www.gsob.org).