Rich Casale’s* TOP TEN LIST

What Property Owners Should Consider if They Have Experienced a Debris Flow/Mudslide or Slope Failure on Their Property

#10 Get help from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service or other professionals that are certified, registered and/or licensed before treating a slide area and/or selecting and installing treatment measures.

#9 Respect the laws of nature. Natural recovery can be quicker with longer term benefits when you design with nature. Remember, when you control water (runoff) you control nature which can have disastrous consequences.

#8 One size does not fit all. Every property has unique features and circumstances requiring a site specific evaluation and corresponding treatment. One more reason not to do what your neighbor is doing, besides they might not know what they are doing.

#7 Minimize soil/slope disturbances. Disturbances such as vegetation clearance, grading, terracing or installing landscape drainage ditches/drains can have a detrimental effect on potentially unstable slopes especially if the disturbance is done during the rainy season and if not done according to a plan prepared with professional assistance.

#6 Look beyond your property lines and work with thy neighbor. Runoff, erosion & debris flows have no respect for property boundaries.

#5 Prevent roads from going to ruin. Private roads and long driveways require constant maintenance. Many road drainage facilities may need to be replaced, re-located, and/or re-sized depending on whether or not they contribute to surrounding slope issues or concerns. Proper drainage controls are critical.

#4 Emergency/temporary measures typically have a high risk of failure. They can cause more serious problems if and when they fail and often provide a false sense of security especially plastic sheeting which should almost never be applied to a failed slope.

#3 Remember the M&Ms. All existing and any planned treatment measures require regular and perhaps constant Monitoring & Maintenance especially during the winter.

#2 Say “No” to Yes. Sometimes doing nothing or doing less is best. Give nature a chance.

#1 There is NO silver bullet. When it’s not safe, it’s not safe. Have an emergency plan & get out of your home and leave your property when it’s not safe. Have 2+ exits even by foot.

*Rich Casale is a natural resource specialist and a Certified Professional Erosion and Sediment Control Specialist (#3). He has assisted many communities and hundreds of property owners throughout California with post-fire and post storm restoration needs and information throughout his 43-year career with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.