



November 19, 2010

Update on Fire Safety and Landscaping Projects in Fountaingrove II

From: Board of Directors of the Open Space Maintenance Association (OSMA)

Fountaingrove II West Projects:

Fuel Reduction in Firebreak 14: On Monday, November 22nd, Marizco Landscape Management, Inc. will commence fuel reduction of Chaparral in the interior of a 13.44 acre parcel called Firebreak 14. This area is surrounded by: (1) homes off lower Crown Hill Drive and four of its cul-de-sacs, and (2) Open Space along the eastern side of Parker Hill below Giorno Court to the rear of 3615 Crown Hill. Last year, OSMA expanded the Firebreaks in this parcel behind the cul-de-sacs of Giorno, Palazzo, Bellagio and Incantare from 30' to 100'.

The objective of the new work will be to remove about 50% of the dead and excessive, highly flammable fuel to what remains in the 5 acres of the parcel which are not part of a Firebreak. This will make the area a more fire-safe place for the homes surrounding this steeply sloped area. The fuel reduction work will be performed with hand tools, supplemented by chain saws on the larger limbs or trunks of trees. Dead trees 6" or less in diameter will be removed. No vehicles will be used on Open Space. Marizco plans to install a zip line to transport material above the ground to the streets, where it will be chipped and then removed offsite for disposal. Marizco has used this zip line procedure before, and they provided OSMA a plan whereby the temporary installation will not damage the soil or plants. Upon completion, the area will not only be more fire-safe, but it will offer a better browsing habitat for animals, plus have a park-like atmosphere. This same type of treatment has been done in two firebreak islands located in Fountaingrove II East. This project will be completed before year end.

New Landscaping along Parker Hill Road along the Open Space in Firebreak 14: On this same Monday, Michael Golas Landscaping Design will commence the installation work for new landscaping in the same vicinity behind the courts of Darlington and Giorno. The plants will consist of native plants cultivated by OSMA, including the endangered Rincon species of Manzanita and Ceanothus, as well as other native plants sourced from nurseries. Additional landscaping will be added south of this new landscape next fall. The second half of the landscaping was timed to allow Marizco the capability to conduct their fuel reduction work discussed above.

Trees with Safety Issues behind 3692 and 3696 Crown Hill Drive: Several trees with safety issues will be removed along the top of the old fire road. Sandborn Tree Service, Inc. will conduct this work, and vehicle access on Open Space will be restricted. More Chaparral and tree work is planned in this area in the near future, depending upon weather and habitat season (February 1st – August 31st), when work cannot be done under our management plan for Open Space approved by the City of Santa Rosa.

Fountaingrove II East Projects:

Fuel Reduction along the Parkway from Daybreak Court towards Chanate: Dead and dry Chaparral such as Coyote Brush and invasives species such as Broom, Dill and Acacia will be removed along the top of the hillside from Daybreak towards Chanate. The project area extends about 950' along the Parkway, and the depth of the fuel reduction varies from 15' to 45' behind the existing irrigated landscaped area. The Chaparral in this area has the potential of ignition from vehicles on the Parkway, as well as from a fire coming up the hillside from Open Space. If a fire did emanate from Open Space, it could jump the Parkway and send embers to homes on Kendell Hill, Chanate, and the Montecito area and beyond. Sandborn will do this work.

Trees in Firebreak 10 with Safety Issues between Newbury and Banbury Court: Two trees with safety issues will be removed soon by Sandborn Tree Service, Inc., and there will be no vehicle access on Open Space when the work is performed. Many other dead trees, or excess Douglas firs, will be removed before the end of next year. Some trees will be left or reduced in size to become wildlife snags, to comply with the habitat rules OSMA must follow.

Fountaingrove II East Projects (continued):

Trees with Safety Issues on the lower portion of Firebreak 3 behind homes on Deer Trail Court: There are several trees that target homes behind Deer Trail Court, which is located off of Brush Creek Road at the bottom of our Firebreak 3. One huge tree has twice dropped limbs on a homeowner's fence that OSMA has had to repair. Another dead tree is within a foot of a fence and could fall on a residence. Work to remove these hazards will also be done by Sandborn. Due to access problems and wet weather, the trees will be cut now and the trunks, limbs and brush will be managed when the weather permits next year.

Tree work in the Island of Firebreak 2: This parcel of 5.64 acres along Rincon Ridge Drive and bordered by Rocky Knoll Way, Sage Hill Place and Fox Hill Place was once predominantly an oak woodland. Since the 1964 Hanley Fire, the Douglas fir has reproduced in an aggressive manner and this has changed the historical biodiversity of the area. It also has created an unsafe environment due to excessive fuel and the pyrophytic (highly flammable) nature of the fir. There is a lot of dieback of firs in this parcel, and the overpopulation of trees has, unfortunately, helped spread beetle infestations because the trees are competing for a limited amount of available nutrients in the soil. Sandborn will perform this tree work, and no vehicles will be allowed on Open Space. There are several dead trees in the area. Many will be removed, but some will be reduced in size to become wildlife snags, reducing their fire risk, but remaining as useful habitat for raptors, woodpeckers and other animals. When cutting trees, OSMA is legally required to provide 2 habitat trees per acre.

Tree Pruning of Douglas firs in the landscape areas in Fountaingrove II East: Years ago, many Douglas firs were planted in landscaped areas, and they now need limbing up for fire safety. OSMA is taking a conservative approach, and will initially limb these trees just 2' to 3' from the ground. Fine Tree Care was selected to do this work. The Landscape Committee and OSMA Board plan to treat the few existing Douglas firs in the landscaped areas of the West in the future, plus limb up Redwoods and manicure Oak trees in the landscaped areas.

Other projects in process with Urban Forestry Associates: OSMA engaged Urban Forestry Associates, Inc. (UFA) to provide consultation on fire safety, forest health and habitat issues. UFA has been helping OSMA identify areas of concern and prescribing treatment procedures for the past several months, including most of the work currently underway. Even more Chaparral and tree work has been scoped out in the East and West. Some areas have already been charted, and are slated for Requests for Proposal to vendors the latter part of this year or the early part of 2011. Because of habitat timing restrictions, OSMA is studying the possibility of staging the work in phases, with trees being cut between now and February 1st, and the cleanup work performed after the rainy season in 2011.

Urban Forestry Associates has become OSMA's Qualified Authority as required by the Design Program for managing trees in Open Space. Both UFA, and the Board of OSMA, must certify they have followed the parameters of the Use Permit and amended Fountaingrove II Open Space Maintenance Program that was approved by the City of Santa Rosa on April 15, 2010. These certifications must be submitted by February 1, 2011, when OSMA provides its Annual Report for work done in Open Space during the past year. This report will be made available to all Fountaingrove II homeowners on its website at FountaingroveII.com.

Urban Forestry has identified several trees, both dead and alive, that are safety issues and which target streets, sidewalks, structures and trails frequented by hikers. Many of these trees are identified above for removal, but others exist in the wildlands, firebreaks and landscaped areas of Open Space. The OSMA Board has placed such trees as a priority for removal. If the tree is designated as a heritage tree, and is within 20' of the property line of a resident of Fountaingrove II, the homeowner will receive a 10 day notice of the planned action with such trees. OSMA and UFA will be working with the Fire Department or other City Departments to obtain any required permissions to expedite the removal of trees that are designated to be a safety hazard.

OSMA's website has a wealth of information, including its Mission Statement and governing documents it must follow, as it manages Open Space in a responsible manner - from both an environmental and fire-safe standpoint.

Our Governing Documents stipulate that no tree on Open Space will be cut, topped, or pruned to enhance views. OSMA strictly follows this rule, and enforces fines on homeowners guilty of trespassing to alter anything, living or not, in Open Space. **Help keep our Open Space a scenic treasure and a valuable asset for both our economic and visual pleasure. Please report any violations in Open Space - from illegal access, dumping, pruning or topping trees, or perceived erosion issues** to Leslie Cohen, Focus Real Estate, 544-9443; e-mail fokusre@sonic.net. Or you can contact the Board through Dennis Searles 528-6636; e-mail: dennis@bpfinance.com or Kim Nielsen-Glynn 544-7871 or glynn@sonic.net.