

Fountaingrove II Gazette

Volume VI, Issue 2

Summer 2009

New Firebreak Expansions

As many homeowners already know, 2009 has been a year of fuel reduction, expanding our firebreaks within Fountaingrove II. The expansions were a result of the OSMA Board's decision to take a more proactive approach to creating more effective safety zones in case of fire.

The open space "island" that is bordered by Parker Hill Road and the cul-de-sacs along Crown Hill Drive (Orbetello, Bellagio, Incantare, Giorno, Palazzo) originally had just a 30' firebreak along the rear fences of the homes abutting the area. Thanks to several weeks of labor intensive and careful pruning, that firebreak, which is referred to as FB14, is now 100' wide. The clearing created deeper views into the forest, revealing many beautiful specimens of oak, manzanita and madrone, and unveiled a previously unknown stand of our native endangered Rincon Ceanothus and Rincon Manzanita. Wonderful!

Another open space island, which is labeled FB9, was the next target for fuel reduction. FB9 lies off the cul-de-sacs along Hadley Hill Drive and is comprised of 3.03 acres. Last year, the OSMA Board authorized treatment of 7200 square feet of FB9 exposing a stunning grove of mature manzanitas. This left 1.8 acres of the parcel that needed to be treated to meet the fuel management objectives of the original Fountaingrove II Design Guidelines. The area was mostly a thicket of dense brush that appeared to be primarily scrub oak. Although there was some concern that privacy might be compromised for the adjacent homeowners, the fuel reduction work left privacy intact while opening up longer sight-lines into the stunning landscape. The botanical discovery here was a native coffeeberry thriving throughout. These drought tolerant natives surely will be on the OSMA's list for propagation later this year!

The last area treated was a small area between Heathfield Court and Fountaingrove Parkway. Native shrubs were heavily overgrown outside the maintained irrigated areas, so a decision was made to clean it up. Again, another attractive result. The OSMA Board will continue to prioritize areas needing treatment in hopes of creating healthier, safer and more picturesque open space.

We encourage you to check these areas out and enjoy the park-like settings they have become. Please help us keep these areas attractive and neat. Enjoy the open space, but help keep it well-maintained and free of litter.



Annual Firebreak Work Complete

Each year, Fountaingrove II has all 64 acres of its firebreaks and fire access roads weed whacked - twice. In addition, based on a three-year rotation, firebreaks are treated for re-growth. Re-growth treatment consists of limbing up trees, removing smaller dead trees, disposing of miscellaneous debris, cutting back quick-growing shrubs like coyote brush to the ground, and structurally pruning more desirable shrubs like manzanita and toyon.



The firebreaks are walked to check out the two passes of the work done by the weed-whacking vendor, and at other times to plan the scope of the rework and check this work against the specification in the Request for Proposal. We need more people who are interested in becoming active walking the firebreaks. While many of the areas are challenging, it is good exercise and there are many opportunities for great views and discoveries of dozens of different plants and wildflowers that exist in the open space.

Our annual firebreak work was completed earlier this summer, with beautiful results!

Fountaingrove II Applying for Firewise Community Status

Fountaingrove II is submitting an application to be recognized as a “Firewise Community” - the first in Sonoma County. In order to be recognized as such, there are several objectives that must be met:

- Form a Firewise Board, which will be OSMA
- Spend \$2 per capita in Firewise projects, which OSMA has met
- Complete a community assessment
- Create a plan, which is nearly complete, and will be called “Fountaingrove II Community Wildfire Protection Plan” (CWPP)
- Hold a Firewise Day, which will most likely coincide with OSMA’s Annual Meeting
- Hold a meeting of stakeholders that benefit from FGII’s action such as Santa Rosa Fire, Sonoma Fire, Cal Fire, PG&E, neighboring businesses and homeowner associations outside the boundaries of FGII, etc.
- Submit an annual report to Firewise Communities/USA that documents continuing compliance with the program

Fountaingrove II OSMA hopes that designation as a Firewise Community will alleviate homeowner insurance coverage problems, encourage neighboring fire hazardous communities to follow our lead and perhaps qualify us for potential grant funding for vegetation management.

The OSMA also believes that continual and elevated communication on this important issue will make us all more dedicated to do our part to make our community more fire safe.



Look Familiar?

Does this grassy plant on the left look familiar to you? It’s a type of Pennisetum or Fountain Grass, common in many yards. This particular grass was not photographed inside someone’s yard, however. This plant was a result of a homeowner’s garden plant reseeding itself in the open space. Take note: Pennisetum (the first two photos are types of Pennisetum or Fountain Grass) is among plants on the “Unsuitable/Invasive Plant List” and is prohibited in Fountaingrove II. Removing it and other such invasives from the open space costs everyone money and harms the native plants and habitat.



Muhlenbergia rigens or Deer Grass (on the far right) is a native grass that thrives in our dry summer climate, is deer resistant and is relatively readily available - try that instead!



2009 FGII Community Wildfire Protection Plan Nearly Complete

A major project the OSMA undertook this year was the development of an updated Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which will serve as our instruction manual with strategies and action plans regarding the treatment of our open space for years to come.

Combining the OSMA governing documents and their mandates, sensitivity to the environment, along with fire safety, this document is the most comprehensive tool OSMA has ever had for determining projects and methods for maintaining a safe and healthy forest. Many agencies and experts were consulted for their valuable input: Cal Fire, Santa Rosa Fire, Sonoma Fire, the City of Santa Rosa, plus authorities on forest management for both environmental and fire concerns.

Among the recommendations in the document: control the Douglas-fir population. Douglas-firs are a native plant, but without the occurrence of wildfires (the historically natural control), their population can explode, crowding out other desirable natives such as Oak, Madrone, Manzanita, etc. Moreover, their tendency to create walls of seedlings creates fire fuel that is downright scary.

It is hoped that the recommendations within the CWPP will help OSMA have more control over its forest practices. Forest Management Practices for Trees have been documented and submitted to the City of Santa Rosa for review. These Practices include the procedures for removal of trees, the number of dead trees per acre to leave standing for wildlife habitat, timing of removal and other safety issues. It is hoped that the City of Santa Rosa will find that this blueprint for tree management will be thorough enough to allow the OSMA more authority over its own open space maintenance.

Forest Management Practices were developed in the 2008 – 2009 timeframe to control the specifications for firebreak work done for: (1) annual weed abatement, (2) re-growth treatment and (3) fuel reduction programs, such as the recent work done in FB14, FB9 and on Heathfield. These Practices are now incorporated into all OSMA's Requests for Proposal (RFPs). The Practices for Trees will be another chapter in the documented Forest Management Practices under which OSMA is governed to operate.

New Fire Station – Still on Track

The City of Santa Rosa is continuing its plans to build a new fire station at the top of Fountaingrove on Newgate Court. Timing of the build out for the Newgate station, which will replace the existing station #5 on lower Parker Hill Road, is not known, although the City has held a neighborhood informational meeting and is planning to proceed with plan development and to submit for a federal “fire station construction grant.”



In November 2004, Santa Rosa voters passed Measure O, a sales tax measure to fund critical public safety improvements in Police, Fire and Recreation & Parks. A portion of the funds generated is slated to help fund the new neighborhood fire station.

Summit Update

Our last newsletter reported that Creekbridge Homes, the builder of the Summit development was in the process of landscaping their portion of Fountaingrove Parkway before turning over the property to the OSMA.

Unfortunately, after planting over 165 trees and about 200 one-gallon plants, Creekbridge put the brakes on. Installation of water meters came at a price Creekbridge was not keen on paying now. Weeks and weeks of foot-dragging led the OSMA Board to allow Creekbridge to borrow some of its water in hopes of keeping at least some of the many oak trees alive through the hot weather.

The City has since agreed to let Creekbridge install temporary water meters, eliminating the need for OSMA water.

OSMA does not know when Creekbridge will restart and complete the work at the Summit. The City will not release the underlying bond until Creekbridge completes the Summit infrastructure issues on the City's punch list.

The Summit's weeds and invasive broom plants have re-grown into an ugly jumble among the struggling trees. It is our hope that the water and landscaping issues will be resolved soon, but from all appearances, it does not seem likely.

Dog Poop

If your dog can't clean up after himself, it's up to you. Please carry one or two plastic bags with you whenever you and your dog take a stroll. Evidence of your pooch's travels is not a welcome addition to the natural beauty of

our open space or the bottom of one's shoe. Please be a responsible pet owner – and everyone can enjoy his or her daily walks!



Something to Ponder this Fire Season...

Did you know the homes that adjoin major open space have significantly deeper lots (100' or more) than those that are surrounded by other homes or streets? It is highly likely that as part of the original design, those deep rear yards were calculated to contain a portion of the wild urban interface defensible space. Although we don't know for sure if those calculations were originally part of the fire safety plan for Fountaingrove II, it is certain that those homeowners adjoining the open space are major contributing factors to Fountaingrove II's overall fire safety.



The photo shows that the OSMA can only do so much. The area in the foreground is managed by OSMA. The area behind the fence is homeowner property. The abundance of dried grass, dead trees and low lying plant material will be welcome fuel to a voracious wildfire, drawing the flames up the hill and into the home - and its neighbors - in a flash. One weak link is all it takes...

Do yourself and everyone a favor - if you cannot see the rear of your property because of dense trees, brush or grass, have it cleared immediately. Fire season has only just begun.

Call for Candidates

The Fountaingrove II Open Space Maintenance Association will hold its annual election for Board members this October. Energetic volunteers who are interested in helping maintain our amazing open space, improving our irrigated landscape and striving for a fire safe neighborhood are encouraged to run.

If you have an interest in hiking, native plants, fire safety, documentation, working with various agencies and some time, think about becoming more involved.

OSMA and the Directors are obligated to become knowledgeable of several legal documents that govern the management of the open space for both environmental and fire safety purposes. There are monthly meetings, but much of the work is comprised of on-site activities, and communicating primarily by email on management issues.

Not able to commit to being a Director now? Consider joining a committee/team to learn more about OSMA. And remember, the Open Space Maintenance Association is responsible only for the open space – both irrigated and non-irrigated. The OSMA does not enforce any Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions (CC&Rs), so if that angle piques your interest, the OSMA isn't for you (try the Architectural Review Committee).

Do You Have a Bird Bath, Fountain or Pond?

Make sure you aren't harboring mosquitoes in your water!

Try to keep the water moving. Aerate it, create a flow. If you have plants in your pond, try not to group plants together, which will create an attractive breeding ground for the insects. You can add goldfish to your fountain or mosquito fish (gambusia) to your pond to help eliminate larvae and eggs. Finally, Microbe-Lift Liquid Biological Mosquito Control or Mosquito Dunks are earth-friendly controls that won't harm fish, animals or humans.



Crime

Just a friendly reminder to remain vigilant in keeping yourself safer against crime. Thieves are constantly looking for an attractive target – don't be the one they choose!

The recent wave of home break-ins seems to have slowed, but that doesn't mean it can't happen to you. Make sure you're smart about your security: keep all doors and windows locked at all times; never leave your garage door open – even a crack; install a fence, and if you already have a fence keep the gates locked; set your alarm; keep a light on and the radio playing when you're away; avoid allowing shrubs to create hiding places; be aware of who is coming and going in your neighborhood.



If something doesn't seem right or if you've been a victim of a crime, call the police at 528-5222 immediately. It has been advised that you call the police no matter how small the crime. If they don't know a crime has been committed they have no statistical data to instruct them on where to apply future resources.

Theft from automobiles is an ongoing problem. Always take everything out of your car should you leave it in the driveway overnight. Everything. Checkbook, computer, garage door opener, small change. And, remember, overnight parking on the street is prohibited in Fountaingrove II. Many residents disregard this rule, but it's another element contributing to our security – or insecurity. Encourage your noncompliant neighbors to clean out their garage – a neighborhood yard sale, perhaps?

And, start a Neighborhood Watch group in your area. It's a great way to get to know your neighbors and a good excuse for an end-of-summer gathering.

Did You Know...??

You must submit an application to the Architectural Review Committee for:

- Landscaping installations
- Solar panels
- Exterior painting - any change in color
- Removing trees
- Pool, decks, trellises, sheds, fences
- Home additions

Residents in the West and Summit are encouraged to form their committees now!

The Architectural Review Committee for Fountaingrove II East would also like to remind everyone in Fountaingrove II that:

- **Parking overnight in the street is prohibited** - park overnight only in garages and driveways
- No repairs of vehicles in the street are allowed
- Basketball standards are not allowed in the driveway or front of home (only in the side or rear yards)

Maintenance Contractors

The OSMA recently asked several contractors to bid on its landscaping maintenance for new annual contracts. Two landscape firms were hired to handle the ongoing maintenance of our irrigated open space. Valley Oak Landscaping was re-hired to handle the plant maintenance in Fountaingrove II East (from Kendell Hill/Daybreak to just before the Summit development), and Gardeners' Guild, Inc., is our new contractor for Fountaingrove II West (Parker Hill and Crown Hill areas).

Tree work was eliminated from the maintenance contracts this year, and will be hired out using a separate bidding process.

Should you notice an irrigation problem or plants that seem to be stressed, please contact Focus Real Estate & Investments at 544-9443 and report your findings.

Landscape Committee

The Landscape Committee took a break from landscape planting earlier this year, as the drought took precedence over new plants. This fall, however, the committee plans to complete the planting of the few currently blank canvases left in Fountaingrove II. The committee is hoping to utilize 200 rare natives that were propagated last fall and should be ready for planting soon. Unfortunately, the other 200 plants we had propagated were lost when another vendor had a greenhouse malfunction. This resulted in no out-of-pocket loss to OSMA, just a delay in the propagation program.

Another project the Landscape Committee has begun is actually a project that had been introduced several years ago. Committee members will be walking the landscaped areas on a regular basis taking notes of problems to report to our maintenance contractors. If you are interested in helping with this program, contact Kim Nielsen-Glynn at 544-7871 to volunteer.



Planning on Doing Some Fall Planting?

Please Keep These Plants *Off* Your Shopping List

The following plants are prohibited within Fountaingrove II due to their invasive nature. They tend to spread rapidly, out compete native vegetation, degrade wildlife habitat and create weed problems on other properties:

Eucalyptus globulus (Blue Gum)

Cortaderi jubata (Pampas Grass)

Vinca (Periwinkle)

Cytissus scoparius (Scotch Broom)

Allium paniculatum (Panicked Onion)

Arctotheca calendula (Capeweed)

Carduus nutans (Musk Thistle)

Centaurea maculosa (Spotted Knapweed)

Onopordum acanthium (Scotch Thistle)

Onopordum arabicum (Silver Thistle)

Onopordum illyricum (Illyrian Thistle)

Onopordum tauricum (Taurian Thistle)

Tagetes minuta (Wild Marigold)

Acacia armata (Kangaroothorn)

Acacia decurrens (Acacia)

Cytisus monspessulanus (French Broom)

Nymphoides peltata (Yellow Floatingheart)

Viscum album (European Mistletoe)

Lythrum salicaria (Purple Loosestrife)

Nymphaea mexicana (Banana Waterlily)

Pennisetum setaceum (Fountain Grass)

Stipa brachychaeta (Punagrass)

Polygonum cuspidatum (Japanese Knotweed)

Polygonum multiflorum (Chinese Knotweed)

Polygonum polystachium (Himalayan Knotweed)

Polygonum sachalinense (Giant Knotweed)

Acaena anserinifolia (Bidly Bidly)

Acaena novae-zelandiae (Bidly Bidly)

Acaena pallida (Bidly Bidly)

Salvinia (Auriculata)

Linaria dalmatica (Dalmation Toadflax)

Solanum marginatum (White-margined Nightshade)

Tamarix ramosissima (Tamarisk)

Peganum harmala (Harmel)

Anthemus fuscus (Asti Daisy)

The following Ceanothus plants and their varieties and cultivars should not be planted in Fountaingrove II in order to eliminate any possibility of cross-pollination and contamination of the sensitive plant Ceanothus confusus:

Ceanothus gloriosus (Pt. Reyes Ceanothus), Ceanothus gloriosus var. porrectus (Mt. Vision Ceanothus), Ceanothus rigidus (Snowball Ceanothus), Ceanothus purpureus (Hollyleaf Ceanothus), Ceanothus prostratus occidentalis, Ceanothus jepsonii Jepson Ceanothus), Ceanothus jepsonii var. albiflorus, Ceanothus verrucosus (White Coast Ceanothus), Ceanothus greggii (Desert Ceanothus), Ceanothus greggii perplexans, Ceanothus crassifolius (Hoary Leaf Ceanothus), Ceanothus cuneatus (Wedge Leaf Ceanothus), Ceanothus ramulosus (Coast Ceanothus), Ceanothus masonii (Bolas Ceanothus), Ceanothus gloriosus var. exaltatus (Emily Brown Ceanothus), Ceanothus prostratus var. prostratus, Ceanothus sonomensis (Sonoma Ceanothus), Ceanothus divergens (Calistoga Ceanothus), Ceanothus insularis, Ceanothus megocarpus (Island Ceanothus), Ceanothus ferri-sae (Coyote Ceanothus), Ceanothus fresnensis (Fresno Ceanothus), Ceanothus pinetorum (Kern Ceanothus), Ceanothus pumilus (Siskiyou Ceanothus), Ceanothus maritimus (Maritime Ceanothus)

In order to eliminate any possibility of cross-pollination and continuation of the sensitive plant *Arctostaphylos stanfordiana* var. *repens*, **no plantings of *Arctostaphylos* (*Manzanita*) should be made in Fountaingrove II. The only exceptions are the following three species indigenous to the site:**

Arctostaphylos stanfordiana var. *repens* (Rincon Manzanita)

Arctostaphylos canescens var. *sonomensis* (Sonoma Manzanita)

Arctostaphylos glandulosa var. *cushingiana* (Eastwood Manzanita)

(These 3 Manzanitas are sometimes available at California Flora Nursery in Fulton).

The Fountaingrove II Gazette

The Fountaingrove II Gazette is published quarterly by the Fountaingrove II OSMA. Any submission information/requests may be directed to the OSMA Board through its property management company: Focus Real Estate & Investments, Inc. 3936 Mayette Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95405
Phone: 707-544-9443, email: focusre@sonic.net
Kim Nielsen-Glynn, Newsletter Editor, editor@fountaingrove2.com.

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Be sure your name is on our email update list! Join the nearly 250 neighbors already receiving valuable information. You, too, can get timely and important neighborhood notifications. Your name and email address will not be shared with anyone else, and it will be hidden in group emails. Simply send an email with your name to: editor@fountaingrove2.com and state that you wish to be on the email update list.

Contacts

See a problem? Illegal dumping or unauthorized use of open space? A broken irrigation pipe?

Contact Focus Real Estate & Investments at 544-9443.

2009 OSMA Board

President, Dennis Searles
Vice President, Dan Cummins
Treasurer, JPaul Dumont
Secretary, Kim Nielsen-Glynn
Member-at-Large, Bruce McConnell

OSMA Board meetings are usually held at 3:30 on the third Wednesday of the month at Focus Real Estate & Investments, 3936 Mayette Ave. Call 544-9443 to confirm.