

FOUNTAINGROVE II GAZETTE



OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE ASSOCIATION

Summer 2015



Working with Nature - OSMA Cages Native Oaks

With the severe drought and recognition that homegrown natives stand a much better chance of survival than planted specimens, the OSMA decided that it might be a good idea to place cages around well-placed seedlings that are emerging from the soil all on their own.

Several energetic volunteers have spent many days hunting for promising native oak seedlings and saplings (Black Oak, Coast Live Oak, White Oak, Valley Oak), flagging their locations and returning later to build and erect cages around the little trees. It is hoped that with some protection from deer browsing and weed whackers that these small plants will grow into strong, healthy mature trees that never need supplemental watering or stabilizing staking.

Other plants that are being caged in spots include the Madrone, Toyon, Ceanothus and Coffeeberry. All are beautiful native plants with important habitat value.

To date, OSMA has placed 148 cages in landscaped parcels, 52 in open space and 48 in park open space. Once the trees look like they're large enough to fare on their own, we can reuse the existing cages to help along other new seedlings. We will be building more cages this summer and fall. Please contact us if you wish to help.

Vote Required on Updated Docs

It's been nearly two decades since Fountaingrove II and the OSMA came into existence. Since that time, the developers have sold their stakes and left, but we are stuck with legal documents that still delineate their position within the development long after they've gone.

It's time to update our documents. Take out what no longer applies. Insert updated legal requirements, simplify, refine, restate, and improve the ability to read and understand them. Easier said than done, however. The OSMA will need 51% approval from ALL homeowners. It's not just a simple majority of the votes cast. Please, do everyone a favor and approve the restatement of these confusing and outdated documents.

E-Communication: Are you in?

The OSMA has kept an email address list for several years and uses it to let homeowners know of timely news items or alerts. Now, the OSMA is hoping to expand its electronic communication with homeowners. By opting to receive newsletters, news releases, annual reports, etc., via email, homeowners will help to greatly reduce cost of mailing and the waste from photocopying and printing.

There is no requirement that everyone receive communications electronically (opting out is easy and required under the CA Code of Davis-Sterling Act), but the more homeowners comply, the better informed and educated community we will enjoy. Look for the sign up form in an upcoming "snail" mailer.

Dan Cummins

The OSMA and Fountaingrove II have lost a valued contributor to our community. Dan Cummins passed away in late July after struggling with health problems. He spent many years on the Board of OSMA and was also a member of the Architectural Review Committee for the East after spending most of his working life as an electrician, heading up his own company.

Dan was active in helping OSMA manage its open space landscape parcels and served on the Fire and Safety Team and Finance Committee. His many contributions to our onsite management and desire to keep our community safe and well-maintained is deeply appreciated. Dan leaves behind his wife Helen, two daughters and his beloved grandchildren.

Dan's infectious smile, valued contributions, easygoing manner - along with his ever-present Ben Davis work shirts - will be greatly missed.

Fire Safety - Homeowners Must Do Their Part!

Every year, the OSMA Board Members and volunteers walk acres of firebreaks throughout Fountaingrove II. The work our weed abatement crews accomplish is quite remarkable. There are so many dangerously steep, rocky areas that they must traverse with 40 pound pieces of equipment in hand, wearing full-body protective suits, masks and helmets. Because their work is so good, it's easy to find the homeowners who fail to maintain the private property they are responsible for under the CC&Rs and City Ordinances.

This year, OSMA is reporting unmaintained properties to the Architectural Review Committee (in the East) and to the City Weed Abatement Department. It is every homeowner's responsibility to maintain their property - front to back - and, unfortunately, not everyone cares to do their part. The OSMA is reporting scofflaws to support the majority of homeowners who want to live in a fire safe environment, and to help prevent loss of life and property due to a negligent homeowner.

Because we live in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, our obligations include keeping weeds and grasses cut to 4" or under during the fire season, and maintaining brush in a fire safe state (well spaced, thinned out, no ladder fuel) up to the required 100' of defensible space from your residence or to the fence line. The firebreaks OSMA maintain are supplemental to YOUR primary obligation to maintain the required defensible space on your property.

Work in an area near you...

- *Firebreak 14 (Crown Hill / Parker Hill Area) - Removal of unhealthy, unsafe and too-numerous trees and excess fuel near all the fence lines.*
- *Rincon Ridge Park - Fuel reduction, including the removal of non-natives and invasives, dry, woody chaparral along fences.*
- *Fuel Reduction along Rincon Ridge Drive - Thinning of overgrown, sickly or poorly placed landscape plantings/trees along the irrigated landscaped parcels.*
- *Firebreak 5 (Between Heathfield/Chanterelle/Shelter Glen) - Cutting back of overgrown coyote brush and other fuel reduction.*
- *More projects are under study and will be reported to you soon!*

Ongoing Hunt for Property Pins

Take a look at a map of Fountaingrove II and you'll see hundreds of private lots, OSMA and City park open space wildlands, landscaping, private land within but not part of FGII, City owned property such as the fire station, roads, and sidewalks. Within all those pieces of the puzzle are 50 parcels that aggregate nearly 220 acres that OSMA must manage and maintain.

We know where our property lies, but when it comes to those last few feet between OSMA land and private property, the exact location of the lot lines can be a bit of a mystery. One by one, Carlile Macy Engineers have been helping us determine the precise corners of OSMA parcels.

Many homeowners have unfenced lots, so sometimes their landscaping accidentally encroaches onto OSMA or City park land. Unfortunately, many of us with fenced lots mistakenly assume that the fence was placed on the property lines. Not so!

Please bear with us if we request that you remove plants, hardscaping, fencing or any other private property off of open space when it is found to be encroaching. It's the right thing to do, and, legally, the only thing we can do as stewards of the set-aside for Common Open Space, managed under governing legal documents and supervision of the City.

Re-Mulching in West Set

The re-mulching program continues this summer with the West (Parker Hill, Crown Hill and adjacent cul-de-sacs with landscaping). August 10th is the scheduled start date for Atlas Tree Service to oversee the placement of over 800 cubic yards of arbor mulch. They plan to complete the project on August 14th. Please move all vehicles into driveways while this process takes place. Safety is our primary concern with the large vehicles needed during this process. Please keep your windows closed, as well, as there will be dust.

SOD - Further Prevention Tactics

For a few years now, OSMA has been keeping abreast of Sudden Oak Death research, prevention theory and treatment, and has been working to try to keep our most prized oak woodlands healthy for future generations. If you've been following OSMA's work in spraying the oaks to help boost their immunity and our involvement in a study with UC Berkeley, you know the seriousness of the work that's being done.



OSMA's latest foray into SOD prevention is to try to prevent already-cut California Bay Laurel trees from re-sprouting at their bases. Bay Laurels (the main culprits in the spread of SOD to oaks) are amazingly resilient and will send out dozens of new shoots from a stump cut down to the ground. It makes them well-adapted to fire prone areas like ours. If you ever venture out into open space,

you'll see some magnificent examples of where an old California Bay Laurel "mother tree" had been destroyed in a fire (probably the 1964 Hanly Fire) and has been replaced by a many-trunked specimen that has grown from the old main mother stem.

OSMA leaves the healthy, majestic bays, but smaller, unhealthy ones are cut down for fuel reduction and SOD control. The freshly cut stumps need further attention so they don't keep growing back. Currently, the OSMA is experimenting to find the most effective and least harmful method to accomplish that task.

Help! We Need You!

Vandals, poachers, homeless campers, trash dumpers, motorbike riders... The OSMA encounters them or the results of their actions. Very seldom do we receive a phone call from a homeowner about something they've seen. Most often, Board members and volunteers find the problem while checking the open space for safety issues or vendor performance. If you ever see something that doesn't seem quite right, please contact us. We greatly appreciate homeowners who ask us what we're doing behind their fences when they see us. It shows us that someone is paying attention!

So, if you see your neighbor dumping debris over their fence into open space, call us. See someone cutting on a tree (and they are not wearing company shirts or have vehicles from our contractors - Sandborn Tree, Marizco Landscape, Valley Oak Landscaping, Landesign Maintenance)? Please call either: Focus Real Estate & Investments at 544-9443; Dennis Searles, OSMA President - 528-6606, dennis@bpfinance.com; or Kim Nielsen-Glynn - 544-7871, glynn@sonic.net.

Want to get more involved than just making a phone call? We need you more!

Volunteers make this organization go. Without them, our neighborhood wouldn't be fire safe, our forests wouldn't be as healthy and our dues would be a whole lot higher. We love the few volunteers we have, but we need many more! Please consider getting involved! We can't do it alone!

Rincon Ridge Sensitive Plant Area - Wow, What a Difference!

The sensitive native plant area of Rincon Ridge Park, easily recognized because it is surrounded by deer fencing, has been undergoing a stunning transformation, thanks in most part to the efforts of volunteer Don Crane, along with other occasional volunteer helpers.

The area was virtually untouched for many years, which allowed the native chaparral to outgrow its usefulness and become overcrowded. Mother Nature would have kept all the growth in check with wildfire, but where fire cannot be allowed to burn, humans must take over. The fuel reduction is nearing completion. Nesting season has kept the work on hold for a few months, but already we can see happier plants - even in this serious drought.

With the completion of the work in the coming year, we will see a resurgence of the natives that were meant to be protected here: Rincon Manzanita and Rincon Ridge Ceanothus, along with native Coffeeberry, Wavy Leaf Ceanothus, Douglas Iris, Sticky Monkey, Blue-eyed Grass, Bracken Fern, Chaparral Pea, Black and Coast Live Oaks and others. It's an amazingly diverse habitat that for too long was left to waste away.



Fountaingrove II Open Space Is Ours to Preserve and Protect



The Open Space Maintenance Association (OSMA) is responsible for managing 200+ acres of open space within the defined boundaries of the community. Recognized as a Firewise Community since 2009, Fountaingrove II is the first in Sonoma County to garner this distinction.

Contact OSMA: Call our property management company...

Focus Real Estate & Investments at 544-9443.

