

# FOUNTAINGROVE II GAZETTE



OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE ASSOCIATION

Fall 2014



## OSMA Tames Risk from Wildfires in Wildland Parks

Soon after OSMA inked a deal in December 2012 with the City of Santa Rosa to maintain the 13.5 acres of the two wildland parks within Fountaingrove II boundaries, work began in earnest to implement plans to make the parks safer, more attractive and useful for recreation and enjoyment.

Initial efforts included the weed abatement of 9.5 park acres (twice) in 2013. Ray Moritz and his colleagues at Urban Forestry Associates (UFA) were consulted on several occasions to prescribe brush and tree removal in the overgrown city parks. With specified budget limitations, the OSMA Board made strategic decisions on how to best use the funds available.

In 2013, OSMA focused its fuel reduction efforts and budget on Rincon Ridge Park, treating over three acres with the help of OSMA volunteers, supplemented by vendor contract work awarded to Sandborn Tree Services and Marizco Landscape Management. This work included the removal of dangerous, sickly and too-numerous Douglas-firs and brush thinning. Additionally, the firebreaks were expanded along Fountaingrove Parkway and behind the homes of Sedgemoore that abut the park situated off Park Gardens Drive. All tree removals over 6" in diameter were prescribed by UFA, the qualified authority required by OSMA's use permit. Some of the cut trees were made into habitat trees, also required by the use permit.

In 2014, OSMA continued to weed abate 9.5 acres of the Fountaingrove parks and allocated the bulk of its fuel reduction budget to removing chaparral, broom, poison oak, dead trees, and too numerous Douglas-firs and California bay laurel trees on the 4.3 acres of Parker Hill Park.

Volunteers removed a significant amount of invasive broom in the first two months of the year, but the bulk of chaparral thinning and tree removals prescribed by UFA were performed by Sandborn. The results are spectacular and the trees, which include many majestic oaks, can now be enjoyed for the beauty and habitat values they add to the neighborhood. For years, the black and coast live oaks in the park struggled to compete with the faster-growing and taller Douglas-firs or the bay laurels that, in addition to their height, also act as host for the pathogen *Phytophthora ramorum* that transmits the fatal Sudden Oak Death Syndrome (SOD) to these two oak species. The oaks now have more sunlight and available nutrients, plus a better chance of avoiding SOD.



Parker Hill Park

A couple of years ago, U.C. Berkeley confirmed the presence of an SOD-infected bay tree in Parker Hill Park, and this and other symptomatic and sickly bays were removed by Sandborn as part of the fuel reduction project.

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## What's Been Happening...

- Received a significant increase in volunteers' assistance to control invasives in the wildland parks and help with OSMA's cooperative research program with Matteo Garbelotto of U.C. to monitor the pathogen of SOD. Volunteers collected 71 bay leaf samples for testing of the pathogen for SOD. Four of these samples tested as positive by the Garbelotto lab.
- Conducted hikes through various parts of our open space, introducing more people to the beauty and complexity of the wildlands all around us.
- Consulted with UFA about making our landscaped irrigated parcels more fire safe.
- Increased OSMA fuel-reduced wildlands by 7.3 acres in 2013 and 6.3 acres in 2014, plus 8 acres of parkland for a total increase of nearly 22 acres during the two year period.
- Increased weed-abated acreage from 98 acres in 2013 to 105 acres in 2014. After the addition of OSMA's 2014 fuel reduction, weed-abated acreage will total nearly 112 acres in 2015.
- Removed dangerous trees in open space.
- Removed irrigation from established trees in some of our irrigated open space to save water and protect the trees from root rot.
- Installed new native plant landscaping at the lower end of Fountaingrove Parkway near Chanate.
- Continued our re-mulching program and completed projects on both sides of Fountaingrove Parkway.
- Consulted with engineers and contractors about fixing the erosion problems on some of our fire roads.
- Purchased weed pullers for OSMA volunteers to use for removing invasive broom plants.
- Continued to propagate and plant endemic rare natives in open space.
- Continued to improve our [fountaingroveii.com](http://fountaingroveii.com) website.
- Removed trees and shrubs that were traffic and pedestrian sight line problems.
- Fuel-reduced the landscaped parcels located off the Crown Hill Road cul-de-sacs.
- Continued our work to remain in compliance as one of just two Firewise Communities in Sonoma County.
- Developed a short- and long-term plan to manage the Fountaingrove II wildland parks in a fire-safe manner.
- Removed dangerous old barbed wire fencing that impeded maintenance and wildlife passage and were girdling oaks.
- Became more involved in the study and treatment of Sudden Oak Death in our open space, including establishing contact with U.C. Berkeley to develop a research study to evaluate the spraying of oaks in Fountaingrove II.

## Well, Well... Lookie Here!

It was really right under our noses the entire time. For those of us who frequent our open spaces on a somewhat regular basis, finding an old abandoned well / swimming hole was indeed an unexpected turn of events. But, there it was.

The OSMA Board consulted with several different authorities to get an idea on how we should proceed. It didn't seem safe. It was located in a pit about five feet below grade with a wooden box structure that had once been covered in the center.



Our probes indicated that the water was over seven feet deep. Should someone fall into it, he or she might not be able to get out. Most everyone we consulted was also surprised by our finding and amazed at the clarity of the water that bubbled up from below, but few had solid suggestions except that we should try to preserve this hidden treasure.

Based upon the suggestion of an environmental scientist of California Fish and Wildlife, the Board decided to fill the vast watery hole with river cobble rock to prevent a possible drowning, and still allow the water to flow to the top from the underground springs. Unfortunately, the attractive and functional cobble rock came too late for a fawn, but now the site is safer, still beautiful, and the water is still crystal clear. Gorgeous!



There had been debris at the site indicating someone had an interest in "cultivation." It is in all our best interest to keep as much of our open space easily accessible by foot and by sight to reduce the likelihood of any criminal or mischievous activity of any kind. In addition to the rock, many small Douglas-firs, broom, coyote brush and fallen trees and limbs were removed nearby as part of a larger fuel-reduction project.

H I G H L I G H T S

*The Fire Station is Coming*



Exciting news! The long-awaited fire station at the top of Fountaingrove is almost here! Funding was secured for the long-awaited project and construction on the site at the corner of Fountaingrove Parkway and Newgate is well underway. Construction should be nearly completed by the end of the year, and the station is targeted to become operational in February, 2015.

Currently, fire response times in Santa Rosa are 4 minutes or under... unless you live in Fountaingrove. There's a lot of bulk to truck up that big hill of ours (big trucks with tons of water weight), but when the Parker Hill station moves to the top of the parkway, response times to us and those in the surrounding environs will vastly improve - because it's all down hill from here!

We are so fortunate that the fire station will soon be servicing our very high fire hazard severity zone in the near future. When a fire does occur - and it will - help will be that much closer. And should you ever need emergency medical help, you'll be thankful for the quick response time a nearer station will provide.

The attractive architectural design will fit well within our community, and the noise and privacy accommodations that have been incorporated to provide a neighbor-friendly station are quite impressive. All the design and operating procedures were reviewed by the community and were approved by the City Council a few years ago.

**Come meet some of our new neighbors (the Station #5 Fire Department Crew) at the OSMA Annual Meeting on November 12<sup>th</sup> at the Fountaingrove Club. It all starts at 6:30 p.m.**

**Junkyard & Barbed Wire Fence Cleanup**

One of the items long on the list of projects for OSMA to tackle was an area below Parker Hill Road. Long before Fountaingrove II was developed, it appears to have been an area where people would discard their junk haphazardly down a steep embankment into a ravine. Dozens of tires, an old water heater and other appliances and garbage had accumulated over the years, left there for someone else to deal with. The area had

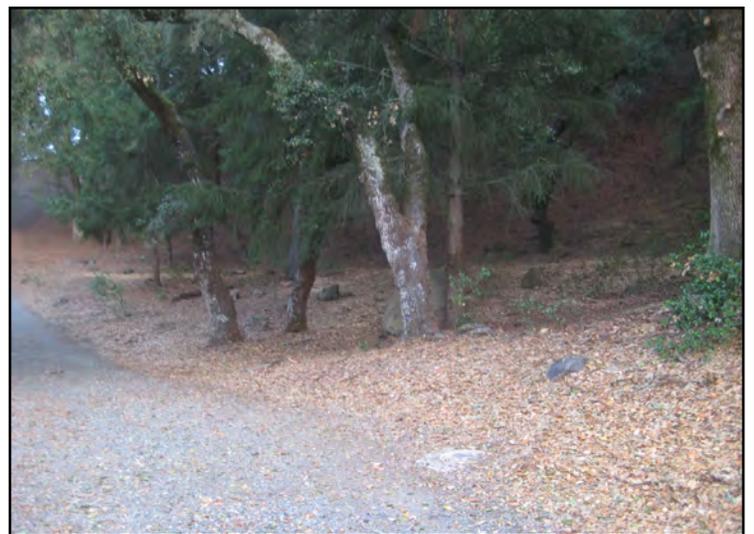


become not only an unattractive eyesore, but dangerous for humans and wildlife. The time finally came to clean it up!

Hundreds of yards of old

barbed wire fencing were removed throughout the area adjacent to the junkyard and extending to open space adjacent to Manor Park Place. It, too, had long been an issue that needed attention, preventing access and creating safety hazards for volunteers and contractors in our open space. Once the fencing

was gone, access into those formerly cordoned off areas was opened up. Along with the trash, crews reduced fuel loads and removed excess trees allowing more airflow around valuable heritage oaks. In all, about two acres of land was treated along the fire road that extends behind and between the residences of 3903 and 3933 Parker Hill Road. There are still plenty of broken glass bottles emerging through the leaves and duff here and there, so if you hike through, be careful - and maybe bring a trash bag!



P A R K S

Continued from Page 1.

Volunteer work continued in the 2.3 acres within the fenced area of Rincon Ridge that was set aside to protect the indigenous and rare rincon manzanita and rincon ceanothus. Significant thinning was done by several volunteers during the first part of 2014, and City Parks arranged for debris boxes for complimentary removal by the City’s trash hauling company, North Bay. Recently, Don and Fran Crane have spent considerable time trimming dead chaparral, poison oak, and pyrophytic dense chaparral such as coyote brush and chamise. Their significant contribution has expanded the fuel-reduced acreage to over 20% of the fenced Rincon Ridge Park. The fenced portion of Rincon Ridge was among our most dangerous fire safety issues on city park land. We thank all the volunteers for their efforts in making this area a safer place for the community and wildlife.

Take a look at the wonderfully wooded sites and you’ll be amazed at the beauty within both of these non-developed parks. The end result is that the city park property is beginning to look like a healthy habitat – thanks to the help of significant volunteer effort.

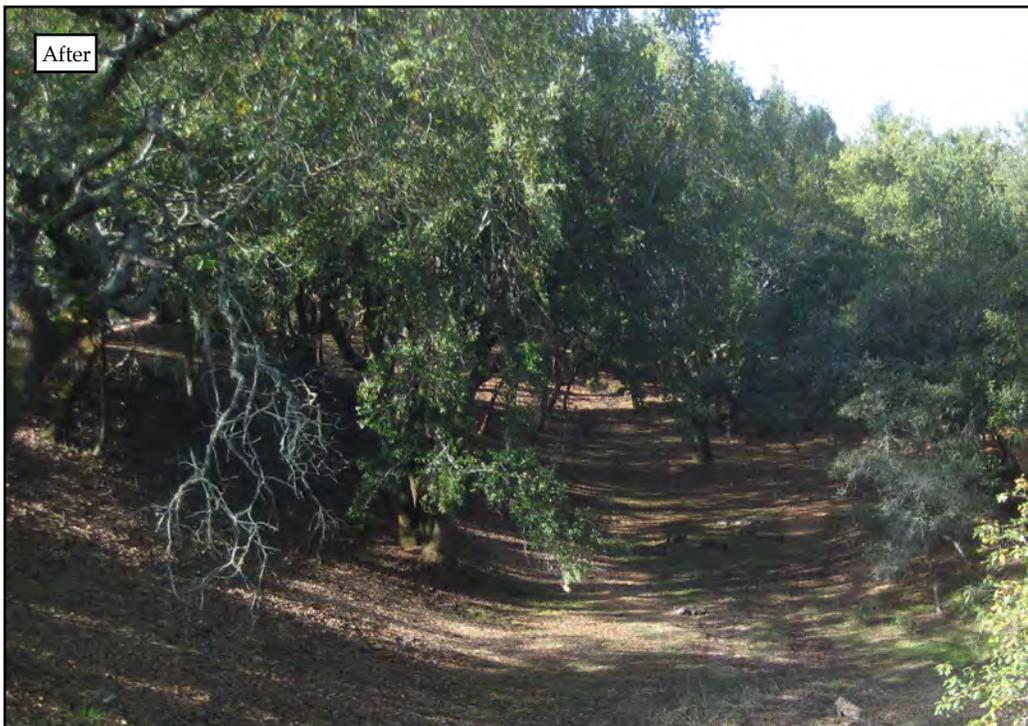
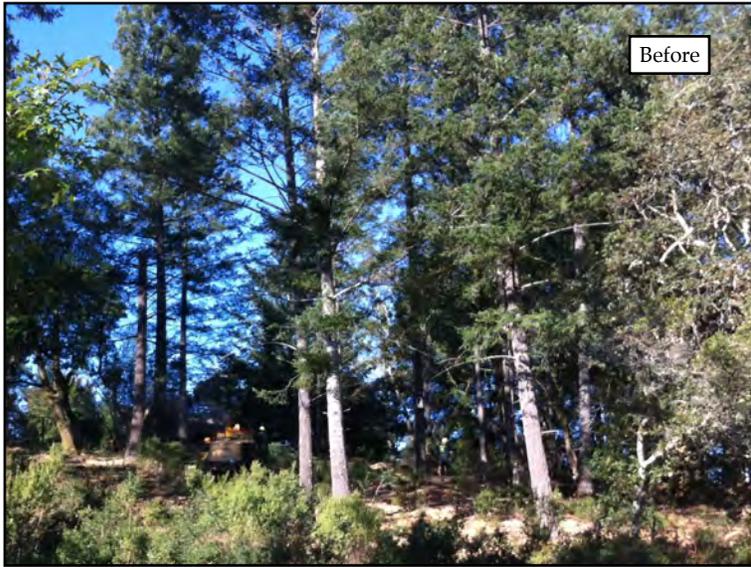
Although OSMA has tamed nearly eight acres of the wildland parks in fewer than two years, there is still more work to do.

One of the biggest areas of concern within the park properties is the hill that rises between Sedgemoore Drive and Repton Way. The homes along that parcel have beautiful scenery, but there’s too much fuel behind them. It’s mostly a sunny, dry slope dense with chaparral plants like coyote brush, chamise, manzanita, sage and chaparral pea. OSMA plans to reduce the fuel in this area as its budget and priorities allow.

To leverage its funds, OSMA has focused its priorities on where it can get the biggest bang for its buck. Hillsides with poor access can be extremely expensive to have fuel reduced by contractors, and asking OSMA volunteers to do this dangerous work is not a desirable option. OSMA has asked the Santa Rosa Fire Department to assist us in obtaining help from the Cal Fire labor crews to help clean up the chaparral in this area to make it more fire safe. The extreme drought and high fire danger has not helped OSMA secure these services. Our hope is that approval will come in the near term to help OSMA treat the parcel sooner rather than later when funds allow.



P A R K S



## Volunteers

The OSMA is delighted to have eager and capable volunteer help within the parks when the right projects arise. Please let us know if you are interested in helping us reduce the fuel loads while preserving the precious rare native plants residing within our open space and our parks.

Dates for more volunteer opportunities will be announced soon.

# OSMA's Sudden Oak Death Prevention Measures

Sudden Oak Death (SOD), the tree disease that is killing oaks in California by the hundreds of thousands, is also killing oaks in Fountaingrove II open space. SOD infects many different plants (big leaf maple, madrone, manzanita, coffeeberry, camellia, rhododendron, redwood, Douglas-fir, California buckeye, toyon, lilac, viburnum and many more), but it's the plentiful California bay laurel that mostly transmits the disease to susceptible oaks, and once an oak is infected with the disease it usually means certain death. Why are we worried about SOD? Oaks are a hugely important element to the many living things within our ecosystem. Over 300 species rely on oaks as habitat or food sources. That cannot be said of almost any other tree in our forests. The oaks that are present in our open space include the black oak and coast live oak, which can become infected with SOD, while the Oregon white oak and valley oak seem to be safe from the disease thus far.

Two years ago, OSMA started a program to spray oaks with Agri-Fos and Pentra-Bark as preventative measures against the spread of Sudden Oak Death (SOD). (Agri-Fos is a fungicide that "turns on" the natural defense mechanisms through the vascular system in the oak tree to help resist disease-causing pathogens. Pentra-Bark is a surfactant that helps the tree absorb the Agri-Fos through its bark and into its vascular system).

In 2012, the OSMA cataloged just over

400 oak trees in in the area known as Firebreaks 11 and 12, located behind Parker Hill Road and above Manor Park Place, to be sprayed. (OSMA does not spray trees that are not

susceptible). Flags were placed at each tree so that our vendor spraying the chemical mixture with Agri-Fos would know which trees to treat. In 2013, OSMA volunteers, along with arborists from Urban Forestry Associates (UFA), identified well over 760 oak trees for tracking and treating, almost double the previous year's inventory. Again, flags were placed at every tree to be treated.

The 760+ oaks are a mix of 15% black oaks and 85% coast live oaks. They were also permanently tagged with a numbered blue metal disc, identified with a GPS location and measured for their diameter at breast height (DBH). Their GPS locations were mapped into a computer program for tracking into the future.

Spraying was scheduled to be done in the fall of 2013, but was delayed due to the extremely dry conditions with the hope some rain would fall to help move the spray into the vascular system of the trees. The treatment was finally completed in February of 2014.

This year, OSMA started a dialogue with the leading authority in SOD, Matteo Garbelotto of U.C. Berkeley. In June, he visited Fountaingrove II and met with UFA and OSMA Board



Above: A coast live oak infected with SOD. In the photo, the left and lower side still has green foliage, whereas the upper portion turned brown over a period of weeks. Below: Same tree showing "frass" from beetles that attacked the weakened tree. It looks like sawdust sprinkled over the mossy bark.



S . O . D .

Continued from Page 6.

members and volunteers. The purpose was to discuss a potential research site for an oak spraying project to be managed by OSMA with assistance from UFA and Matteo Garbelotto. OSMA hopes to leverage the knowledge and resources of Garbelotto and UFA to conduct a study in our open space that will provide insight into the best way to combat SOD by spraying black and live oaks. A couple of studies on spraying for SOD have been done on Tanoaks (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*) – a tree that is not related to true oaks (*Quercus*), but there is scant research on true oaks. There are no tanoaks within our open space.

SOD was confirmed on a few oaks during the past few months by both Garbelotto and UFA. OSMA thinks that using our *Quercus* species to help find the best way to combat the disease is a logical and important path to follow. Using Garbelotto’s guidelines, the plan is to divide up the similar trees into four risk groups based upon their proximity to bays. These four risk groups will then be treated in three different ways (sprayed once a year in the fall, sprayed every other year in the fall, or not sprayed at all “control group”).

As part of the setup of the study, California bay laurel leaves that appeared to be symptomatic for SOD were gathered and tested. SOD lives on the bay laurel’s leaves and does not affect the tree otherwise. Known as the “Typhoid Mary” for the oaks, the bay laurel infects the oaks nearby when the SOD spores travel in wet and windy weather. In the oaks, SOD does not sit on the leaves, rather it is a vascular disease that can be a death sentence.

Interestingly, all of the 49 tested bay leaves from Firebreaks 11 and 12 came back with negative results this year, even though the area is known to have SOD. (Four trees that were tested

from another part of Fountaingrove II, next to a tributary of Paulin Creek, did test positive). Garbelotto told us that these negative results have been typical this year and that he believes the extended drought has killed many of the SOD spores that live on the bay leaves – except for those near a year-round water source. Most likely when the rains and fog return, so will the incidence of SOD spores on the bay laurels throughout our open space.



Photos above and below: Ray Moritz of UFA and Matteo Garbelotto of U.C. Berkeley talk about Sudden Oak Death in OSMA open space.

We hope the results of our spray testing will provide Fountaingrove II - and many other California communities - with more scientific evidence on how to move forward in combatting this terrible pathogen.

The OSMA properties are home to thousands of oak trees in danger of succumbing to SOD, however, the probability of greatly expanding the prevention program further is not likely. Vendors who spray the trees need easy access to their trucks and a water supply, which in most of our open space areas is virtually impossible. The OSMA’s goal has been to try to preserve our most significant oak wildlands, which are located in the Parker Hill area.

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This year, OSMA will be spraying between now and the end of the year since this is the timeframe Matteo Garbelotto of prefers for the research project.

Most of the work locating, tagging and flagging oak trees is done by a handful of volunteers. If you’re interested in helping out with this worthwhile project, please contact Dennis Searles at [dennis@bpfinance.com](mailto:dennis@bpfinance.com) or Kim Nielsen-Glynn at

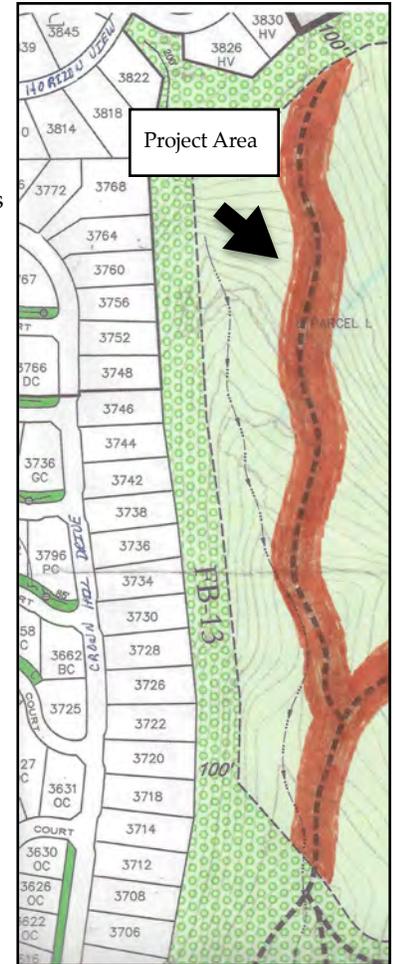
[glynn@sonic.net](mailto:glynn@sonic.net) soon. If you can’t help this round, don’t worry – there will be many other opportunities to assist with this ongoing program.

## Chipping Away at Our Biggest Challenge

The OSMA has had its eye on one part of our open space that spans acreage in both the Fountaingrove II East and West for some time. It lies between Crown Hill Drive, Horizon View, Rocky Point Way, Boulder Point and Hadley Hill and even abuts Fountaingrove Parkway in a couple of spots. The large open space parcel that encompasses several firebreaks (Firebreaks 6, 7, 8 and 13) is a steep hillside/valley area that transitions from oak woodland to Douglas-fir overgrowth to dense chaparral and grasslands. Also interspersed among the native trees and shrubs are invasive broom and Monterey pine trees, neither of which belong here or are a desirable mix in our forest for habitat or fire safety. Access for equipment and crews has always been OSMA's major challenge in the area, as there is only one vehicle entry/exit point out of the entire 60+ acre parcel.

After much deliberation on how to approach the project area, it was decided to use the existing "fire roads," which were probably just old jeep trails originally, and start to chip away at the dense overgrown plant matter along both sides of those roads so that crews could traverse and work close to their equipment. Requests for proposal (RFPs) were submitted to vendors, and the budget numbers allowed the OSMA Board to award a 4.4 acre project to Sandborn Tree Service below the homes of Crown Hill in Firebreak 13. Crews fuel-reduced an area 50 feet deep on both sides of a 1900' stretch along the existing fire road. The work created an interior firebreak and was less expensive than trying to extend the existing firebreaks below the Crown Hill homes, as that area is steep and inaccessible.

Just as with other fuel-reduction projects, this one has opened up scenery and plants that had previously been hidden in thickets of dead, dry brambles. Now you can find large, red-skinned manzanita or orange barked madrones and oaks in full view, plus enjoy the scenic small creek that winds its way through the valley.



Before



After



## Landscape Mulch

Over the past three years, OSMA embarked on a major re-mulching program that will continue cyclically into the future. It's a huge project with our 20 acres of landscaped parcels, particularly with our high fire danger area and many areas facing dangerous traffic situations for the application process.

OSMA researched its options for mulch products and application processes to try to find the most economical and fire-safe selections for our landscaped parcels. Every organic mulch is combustible. As a matter of fact, authorities strongly encourage everyone in a fire prone neighborhood to keep at least the first five feet from a structure a "non-combustible zone" with only concrete, rock or gravel next to the house. That can be a tough sell, but it's something to consider in our very high fire danger hazard severity zone. Rock or gravel mulch wasn't a feasible option for OSMA, so our best option was composted wood chips. One thing the OSMA will not be putting onto its landscaping ever again is shredded redwood or cedar mulch. Most authorities agree that it is highly flammable - up there with shredded rubber and pine needles. Do yourself and your neighbors a favor. The next time you mulch your yard, steer clear of shredded mulch. Although the price may be right, it might pay to spend a little more to have a more fire-safe mulch product (composted wood chips, for example) near your very expensive home.

The first phase of re-mulching in 2012, which covered the areas of Rincon Ridge and the courts on Hadley Hill, was a learning process for OSMA. With further research and a return to local

sources, the second phase of mulch was spread along Fountaingrove Parkway on the westbound side in mid-October 2013. The mulch came from Atlas Tree Service and ended up being a superior product and process than the previous year. Although there are no absolute guarantees of any mulch being debris-free (one little plastic bag caught on a branch can be shredded into a thousand pieces as it's fed into a chipper), the mulch from Atlas was nearly free of "junk" we've seen in previous mulch applications (pieces of palettes, laminated MDF, painted fence boards). The third phase, on the opposite side of the parkway, was also done by Atlas in August, 2014. Next year, the cul-de-sacs off of Crown Hill are due for refreshing.

For more information, log onto a Firewise YouTube video on the subject: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN\\_nImd8Dbk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GN_nImd8Dbk)



## *What Makes an Effective Firebreak in the open space?*

We talk about firebreaks all the time. Your monthly dues, in part, pay for the maintenance of the firebreaks in the open space. But, what makes a good firebreak? Is it a moonscape denuded of all vegetation? No trees? No shrubs? No grasses? No nothing? Well, not exactly.

It's taken several years of education and evolving laws on fire safety, but the OSMA finally has a pretty good handle on what constitutes a desirable firebreak today. The best type is called a "shaded firebreak." That's where there are enough tall trees to create large swaths of shade, but not so many so that the tops of the trees touch each other. "Crown-to-crown separation" is a good thing in pre-fire preparation. Just like Goldilocks, not too many, not too few, but just right. The OSMA is always trying to strike a balance with the correct number and placement of trees. Ray Moritz of UFA introduced OSMA to the concept and reasons for shaded fuel breaks several years ago. Wherever and whenever OSMA does fuel reduction in the wildlands, creating a shaded fuel break is a primary objective.

During fuel reduction or their treatment for regrowth, shrubs growing in the area are thinned so that there are no large masses of foliage, or they are removed altogether if they are "ladder fuel" – i.e.: any vegetation that can carry low flames higher into a tree. Once a wildfire is carried into the trees, the flames elongate and the energy and intensity vastly increases.

The right amount of shade creates an understory that retains moisture. Even on the hottest days, those areas will be cooler with higher humidity and less of a risk during a fire. Think about when you're out for a walk. Sometimes the temperature difference can be remarkably different between a hot, dry slope compared to a shaded stand of trees. Shaded areas also tend to discourage the growth of grasses, broom and other less desirable flora, so maintenance is much less labor intensive. Shaded firebreaks have an added value; we benefit from a beautiful landscape that's also full of habitat value.

## Fire Safety Starts at Your Own Front Door

Remember, we live in a very high fire hazard severity zone. Here are some important rules on keeping your home more fire-safe so that you, your loved ones and your neighbors can be better prepared and help firefighters better defend your property and your lives. Start from your front and back doors and work out from there.

### Home Ignition Zone

Keep leaves and fir needles off your roof and deck. They can catch fire from flying embers. Create a fuel-free area within 3-5 feet of your home's perimeter. Then, from 5 feet to a minimum of 30 feet out, thin and space vegetation, remove dead leaves and needles, prune shrubs and tree limbs. Keep areas around decks, sheds, fences and swing sets clear of debris and vegetation.

### Landscaping and Fire-Wise Plants

To prevent fire spread, trim back branches that overhang structures and prune branches of large trees up to 6 to 10 feet from the ground. Remove plants containing resins, oils, and waxes; make sure organic mulch is at least 5 feet from structures. Choose fire-wise plants – find lists at [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) or [www.fountaingroveii.com](http://www.fountaingroveii.com).

### Fire-Resistant Attachments

Any attachments to your home (decks, porches, fences) must be fire-resistant. If not, your entire home is vulnerable to ignition. Remove anything stored under decks. Storing firewood for the winter under your deck? Don't even think about it. Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating. Move any flammable material away from wall exteriors.

Fire climbs neighboring trees like a ladder. To reduce the chance of fire climbing a tree, limb trees at least 6-15 feet or the lower 1/3 of branches of smaller trees.



Graphics developed by Riverside County Fire

## Yes, it can happen here...

When wildfires raged through the state of Colorado two years in a row, it may have seemed that it was far away and had no relation to any of our own fire safety concerns, but that's far from true. Just by looking at the before and after photos from the Waldo Canyon Fire in 2012, it's painfully apparent how similar our neighborhoods are: many homes built in a wildland urban interface (WUI) on hilly terrain. In the Waldo Canyon Fire alone, 347 homes were destroyed, and insurance claims were made totaling over \$450 million. Of the 18,247 acres (29 square miles) burned, 1,516 acres (2.4 sq. mi) were in residential areas.

Fountaingrove II encompasses approximately 600 total acres. It is incumbent upon each of us to plant and maintain our landscapes as though a wildfire could erupt at any time. It's your responsibility to your family and to your neighbors.



## OSMA Annual Meeting / Firewise Meeting Set for November 12th

The combination Annual Meeting and Firewise Meeting for OSMA is scheduled for Wednesday, November 12th at 6:30. Please make plans to come to the Fountaingrove Club that evening. The guest speakers include the crew from our own Station #5 of the Santa Rosa Fire Department, who will share updates on the new fire station as well as tips for fire safety around the home. Ever have to use a fire extinguisher? Let the professionals show you how before you need it!

Also, Ray Moritz from Urban Forestry Associates will provide insights into fire safety and forest health in our open space properties, and comment on the value of trees and tree law, something with which OSMA has to contend when faced with trees illegally desecrated by homeowners.

Of course, there's always an enormously entertaining and informative video of the past year's accomplishments, as well as election results and answers to your questions! Please join your neighbors in attending this important meeting. It's just once a year and the fire safety information you hear may save your property and your lives.

## Erosion Control Measures to be Implemented



Erosion is a serious problem that the OSMA must fight on an ongoing basis. When the open space property was initially turned over to the OSMA, it came with no instructions. No one said, "Hey, here's how this hill was assembled and you should know that you're going have to invest in lots of outdoor plumbing work in the coming years." It's been an ongoing search for answers.... and sometimes we don't know what questions to ask.

The way in which many of the hillsides, home building sites, roads and drainage systems were designed was, in many cases, far from ideal. When rains come in torrents, most of our drainage systems are overrun, causing strong gushes of raging water that quickly eat away at the delicate topsoil and send portions of our access roads down into the valleys below. It's a shame that the engineers and developers didn't think harder and longer about the long-term effects of water and drainage on our fragile hillsides, but here we are.

The OSMA plans on helping alleviate some of the damage being done with the use of some engineered stabilization systems and water bars in some of our key problem areas. We hope that some redirection of water flow will help save headaches in the future.

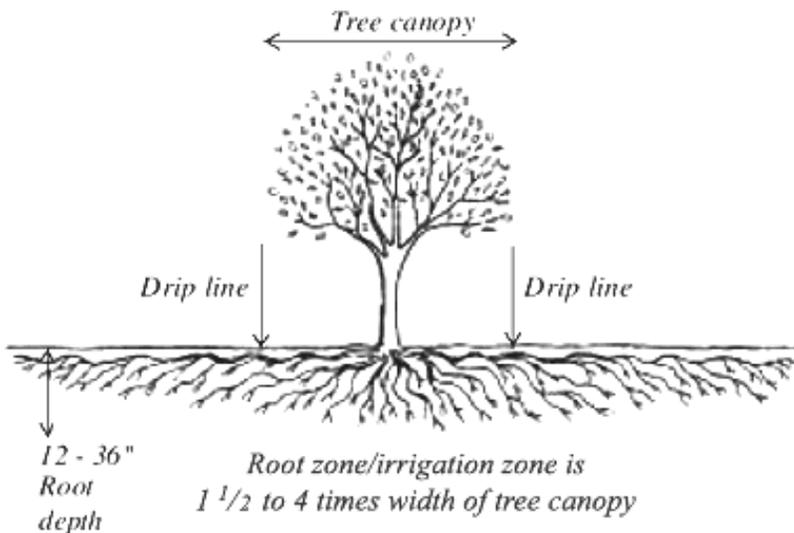
## Are you creating a hazardous tree?

All our homes are reaching or surpassing the decade mark, along with the landscaping. If you haven't looked at those ten-year-old trees in your yard, you might be missing something.

Trees whose trunks are much larger than the support stakes to which they are still bound may be crying out for release. Too often, straps placed to initially stabilize newly planted young trees become methods of strangulation as the trees grow. If you have trees that have been staked for more than three years, review whether you should get rid of those stakes by pulling them out of the ground (Don't break them off at ground level. The stakes are treated with chemicals to prevent rot and breaking them will release more toxins). If the trees can't stand on their own, they never will.

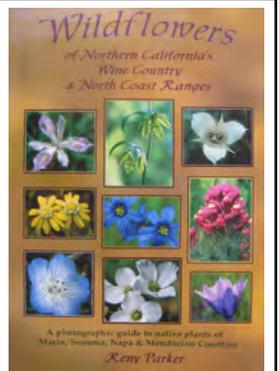
What about irrigation? Did you know that the drippers that are probably resting at the base of your trees are providing nothing for your trees except a perfect opportunity for rot to weaken them? The roots that take in moisture and nutrients do not exist at the base of a tree. They reach out to the "drip line" and beyond. Maybe lazy or less-than-knowledgeable landscapers left you with an irrigation hose that wraps around the base of your tree. Move those hoses and drippers, or remove them completely if the tree is native or can get adequate water from the irrigation on surrounding plants.

Do your trees a favor and pay some much needed attention to them. They will repay you with years of better health and safer stability.



## Wildflower Reference Book

For anyone interested in finding out more about the native wildflowers and plants that exist in our open space, one of the best reference books available for the flora in our area is Wildflowers of Northern California's Wine Country & North Coast Ranges by Reny Parker.



Its easy-to-use format divides up the flowers by color so that finding a photograph of a particular plant is fairly quick. The book also gives descriptions of the plants' habits, uses, history and garden tips. In addition, Parker includes photos and descriptions of several invasive plants that may seem like natives to the untrained eye.

Heading out into the wild lands for a nature hike? Tote along this guide for a fun education.

# *Fountaingrove II Open Space Is Ours to Preserve and Protect*

*The Open Space Maintenance Association (OSMA) is responsible for managing the 200+ acres of open space within the defined boundaries of the community in a fire-safe and environmentally responsible manner. Recognized as a Firewise Community, Fountaingrove II is the first of just two communities in Sonoma County to garner this distinction.*

*Find out more by visiting our website: [www.fountaingroveii.com](http://www.fountaingroveii.com). Check out our Annual Reports to the City for all our activities over the past years.*



A PUBLICATION OF THE FOUNTAINGROVE II OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE ASSOCIATION

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE OSMA ANNUAL MEETING / FIREWISE MEETING,  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12TH AT 6:30 AT THE FOUNTAINGROVE CLUB!**

Fountaingrove II  
Open Space Maintenance Association  
% Focus Real Estate and Investments  
3936 Mayette Ave.  
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

*To view this newsletter in full color, go to [www.fountaingroveii.com](http://www.fountaingroveii.com).*