

FOUNTAINGROVE II

The OSMA Newsletter is published quarterly by the Fountaingrove II Open Space Maintenance Association.



Our 200 acres of wildland habitat is home to dozens of species of birds and animals. Get to know them.



Be Smart with Water

Everyone is aware we're facing a critical water shortage that requires all of us to be mindful of our use and mis-use of the water we have available. Water-saving rules are in place and must be adhered to by all of us during this drought. Please be a responsible water user. See the City of Santa Rosa guidelines at: <https://srcity.org/3555/Drought>



Our Airborne Neighbors

Fountaingrove is a birdwatcher's dream and we will be highlighting some of the species we share our home with. The better we know and understand the wild habitat around us, the more we will appreciate the responsibility we all share in preserving its health. This issue we'll get to know our Acorn Woodpeckers, you may be surprised at what you learn.



What Does the OSMA Do?

Fountaingrove II open space is home to many species of mammals, birds and reptiles, as well as several species of rare and endangered native plants. The OSMA is responsible for maintaining a healthy natural environment while reducing the threat of a wild fire. OSMA is managed by an elected, all volunteer board of directors.

The unseen wilderness you drive by every day in Fountaingrove.

Our Wildlands incorporate miles of trails or old fire roads that provide routes for hikers to enjoy our treasure of trees, wildflowers, native plants and animals. Maps of these routes are available so you can locate and plan your adventure. Enjoy our open space, but do so in a safe manner. It's not recommended that you hike alone. The terrain can be challenging and grass can be slippery. You should always be alert for ticks, and poison oak. Enjoy the outdoors, but wear proper clothing and always take a cell phone in case you need assistance.

We stay prepared for fire throughout the open space. Be sure your property is prepared and defensible as well.

Every year, the OSMA Board Members and volunteers (thank you) walk acres of fire breaks throughout Fountaingrove II monitoring fire safe conditions. Our weed abatement crews do an incredible job given the terrain, but homeowners are also encouraged to maintain fire-safe conditions around homes and property. Our OSMA firebreaks are critical but your personal efforts also make a real difference..





From the OSMA Board

From the OSMA Board

Fountaingrove II open space is home to many species of mammals, birds and reptiles, as well as an abundance of native plants, many rare and endangered. The OSMA is responsible for maintaining a healthy natural environment while reducing the threat of wildfire. OSMA is managed by an all volunteer board of directors elected by our property owners.

Suggestions and Questions

As your board, our job is to oversee the maintenance and integrity of our open space as viable, healthy habitat, but we also want to be responsive to your questions as to how we are required to perform our caretaker duties. If you have a suggestion or a question on this or any other open space topic, please let us know. Chances are others would be interested as well. We welcome all questions and comments — osmanews@sonic.net.

Newsletter Content

Our intent with this newsletter is to address a range of topics relative to life in Fountaingrove, from the heritage we all share to our shared responsibilities in keeping this the “wonder” we’re all proud of.

Contributors will be sharing knowledge you should enjoy: several authorities on Sonoma County bird populations, the California Native Plant Society on our native and endangered plant life, and other contributors on wildlife habitat. Also tips on hiking and exploring our wild land trails safely and respectfully.

If there are other areas you’d like to see addressed as well, email your comments or questions to: Leslie Cohen at: leslie@focus-re.com.

In the Beginning...

Fountaingrove — The envisioned dream of the Wonder Seekers

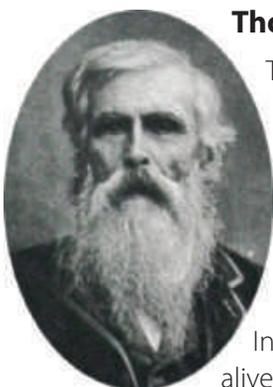
We all see Fountaingrove as unique, a special place to call home. But you may not be aware of how these hills once captured the imagination of dreamers with its *aura of wonder*. Much has been researched about the early days of these ridge tops and valleys but few if any have recorded this history with the insight and accuracy of Gaye LeBaron.

Former featured columnist and still a regular contributor to the Press Democrat, Gaye is best known for her preservation of local history both in terms of wonderfully illustrative columns and a virtual library of books assuring who we were and what we did in Sonoma County will never be forgotten.



In future issues, we’ll explore Gaye’s rich and in-depth history, focusing on the colorful and even controversial figures who sought to carve out their dreams in what they saw as the ultimate spiritual environment. Gaye’s most recent book, *The Wonder Seekers of Fountaingrove*, tells it all. She’s made signed, hardcover copies available to us that we may offer them to our members for \$15, proceeds going to future wildland projects.

Watch for these glimpses into the past—or get a head start by taking advantage of Gaye’s generosity and add *The Wonder Seekers* to your home library. A great addition to your book club also, while you learn about our history here in Fountaingrove. To order a book, email Leslie Cohen at: leslie@focus-re.com.



Thomas Lake Harris

There’s no better place to begin the Fountaingrove story than with the self proclaimed deity who created a mystique that drew followers from around the world. Among the entranced were British author and former member of Parliament, Laurance Oliphant and from Japan, young samurai, Kanaye Nagasawa who would, in time, become heir to the collective Fountain Grove vision.

In amazing detail, Gaye and collaborator Bart Casey bring alive an intriguing era in Santa Rosa history as only they could.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Bruce McConnell, OSMA Board President

The immense job of recovery.

It's been four years since that horrific night of the Tubbs fire. During the predawn and midmorning hours of Oct 9th almost 85% of the Fountaingrove II Open Space and residents' homes burned. An event that forever changed the lives of all that called the community of Fountaingrove II their home.

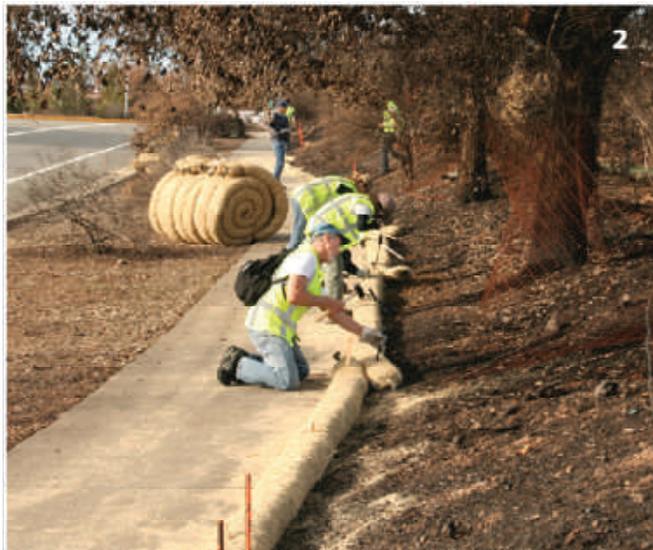
I think it is important to provide some history of what has occurred since the Tubbs Fire to bring our landscaped and wildland areas back to life. The following is presented as historical information. This documentation will be in two parts. This issue of the OSMA Newsletter will document the containment of fire contaminants, replanting shrubs and trees in the landscape areas, reestablishing irrigation systems and repairs to OSMA drainage infrastructure.

Recovery Begins!

October 2017—The Board members, three of whom lost their homes to the Tubbs fire, met a few weeks after the fire and began the planning process to repair infrastructure and remove and replant thousands of shrubs and trees. But, the

first task for the OSMA had nothing to do with infrastructure or plants, rather it was to install over five miles of straw wattles. This was necessary to keep the fire contaminants remaining on the burned soil from washing into the storm drains and ultimately ending up in the Russian River Watershed. Thanks to some grant funding and volunteers, some local and others from all parts of the North and South Bay, installation of all five miles of straw wattles was completed before the winter rains.

Early in 2018, planning began for our first replanting project which occurred along Fountaingrove Parkway and Rincon Ridge Drive. On April 21, 2018, with the help of volunteers, a Grant totaling \$55,000 from the Arbor Day Foundation - Comcast and management support by the California Urban Forests Council, we planted 330 shrubs and trees and installed approximately two miles of irrigation tubing to support the new plantings. Concurrent with this planting project was the beginning of a three-year project to replace 18 irrigation controllers and backflow prevention valves, plus a pressure booster pump.



1 Five miles of straw wattles were delivered Nov. 28, 2017.

2 Wattles were installed by volunteers prior to the winter rains.

3 Eighteen irrigation control boxes and backflow prevention valves had to be replaced during the three year replanting project.

4 Burned storm water pipe connecting to a Drain Box along Parker Hill Rd. Discovered Nov 16, 2017 while City Water Personnel were flushing water mains.

5 Nov 28, 2017, repairing a drain box connecting to a storm water drain under Dafford Pl.



THE PRESIDENT’S CORNER *continued*

Another OSMA asset damaged during the fire were the twenty storm water collection boxes, which had wood covers. The Board decided to replace all of the OSMA drain box covers, burned or not, with steel plate covers. In addition, several underground storm water drain pipes burned and required replacing when discovered.

Planning for the second replanting project began in early 2019 for an April 21st event. This event was funded by a CALFIRE ReLeaf grant in the amount of \$40,000 for planting of approximately 120 shrubs and trees and a mile of PVC water supply lines and approximately two miles of irrigation lines to support the new plantings.

During the summer of 2019 planning for our third replanting project began. This project was funded by a second grant, totaling \$50,000, from the Arbor Day Foundation - Google and management support by the California Urban Forests Council. During October 2019, we planted 150 shrubs and trees and installed over a mile of PVC water supply lines and two miles of irrigation tubing to support the new plantings.

Training on proper planting techniques was provided by

Valley Oak Landscaping and Urban Forestry Associates.

During the Spring of 2020 a fourth replanting project began. This project was to plant 86 shrubs and trees remaining from the third planting project. It also included installing water supply lines and drip irrigation to these plants along the cul-de-sacs off of Crown Hill Dr. The cost was approximately \$25,000 paid with Grant Funds and OSMA Funds.

These projects completed the initial replacement of shrubs and trees in all of the burned landscape areas, approximately 21 ac. It included repair or replacement of miles of burned PVC water supply lines and irrigation and drip lines. Also in these areas, twenty irrigation controllers and water backflow valves were repaired or replaced in addition to replacing one water line pressure booster pump.

The next issue will document all the remaining activities, including use of the Special Assessment Fund, required to establish a safe and robust environment within the fire ravaged areas of OSMA. Soon we will have completed the initial repair and replacement projects of the fire damaged areas of OSMA.



6 Plant delivery for Arbor Day Planting April 21, 2018



7 Drilling holes for planting trees and shrubs, April 2018.



8 Training on proper planting techniques for shrubs and trees was provided by Valley Oak Landscaping and Urban Forestry Associates.

Volunteers, Come One Come All

A vital element in our community has always been our volunteers, ready and willing to become involved.

OSMA is a volunteer organization. We depend on members volunteering time and energy for the mutual benefit of all — a concept disrupted by the fire when 85% of our members lost their homes. Some sold their lots and moved on, some decided to rebuild and have been too busy or overcome with the rebuilding process — and some are still in a state of limbo. And of course there is COVID.

It's been four years since the Tubbs Fire, and new homes are being completed everywhere in the Fountaingrove II Development area. Along with the new houses, are current and new members moving into their recently completed homes. Once again, our burned-out neighborhoods are alive and thriving.

The Board of Directors (also volunteers) needs your help. We need OSMA Members to volunteer their time and expertise to help perform all of the tasks required to maintain and improve our Landscape and Wildland areas.

A majority of the activities that need to be reactivated are performed by OSMA committees and these committees need member participation. The following is a listing of committees that, YOU, a Member of OSMA can volunteer to join.

In addition to committee members experiencing the personal satisfaction of contributing to your local community, participating on OSMA committees is an excellent opportunity for those who may later want to become an OSMA Board Member. OSMA Board Members are working association volunteers. Board Members are expected to donate time supervising as well as performing tasks critical to the success of OSMA maintaining and improving our open space environments.

OSMA Committees Needing Volunteers:

Landscape Committee

- Assist the Board with all areas of maintaining and improving the landscaped areas.
- Make monthly site reviews of landscape areas.
- Work with Board members to evaluate landscape areas requiring repair or replacement of irrigation or plants
- Periodically, participate in planting shrubs or trees, hand watering recent plantings in the wild land areas, minor repair of irrigation, tree stakes, drainage ditches, etc.

Budget Committee

- Advise the Board during the development of the Annual Budget.
- Typically, meet once or twice per year to prepare an Annual Budget recommendation to the OSMA Board.

Infrastructure Review Committee

- Develop an inventory list of damaged City infrastructure within the OSMA area to submit to the City of Santa Rosa for repair.
- Make a visual review of all the sidewalks, curbs and gutters abutting OSMA property to identify damage, take pictures and notate locations.

Communications Committee

- Recommend to the Board, options to improve and strengthen communications and a sense of community within the various neighborhoods of Fountaingrove II and the Board.
- Monthly, assemble Welcome Envelopes to be mailed by Focus Real Estate to new Association Members.
- Prepare a quarterly Newsletter to be emailed to Association Members.



If you are willing to volunteer your services to OSMA, please contact Leslie Cohen at Focus Real Estate and Investments, 707-544-9443 x105 or email leslie@focus-re.com.

Please Volunteer

Thank You. OSMA Board of Directors.

Our Busy Acorn Woodpeckers

Even if you're not an avid birdwatcher, you might find Acorn Woodpeckers an irresistible study.

It's safe to say the most recognizable member of our Fountaingrove II bird population is the Acorn Woodpecker. Dramatically colored in black, white and red, The male with a solid red crown is distinguished from the female who wears a red cap with a black forehead.

Acorn Woodpeckers have a unique social system. Living in family groups, they are fiercely territorial, and young woodpeckers stay with their parents for years helping the parents raise more young. Several different individuals of each sex may breed within one family, with up to seven breeding males and three breeding females in one group.

Acorn Woodpeckers are found in the coastal oak woodlands of California and southwestern US, as well as areas of Mexico and Central America.

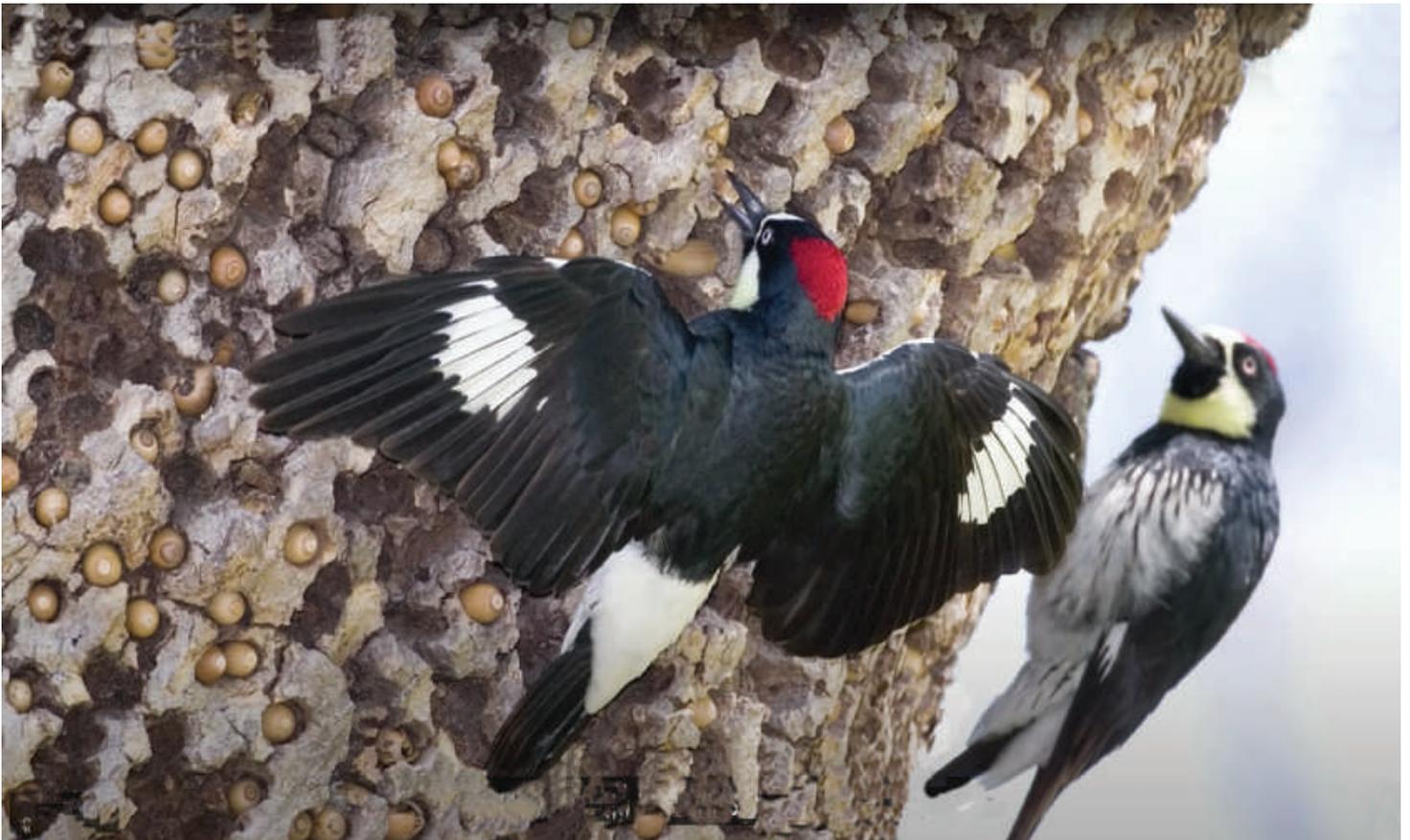
All members of an Acorn Woodpecker group spend large amounts of time storing acorns, typically in gaps in thick bark or holes drilled into a single tree, referred to as a *granary* tree. One granary tree may have up to 50,000 holes, each of which is filled with an acorn in autumn. One member of the group is always on guard for thieves.



Male with Red Cap and Female with black band over forehead.

If you have a home with wood siding, Acorn Woodpeckers may even use your exterior walls to store their acorns — and it's no simple task dissuading them. Use of dangling aluminum foil strips or bright mylar balloons are said to be effective (if not aesthetically pleasing) deterrents.

If this has at all peaked your interest about our intriguing neighbors, there's much more to know. You'll find many informative Acorn Woodpecker videos on line, such as: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvPaiDX_3JM Or take a walk through our open space in search of a granary tree — and hopefully some busy Acorn Woodpecker activity.



Preserving the Heritage

The California Native Plant Preserve on Rincon Ridge, a place like none other amid our recovery.

Brief history: The Rare Plant Preserve is part of Rincon Ridge Neighborhood Park, designated in 1997 as part of the Fountaingrove II development. It comprises about 2 acres of California native plants, and is cared for cooperatively by the city of Santa Rosa, the OSMA and the Milo Baker Chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

It's no easy task for plants to thrive on the top of this hill, a lesson in extremes. The Fountaingrove area can get hotter and colder than other parts of Santa Rosa. The soil in the plant preserve is a quick draining gravelly red rhyolite left by volcanic activity 3-6 million years ago. Before there were houses, these were cattle pastures and the preserve was known as chaparral barrens.

Botanists took notice of Rincon Ridge, and in 1939, a number of rare plant species were first identified. Special to this ridge top are the Rincon Ridge Ceanothus and Rincon Manzanita. Both of these plant families are experts on surviving our sometimes brutal Mediterranean climate. In particular, here at Rincon Ridge, they have learned to survive by hugging the ground and laying low. In addition to the Rincon Manzanita, there are two other manzanita species present, and one other ceanothus species as well.

The manzanita are known for their maroon red bark and pendulous pale pink flowers, look for them starting in December (pray for rain). The ceanothus are also known as California Lilac and will have sapphire blue blossoms, starting in February. Both plants are evergreen with smallish but durable leaves, an adaptation for dealing with wet winters and dry summers. Both plants respond well to wildfire, either by resprouting from a burly root or investing a seed bank within the first few inches of soil. Approximately sixty other plants have been identified within the Preserve, many of them uncommon California natives that will put on a show in late winter-through-spring.

Next newsletter: Blooms of winter...

Michelle

The OSMA Board wants to express our gratitude to Michelle for her generous and knowledgeable role in our new OSMA newsletter. Thank you, Michelle.



Top to Bottom:

Rincon Ridge Native Plant Preserve adjacent to Rincon Park

Rincon Manzanita (Arctostaphylos Stanfordiana ssp. Decumbens)

Arctostaphylos Glandulosa

(BL) Rincon Ridge Ceanothus (Ceanothus Confusus)

(BR) Wavy Leaf Ceanothus (Ceanothus Foliosus var. Foliosus)



OSMA Newsletter

FOUNTAINGROVE II

This first of the post-fire OSMA newsletters is being distributed via email to all OSMA members able to receive electronic mail. Those who cannot or those for whom we have no email address are receiving it via USPS mail. Future newsletter issues will be delivered only by email.

If you would like to sign up for email consent and continue to receive the newsletter and other OSMA updates, contact Leslie Cohen at Focus Real Estate & investments, Inc. 707-544-9443 x105 / leslie@focus-re.com

