

FOUNTAINGROVE II

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



Warm summer days, cool evenings for grilling, reasons enough for this season's top billing. Enjoy.



Understanding the food web.

Our coastal oak woodlands are rich in more ways than we have room to describe. *Biodiversity* is a feature of all Mediterranean climate regions including our own temperate north coast. Summer, the season of plenty is the ideal time to learn about the complex food web required to support such diversity — literally from the ground up. More on page 4.



A warming woodland climate.

Our coastal climate is one of only five Mediterranean climate regions the world over. Historically milder than the global average due to our rain-free summers and wet winters, these regions appear now to be warming faster — up to 20% faster — in the Mediterranean basin itself. Time will tell if the health and allure of these five regions will suffer. See page 5.



Cover is what cover does.

Research our coastal woodlands and you'll read much about the critical role of cover in the daily lives and survival of a rich and diverse community. Cover that serves to conceal wary residents identified as "prey" as well as their predators, intent on their capture. Two opposing roles and in each, cover is defined by the purpose it serves. More on page 6.

Animals in the wild need shelter from the summer sun. So does your dog.

This summer issue is devoted to the wild population with whom we share these hills and how warming impacts their lives and well being. Also the very real risk of heat related illnesses with our pets, especially dogs. This page of advice from **The Humane Society** is being included as a service to all pets. Nature looks after those in the wild, we must look after those in our care. *More on page 7.*



Fire Season is Here
Save the Date, July 22
at Rincon Ridge Park
10am – 12 noon
FIREWISE USA
Meet and talk with
Santa Rosa Fire Dept.
and Cal Fire.

Being a Fire Wise community involves every one of us.

The OSMA exists to assure that all necessary steps are taken to preserve the health and integrity of our Open Space as viable habitat *and* protect our community from the threat of uncontrollable wild fire.

This involves all of us. More on page 3.





From the OSMA Board

Whether you're still working, or retired and even busier, it's rewarding to be a volunteer.

It takes no more of your time than you can comfortably donate – and only on those occasions when a need arises. Just add your name to our volunteer list and we'll let you know when your help could make a real difference.

You might also include any pertinent skill you feel could be of value to our ongoing efforts of maintaining and improving our 225 acres of wild land habitat. Maybe you have some past experience in a related area and would like to be involved in the preservation of something rare here in Santa Rosa. Contact Leslie Cohen at Focus Real Estate, leslie@focus-re.com.

Thanks – *The Board*

FIELD WORK: Site visits by board members planning new landscape concepts for the OSMA maintained irrigated areas. Also monitoring the replanted woodland-to-be on Parker Hill. The landscape committee is now being formed, to be a volunteer, contact Leslie Cohen at Focus Real Estate, leslie@focus-re.com.



The OSMA Newsletter is a quarterly publication of the Fountaingrove II Open Space Maintenance Association as a service to our members.

Be sure to visit Fountaingroveii.com

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Ready or not, summer is here!

As I begin this edition of the Presidents Corner, the first words to come to mind are Nat King Cole's lyrics, Those Lazy-Hazy-Crazy Days of Summer. Summer is here and OSMA is Crazy busy with multiple projects to be completed this summer. These projects are:

(1) As suspected, some areas of our normal spring weed abatement will require a second cutting of regrowth vegetation due to ground moisture remaining from the excessive winter rains. The weed abatement crews will be back in a few weeks to maintain our defensible spaces.

(2) Repair the erosion damage of the only vehicle access road into the +/- 70 acres of OSMA wildland located in the central area of Fountaingrove II. Completion of this repair work will reestablish vehicle access to this OSMA Wildland area for our work crews and emergency response vehicles.

(3) Complete the never-ending burned tree clearing. We have about 15 acres of burned trees and vegetation remaining to be cleared. Once these acres have been cleared we will be finished with the initial burned tree and vegetation clearing. The Board appreciates the understanding and patience of those who have waited years for these remaining areas to be cleared.

(4) A Firewise USA event is scheduled for Saturday, July 22 from 10:00am to 12:00 at Rincon Ridge Park. This is a great opportunity to meet local fire safety professionals from the

Santa Rosa Fire Department and Cal Fire plus your OSMA board and Arborist. Please try to attend.

These four projects are high priority for the OSMA to complete by early fall 2023. Completing these projects benefits OSMA and its Members in one way or another by reducing fire risk, the risk of potential liability, recognizing OSMA's commitment to fire safety, and allowing the association to return to normal annual Open Space (landscape and wildland areas) maintenance and beautification.

Landscaping Along the Parkway and Planting Strips

The City's vendor is making steady progress and is scheduled for completion next month. Drive with care. Crews still have a considerable amount of work to be performed within and along the Parkway. While on the topic of landscaping, the Board is preparing to begin the process of reviewing and prioritizing the OSMA Landscaped areas for rehabilitation and replanting of native plants lost during and after the Tubbs Fire. Volunteers willing to participate on a landscape committee, please contact Leslie Cohen at Leslie@focus-re.com.

The Importance of Native Plants

Home landscaping is an important aspect of our homes. It can increase the value of a home, it can improve the quality of life for the inhabitants, and it can add or lessen the fire safety of a home. It's important to stress that where you plant and what you plant in your home's landscaping may be the difference of a home surviving a fire. Think about incorporating some native plants in your yard landscaping, keeping plants pruned and away from structures. There are many attractive California and local area native plants available for purchase in Sonoma County. Additional advantages of native plants are reduced water required when compared to nonnatives planted in your yard, and good pollinators for all the bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, bats and on and on.

A big ask, please avoid planting highly invasive nonnative plants. The two common plants we find in the Open Space are Broom and Euphorbia. These plants are extremely difficult to eradicate or even control. If you see these in your yard, please remove them.

Bruce McConnell,
OSMA Board President



The Miraculous Food Web

Summer fare in an oak woodland with a Mediterranean climate in rolling Sonoma County hills.

The practical efficiency of the food web, by design, void of any type of emotion, clearly demonstrates nature's brilliant, albeit unapologetic pragmatism.

In the wild, the benefits of our Mediterranean climate are unending, from a mild temperature profile to a diverse plant and animal community unlike any other on the planet. Extensive arrays of food chains that collectively comprise what's termed, *a woodland food web*.

"A food web consists of all the food chains in an ecosystem. Each living thing is part of multiple food chains and each food chain is a possible path that energy — in the form of a living organism — may take as it moves through the food web."

In a food web, all living organisms are considered energy. When one organism consumes another, as in a rabbit consuming a plant and a fox then consuming the rabbit, the energy from the sun has moved through the food web along an energy path from **producer**, through **primary and secondary consumers**. The path then leads to a final phase, the **decomposers** where expired energy in the

form of deceased plants and animals, is broken down and returned to the soil as nutrients for new organisms.

Primary Producers are photosynthesizers, they create their own food from sunlight, water and carbon dioxide. **They are all green plants and algae.** Trees are the largest plant producers and seaweed, the largest algae producers. Without Primary Producers, there would be no food web.

Primary Consumers (herbivores) feed mainly on plants but there are exceptions, species that feed on both plants and small animals and insects. These are **omnivores** and include bears, wolves, coyotes, raccoons, chipmunks, even a deer may eat a small rodent if it's in its grazing path.

Secondary Consumers are larger and feed mostly on the primary consumers, though small prey are not ignored if they are easily accessible. Secondary Consumers are all **carnivores** though some are omnivores and will also feed on fruits and vegetables, mainly to aid digestion. Secondary consumers are at the top or near the top of their food chain and have few if any predators.

Decomposers (fungi and bacteria) await expired energies, as in deceased animals and plants, at the conclusion of their passage through the food web. They see to their disposition and return to the soil as nutrients for new growth, enabling the life-giving energy flow to continue.



Our Warming Woodland

Animals here in the wild, accustomed to our mild coastal climate, are not big fans of summer now.

As summer temperatures rise with global warming, wild animals are now seeking shade from the heat and ill effects of the midday sun. An indications of change.

Effects on Wild Habitat

There have always been hot spells, but then the fog would roll in and all would seem well again. We're all too busy to notice nuances of impending changes. We read about . them. We don't dispute them. We simply assume, somehow it will all work out.



However studies of animal and bird behaviors are indicating those in the wild are well aware something is up. Rising temperatures are not simply a

threat to a species' comfort level. A mean increase of only a couple degrees can affect vegetation and threaten food sources. Migratory birds are particularly vulnerable as they must depend on multiple habitats and the availability of vital support systems within each.

Habitat lost to human development adds to the issue. Many animal species are essentially trapped, their freedom of movement confined by human infrastructure. For them, life-saving migration is not an option without extensive, pre-planned wildlife corridors.



A young doe finds shelter from the midday sun by a backyard fence in Rincon Ridge Park — 1 to 3 PM.

Not to say extreme summer heat has never before been an issue, but what was once considered extreme was a temporary spike that would eventually pass.

Temperature rise related to global warming and habitat loss doesn't "spike," it steadily increases as we and other species are left to adapt. Notice fewer wild animals out and about on sunny days, and pay attention when your dog begins resisting those midday summer walks.



The Bigger Picture

For those whose habitat includes a water source, heat may not seem to be a problem – but habitats are multi-layered and include multiple food chains that, if broken, could threaten every level. Nature has a delicate balance and the food web must always be considered in its entirety.

Cover is What Cover Does

For animals in the wild, being ever alert — and making use of available cover — is crucial to survival.

If you side with the prey, what then do you say if a hungry predator's ready to pounce. Will the prey get away or be eaten today. How well it's concealed is what counts.

Prey animals need cover to conceal themselves from predators. **Predators** use cover through which to approach and successfully capture prey.

The study of animal behavior, with regard to predation, seems to us fraught with drama and emotion. But in fact, emotion has no role in nature's order. As in the food web, nature sees only transfers of energy as organisms consume one another for survival.



Still, during the hunt, there is clearly emotionally driven behavior — *fear* in the prey, and a *must-capture* mentality driving the predator. Were it not for emotion-like behavior in the form of these two opposing survival instincts, prey might simply submit. So enter emotion as a means of the natural order keeping itself in order — as fraught with drama as it may seem to us, it preserves nature's intended balance.

Basically instinct, use of cover and camouflage has always existed. A seemingly simple concept, every species has its own uniquely evolved methods



of concealment, natural cover being the most utilized. Thick, dense, leafy brush, fallen trees, even poison oak is a favorite cover as well as a nutritious food source

Predators often 'lie in wait' relying on both cover and their natural **camouflage** for concealment. Others prefer tall grasses or vegetation as cover for a low, stealthy approach to prey prior to the pounce or moment of capture. This also shortens the pursuit should the prey get wind of the predator and attempt an escape.

*Our focus here is natural predators in a natural environment. But more and more, **domestic and feral cats** must be added to the list as unnatural predators. Admittedly, without an accurate count of free-roaming domestic and feral cats, estimates of bird kills range from 3.7 to 5 billion annually, with kills of small wild mammals far exceeding birds.*



Above left: A California ground squirrel feeds on seeds feeling secure within a pocket of tall plants and grass.

Above: A bobcat awaits motionless as its intended prey approaches to within a safe striking distance.

Left: A California gray fox, having made its approach through the cover of tall grass, makes a characteristic pounce employing the element of surprise.

Your Pet: Your Responsibility

Remember, your animals can suffer from the summer heat just like their cousins in the wild.

These reminders about your pet's low tolerance for summer heat are from of The Humane Society. Too often pets, especially dogs, are thought to be more tolerant of those mid-day summer walks than they truly are. Be concerned if your dog stops and lies down or tries to take shelter under a tree or in a shady spot.



Never Leave Your Pets in a Parked Car

Not even for a minute! Not even with the car running and air conditioner on. On a warm day, temperatures in a vehicle can rise rapidly. On an 85-degree day, for example, the temperature inside a car with the windows opened slightly can reach 102° within 10 minutes. In 30 minutes, it will reach 120°. Your pet may suffer irreversible organ damage or die.

Watch the Humidity

"It's important to remember that it's not just the ambient temperature, but also the humidity that can affect your pet," says Dr. Barry Kellogg, VMD, of the Humane Society Veterinary Medical Association. "Animals pant to evaporate moisture from their lungs, which takes heat away from their body. If the humidity is too high, they are unable to cool themselves and their temperature will skyrocket to dangerous levels—very quickly." A dogs' temperatures should not reach over 104 degrees. If your dog's temperature does, follow the instructions below for treating heat stroke.

Limit Exercise On Hot Days

Take care when exercising your pet. On very hot days, limit exercise to early morning or evening hours, and be especially careful with pets with white-colored ears, who are more susceptible to skin cancer, and short-nosed pets, who typically have difficulty breathing. Asphalt gets very hot and can burn your pet's paws, so walk your dog on the grass if possible. Always carry water with you to keep your dog from dehydrating.

Don't Rely On A Fan

Pets respond differently to heat than humans do. Dogs, for instance, sweat primarily through their feet. And fans don't cool pets as effectively as they cool people.

Provide Ample Shade and Water

Any time your pet is outside, make sure they have protection from heat and sun and plenty of fresh, cold water. In heat waves, add ice to water when possible. Tree shade and tarps are ideal because they don't obstruct air flow. **A doghouse does not provide relief from heat—in fact, it makes it worse.**

Watch for Signs of Heatstroke

Extreme temperatures can cause heatstroke. Some signs of heatstroke are heavy panting, glazed eyes, a rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, excessive thirst, lethargy, fever, dizziness, lack of coordination, profuse salivation, vomiting, a deep red or purple tongue, seizure and unconsciousness. Dogs that are very old, very young, overweight, not conditioned to prolonged exercise, or have heart or respiratory disease are particularly at risk. Some breeds of dogs—like boxers, pugs, shih tzus and other dogs and cats with short muzzles—will have a much harder time breathing in extreme heat.

How to treat a pet suffering from heatstroke: Move your pet into the shade or an air-conditioned area. Apply ice packs or cold towels to their head, neck and chest or run cool (not cold) water over them. Let them drink small amounts of cool water or lick ice cubes. Take them directly to a veterinarian.

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



“The Wonder Seekers of Fountaingrove”

A reminder that Gaye LeBaron’s historical record of the mystical origins of our community is available for a \$15 donation to OSMA. Co-written with fellow historian Bart Casey, there is no more accurate accounting of our nineteenth-and early twentieth-century beginnings. Signed, hardcover copy, contact Leslie@focus-re.com.