

Next Town Council Meeting

TUESDAY, May 12th at 7:00

EF/HG Fire Station

Gating Projects n Elfin Forest



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From the Chair

By Melanie Fallon

Hello All! As you have noticed you have received a hard copy of the Chaparral in the mail – like the olden days! The Town Council Board decided to go back to printing and mailing the Chaparral rather than just sending it electronically to ensure that everyone in our valley is up to speed on the latest news. You will receive the Chaparral four times a year – May, August, November and February. We will also be using Elf or Communication Alerts more often in the intervening months to share up-to-date news and community happenings. (If you think that we may not have your current email address, please let us know at Karen@vintagematerialism.com)

WE HAVE A NEW TOWN COUNCIL BOARD MEMBER! In March, Elfin Forest resident, Zana Parman answered the call for someone to fill the vacant Board position and she volunteered to serve on the Town Council. The Board unanimously voted at our March 26 meeting to confirm Zana as our ninth member. Zana lives on Fortuna Del Este and has lived in the community for almost 10 years. Thank you so much Zana – it is because people like you are willing to participate that we have such a great community!

THE TOWN COUNCIL HAS FORMALLY COMMENTED ON THE NORTH COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

As part of our mission to “keep it rural”, the Town Council has submitted a formal letter to the County with our comments on the draft North County MSCP plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify areas in North San Diego County which have sensitive environmental habitat or species that deserve and need to be protected. Our valley is one of those key areas and it is our hope that by including our sensitive areas in this plan that strategies will also be put into place that will direct development to less sensitive areas in the County. In addition, because of our strong conservation and environmental protection philosophy we have recently met with the US Fish and Wildlife Department and the California Department of Fish and Game to discuss our common interests in protecting Elfin Forest

From the Chair (Continued)

and Harmony Grove. (The entire comment letter can be accessed on our website, efhgtc.org. Also see the article on page 18 in this Chaparral for more detailed conservation information.)

WE HAVE RECEIVED COMMENTS FROM THE COUNTY STAFF ON OUR COMMUNITY

PLANS. The Town Council has received the comments from the County's Department of Planning and Land Use (DPLU) staff on the Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove Community Plans. The comments are very helpful and will help our plans become tighter and easier to understand and implement. We are working to finalize our written responses by the end of April and then we will meet with the staff in May to work through any final issues. We and the County staff are tentatively planning on presenting the draft final plans to the community at our June general meeting on Wednesday June 3. Watch your elf alerts for more information as the date draws nearer.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY PARADE AND PICNIC! SUNDAY

JUNE 28! ☀ We are only a few weeks away from the best event of the entire year, so put it on your calendar and plan on bringing your entire family for a wonderful day of community fun. Check out the article on page 10 regarding the activities and order your tickets. As usual we will have one awesome parade, food, games and our second annual EFHGTC silent auction! Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

If you have any thoughts or questions about any Town Council issues, please don't hesitate to call or email me @ 744.7090 or mfallon1@att.net

What's Happening at the Fire Department—May 2009

We are getting down the end of our annual structure training. Having finished refresher training on Rapid Intervention Crew (RIC) operations, Chief Calhoun took a crew to the North Zone RIC drill in April. Great training and the guys really took a lot from the drill. Our ventilation drill even included a training with Truck 2374 from Encinitas, where we got first hand instruction on truck company operations from the *Truckees*. Awesome training, thanks Chief Heiser for setting it up!

Next we pick up training on the new King tube airway, a method by which we can incubate non-breathing patients at the BLS level. The King tube will replace the Combi-tube we have been using for years. Next up for training comes our mandated Unlawful Harassment refresher. After that, we are off and running on our wild land training to prepare for fire season. The Department sent crews to the Annual County Wild land Readiness Exercise in April. Camp Pendleton Fire School is coming in June. Crews will attend live fire wild land drills and have the opportunity to respond to small initial attack fires. Fire School is really designed for personnel of all ranks new in their positions.

Report from "Academy Central". Congratulations to Kevin Krainock, Dan Aker and Nathan Sanford and Tina

What's Happening ... Continued

Timonian. All successfully completed their Firefighter I academies and can now get back to some sort of normalcy in their lives...that is, until they start medic school. It is a huge commitment to attend a Firefighter I Academy at over 500 hours of training. Hats off to all for their hard work.

Welcome aboard to new Probationary Firefighters Erinn Chounard, Johnny Daniels, and Daniel Watts. All come ready to train hard and learn lots of new skills. We have started a 3 month orientation training that seems to be working well with the newly hired Probationary Firefighters. And we will soon launch the new Probationary Firefighter Task Book, a very detailed training and testing required during their probationary year. We think it will provide a more structured training process in addition to our regular training, and result in a Probationary Firefighter with the training required for promotion to Firefighter.



We have submitted a \$3000 grant to the San Diego Fire and Emergency Services Foundation for an identification card maker. Unable to get the County ID cards any longer, we know from the Witch Fire how important it is that our personnel have proper identification to get in to the district during fire storms. And in May we will be submitting for the Assistance to Firefighters grant for training DVDs and materials. They are enormously expensive, and grant funding is about the only way we can afford them.

We also applied for a \$19,000 grant from the San Diego Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE) for replacement and upgrade for our low angle rescue equipment. New requirements in NFPA 1670 requires that ropes be replaced at 5 years, and Class 2 and Class 3 harnesses be used exclusively by rescuers. Replacing all our ropes is very expensive. This grant will help us with that and also allow us to upgrade for enough equipment to stock all the rigs.

Just a reminder...Earthquake Preparedness is so important because we never know when one will strike. A supply of drinking water is a critical item. Along with can foods or MREs, water purification tablets, a first aid kit, flashlights and spare batteries. Dust off your camping stove and make sure you have some cooking fuel. Start up those generators and check fuel and oil. Remember it's important to not just start generators, but to plug something into them and run them under "load" occasionally. Store everything together in an easily accessible place. Have a pair of walking shoes, a flashlight, some water and a jacket in your car in case you have to walk in. And most important, have a plan for your family! What each member would do with reference to where they may be at any given moment. Rendezvous points, plans and back up plans. What would be the first attempt to communicate, knowing that it could most likely be impossible. Talk about it all now so you are ready.

Fire season is fast approaching, so start your clearing now. Ensure you have clearance of vegetation to provide for defensible space around your home, and adequate clearance along evacuation routes. Cut back low hang-

What's Happening ... Continued

ing trees along driveways to ensure we can get engines to your home. Limb up the trees so that fire can not “ladder” up into the crown. And remember that mulch is a bad thing in a wind driven fire...it bombarded homes with embers for days during the Witch Fire. Many of the homes lost during the Witch Fire were taken by embers after the main fire went through.

We are still trying to get together an order for Barricade Fire Gel. If you are interested, call Dawn at the fire station at 760-744-2186 or email at dpettijohn@sanpasqual.sdcoxmail.com to get on the list. If we get enough orders, we could see what kind of a deal we can make with the vendor.

By Captain Dawn Pettijohn

Community Recycling Day

...mark your calendars for Saturday, June 13th.

It is time to begin cleaning up your garage and garden shed. We have confirmation from San Diego County folks in charge of organizing household hazardous, electronic and universal waste collection that they will be at the fire station on Saturday June 13th from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The entire fire station parking lot will be set up in different zones to collect (most...) everything nasty you might have in your garage or on your property, including a hot zone and a decontamination area. Please note: this will be a “drive-thru” set up, where you will drive from area to area, and there will be no parking available on the lot. If you want to park and chat with your neighbors, you’ll have to park on the street.

What exactly, you may ask, constitutes “Household Hazardous Waste”, or HHW? The county website (<http://www.co.san-diego.ca.us/deh/hazmat/hhw.html>) defines it as “the unused or leftover portions of hazardous chemicals. Any leftover product labeled **DANGER, WARNING, TOXIC, CAUTION, POISON, FLAMMABLE, CORROSIVE or REACTIVE** is considered a household hazardous waste.”

Household Hazardous Waste Includes:

Aerosols	Lighter Fluid
Antifreeze	Pesticides
Auto Batteries	Pool Chemicals
Auto Fluids	Solvents
Household Cleaners	Used Oil/Oil Filters
Gasoline	Latex/ Oil-based Paint

Recycling Day Continued

Universal Waste Includes:

Common Batteries (AA/AAA/C/D/
button cells)
Fluorescent Light Bulbs
Thermostats

Electronic Waste Includes:

Computer/T.V Monitors
Cell Phones
Printers/Scanners
DVD and VCR Players
Fax Machines
Misc. Computer Components

Please Note The Following Will Not Be Accepted

Business Waste	Large Appliances (washers, dryers, refrigerators, water heaters, stoves, etc.)
Tires	Radioactive Material
Ammunition	Microwave Ovens
Air Conditioners	Medications
Explosives	Fax Machines

Please Remember:

The legal Household Hazardous Waste transport limit for residents is 15 gallons or 125 pounds.

All container labels must be clear (Worn-off labels must be re-labeled.)

All containers must be sealed and not leaking

Different products must not be mixed in one container.

Hazardous waste must be transported in the trunk of the car, or in another area away from passengers and pets.

One of the items of particular interest to our animal-friendly population will be collection of bio-hazard - syringes used to administer medications to horses and the like. For those of you with diabetics at home, or large animals you treat yourself, this will save you a trip to the vet or hospital to drop off.

Any questions please contact Chris at 760-420-8161 or dye60@hotmail.com , or the county at 1-877-R-1-EARTH (1-877-713-2784)

By Christopher Dye

Fire Board Update

A little rest goes a long way. With the County of San Diego fire consolidation underway, the County seems to be leaving us alone. As you recall, the community voted to opt out of the consolidation. The board and Chiefs are still a little nervous about the consolidation plans the County may have in store for us. In the meantime, we are getting back to our local issues.

The board has expanded board duties. It was decided that duties would not be related to the Board position held.

Election	Directors Barker / Debellis
Fundraising	Directors Costanzo / Holmes
Bylaws	Director Hill
Contracts and Reviews	Directors Dubs / Debellis
Audits	Director Macfarlane
Planning	Directors Barker / Debellis

The biggest issue (besides the budget) for this year is acquiring a lease for the land and building where the fire department is currently located.

It's been 20 years since the County acquired the land and building for the fire department. The building and land were purchased through a government bond. The bond is paid through your fire benefit fees and fire mitigation fees.

We have hit a milestone this year as the bond will be paid off sometime after July 2009.

Even though you, the tax payers of CSA 107 – Elfin Forest, paid for the building, the County of San Diego still has ownership. (Yes, it's frustrating for us too.)

That brings us to the lease. We wanted to insure the land and buildings stay with Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove no matter what happens to the fire department. The Board requested and received a draft lease from the County. We took several weeks and special meetings to read the draft lease line by line. We did extensive editing. The bottom line is that the board wants a 50 year lease with two 25 year extensions for one dollar per year. The board returned the edited draft lease to the County and we are now waiting to hear back.

While we are waiting for the next round of lease negotiations, the board will be reviewing plans for the new building design. The building will be directly behind the current station. It will hold sleeping quarters for the firefighters, a kitchen, separate men and women restrooms and showers, office space and the like.

The fire department received a \$300,000.00 donation for this building. The donation will match dollar for dollar up to \$600,000.00. What a gift! Now it's up to the communities served by the fire department to raise the balance and more. All money donated for this project is 100% tax deductible. Remember the fire department is a charity, a 501c3 non-profit.

HELP WANTED

The Elfin Forest / Harmony Grove Fire Department is seeking someone to keep our web site updated. This is a volunteer position. Please contact Nona Barker for more information. 760.744.2186 or nbarker@eff-fire.org

Fire Board Update ... Continued

The economy has affected the fire department. Our benefit fees are intact but the fire mitigation fees are far and few between. Fire mitigation fees come from building new homes and developments. All developments in our area have come to a screeching halt. A few new homes are going up around the communities.

Our 2nd station is obviously delayed. Harmony Village being built by New Urban West has been stopped with no signs of when the development will begin again. This development received final approval by the Board of Supervisors several years back. They are also trying to sell off the southern portion of the development. All the properties south of Harmony Grove Road were or are for sale.

Chief Twohy is the best Chief for a down turned economy. He oversees all aspects of the budget. Nothing is spent without his approval. We are lucky to have Chief Twohy at the helm.

Our next board meeting is May 11. Maybe we will have some news on the lease.

The Fire Board meetings are open to the public.

By Nona Barker

Fire, Defensible Space, and You

Many portions of the unincorporated areas of the County of San Diego share expansive, rural settings of native plant life. Fire is an important factor in maintaining the healthy status of these native plant species. Since these areas are also highly desirable places in which to live, maintaining a defensible fire space around structures is essential, and required, for protection against fire. This information will provide you with some helpful hints to assist you in defending your property.

During the October 2003 Firestorms, it was painfully evident that there was insufficient "Defensible Space" on many properties which contributed to destroyed homes and other structures. As a result, the County of San Diego has amended an ordinance that requires residents to keep their property free of fire hazards: including certain vegetation types, green waste and rubbish. Residents can comply with this ordinance by creating a "Defensible Space" around their homes and by taking other preventative steps on their property.

WHAT IS DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

Defensible Space is the area around a structure where combustible vegetation that can spread fire has been cleared, reduced or replaced. This space acts as a barrier between a structure and an advancing fire.

Fire, Defensible Space, and You ... Continued

HOW LARGE SHOULD THE DEFENSIBLE SPACE BE?

You need to clear combustible vegetation in a 100-foot radius from any structure. Your local fire agency may require you to clear additional vegetation by a written letter. You are not required to cross your property line in order to clear the 100 feet. The neighboring property owner may be required to clear the additional distance by the fire agency.

HOW DO I MAINTAIN THE DEFENSIBLE SPACE?

* You may plant fire-resistant, irrigated landscaping in the first 50 feet of the 100 feet from your structure. These plants need to be maintained all year around. Note: no irrigated, or non-native landscaping is allowed within an open space easement.

* You need to keep natural vegetation in the remaining 50 feet of the 100 foot space. This would be the area furthest away from your structure. The plants need to be thinned and cut back to no more than 6 inches above the ground.

* You may need to do this several times a year since the plants grow back.

* Do not completely remove all vegetation which would leave the ground bare. Some vegetation is necessary to prevent erosion. When native vegetation is removed for fire control the bare soil is particularly vulnerable to soil erosion.

* Do not remove or disturb the existing plant root system to prevent any future erosion.

* Remove dead and dying vegetation.

* Trim trees that overhang or touch your structures.

* Properly irrigating plants will help prevent plants from igniting. Wildfires rarely occur until after June, because as little as 1 inch of water per month keeps drought adapted plants from readily burning. Permanent irrigation should be confined to landscaping within the first 50 feet of a structure.

* Trees and shrubs can be maintained by deep watering at least once a month for drought tolerant species and once a week for high water requiring plants.

WHAT TYPES OF FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS SHOULD I CHOOSE?

* Grow close to the ground.

* Have a low sap or resin content.

* Grow without accumulating dead branches, needles or leaves.

* Are easily maintained and pruned.

* Are drought-tolerant

HOW DO I CLEAR LEGALLY?

Combustible vegetation can only be removed by mowing, cutting and grazing as long as the root structure is left intact. Any trees you remove shall have the stumps cut no higher than 8 inches above the ground. The only

Fire, Defensible Space, and You ... Continued

exception would be an orchard. Orchard trees may have their stumps completely removed.

CAN I CLEAR INTO OPEN SPACE?

If an open space easement is located on your property you may legally clear the 100 feet from your structure, even if it takes you into that easement, upon written authorization of your fire protection district. No irrigated, or non-native landscaping is allowed within an open space easement.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I DO TO PROTECT MY PROPERTY AGAINST FIRE?

- * Vary the height of plants and adequately space them. Taller plants need to be spaced wider apart.
- * Existing trees and large shrubs should be pruned by cutting off any branches up to 6 feet above the ground to prevent ground fires from spreading upwards into trees.
- * For fire truck access, remove vegetation within 10 feet of each side of your driveway.
- * Remove any tree limbs within 10 feet of your chimney.
- * Work with your neighbors to clear common areas between houses, and prune areas of heavy vegetation that are a fire threat to both properties.
- * Avoid planting trees under or near electrical lines. They may grow into or make contact with overhead lines. Under windy conditions these instances may cause a fire.
- * If you have a heavily wooded area on your property, removing dead, weak or diseased trees may improve growing conditions. This will leave you with a healthy mixture of both new and older trees.
- * Any removed trees may be chipped and left on your property if they don't present a fire hazard. Contact your local fire agency to find out how to do this.
- * Don't forget to legally dispose of all your cut vegetation. You may contact your local landfill to inquire about green waste recycling. Open burning may not be allowed. Contact your fire agency for more information.
- * Stack firewood and scrap wood piles at least 50 feet from any structure and clear away any combustible vegetation within 10 feet of the piles. Many homes have "survived" as a fire moved past it, only to burn later from a wood pile that caught fire after the firefighters had moved on to protect other homes.
- * Check and clean your roofs and gutters on all structures several times during the spring, summer and fall to remove debris that can easily ignite from a spark

By Nona Barker

31st Annual
Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove
4TH of July Parade and Picnic
Honoring Our Troops...Past & Present
SUNDAY, JUNE 28TH

11:30 a.m. Parade line up just east of Fortuna Del Norte

12 noon Parade Begins

Fire trucks will lead the way followed by your own decorated floats, tractors, ATVs, bikes, strollers and horses...

Remember this year's Honoring Our Troops theme!

12:30-2:30 Barbecue Lunch at the Fire Station (menu/ticket info on next page side)

12:30-4:00 Disc Jockey, Games and Picnic

* * * * *

- ***Awards for the Best Parade & Cake Decorating Entries***
- ***Limbo, Hula Hoop, Egg Toss and Horseshoe Contests***
- ***Carnival Booths, Jump House, Cake Walk & Dunk Tank***
- ***Firefighters' Water Hose Blast (back by popular demand)***

* * * * *

Cake Decorating Contest

Both kids and adults are welcome to enter decorated cakes, cupcakes or cookies in the cake decorating contest. The cakes are used for the very popular cake walk. Prizes are given for Best Example of **Rural Life, Most Creative** and **Patriotic**.

* * * * *

Cake Decorating Contest Entries and Desserts for the Bake Sale can be dropped off at the Fire Station all day Saturday or Sunday morning.

Barbecue Lunch Menu

Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Barbecued Pulled Pork
Coleslaw, Baked Beans, Potato Salad
Macaroni & Cheese, Watermelon, Popsicles
(veggie burgers available if ordered in advance)

A special Thank You to Sue Hill of Prudential California Realty for providing the hamburgers and hot dogs for the picnic.

Pre-Registration recommended. Limited meals available day of event.

Please, only cash & checks day of event, no credit cards accepted.

Lunch & Game Ticket Before 6/24 Day of Picnic

Adult Lunch \$9.00 \$12.00

Child Lunch (12 & under) \$5.00 \$ 6.00

45 Game Tickets - \$20.00 22 Game Tickets - \$10.00

(Game tickets good for carnival booths, jump, cake walk & dunk tank)

Name: _____ Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

Number of Adults @ \$9.00: _____ Number of Children @ \$5.00: _____

Game Tickets: 45 tickets @ \$20.00 _____ OR 22 tickets @ \$10.00 _____

Veggie Burgers: _____ Total Amount Enclosed: _____

****Make Checks Payable to EF/HG Town Council; Please pick up tickets at picnic****

Detach & Mail by June 24th to:

Betsy Keithley, 19918 Elfin Forest Rd., Escondido, CA 92029

Silent Auction Coming to the Picnic

On June 28th not only are we going to have the best picnic and parade ever, which you don't want to miss, but we are also holding our Second Annual Community Silent Auction. It's a great opportunity to get a bargain in these tough economic times, but also to contribute to your community by donating something you might not have considered: do you own, or have a friend or family member who owns, a vacation home? Last year our largest grossing items were a house in Hawaii, a condo in Mt. Hood, and a condo in Utah.

Do you work for a business that might enjoy some exposure, or simply wants to give back to the community? Last year we had items from a large pet retailer, from a local resident who sells bamboo items, from another resident who imports French linens: do you know who your neighbors work for; maybe someone would like the chance to contribute something? Of course businesses can get their name advertised on the donation, to be read by our estimated 300 to 400 participants that day.

Do you belong to the Zoo or Sea World or a local museum and each year see those guest passes expiring without a chance to use them? We have all been there... consider donating your guest passes to the auction, perhaps with a stuffed animal or another related item we can arrange in a basket.

If you have a special skill, think about donating an hour or more of your time: are you a great photographer? A garden designer? Can you teach a foreign language? Give horseback riding lessons? Can you bake awesome cookies or have a favorite cake you might consider making "on demand" for a lucky winner? How about cooking a meal for 4 or 6 at your home?

How about the fruits (literally!) of your labor: if you are a vegetable gardener, consider donating a basket of produce (or maybe a 3 month series, like those "fruit-of-the-month" clubs where you get a different crop each time). I hear fresh eggs from your pet chickens will fetch a good price – maybe a dozen a month for 3 months, or a year?

Once you put your thinking cap on, you'll be sure to come up with original ways to make this year's silent auction the great community event it was last year. Proceeds last year exceeded \$6,000, and were utilized to contribute directly to the conservation mission which is described elsewhere in this issue. It takes money to do all the wonderful things we do to *keep it rural*, and this is a fun and easy way to contribute, by donating items and of course by coming to the picnic to meet your neighbors and bid as you stand in line to get your food!



For donations contact Jacqueline at j.arsivaud@gmail.com or 760-855-0444.

It's Parade Time

Dust off your tractors, polish your bikes!

Groom the dog and horse! Decorate your floats! Organize a marching band or drill team! JOIN THE FUN.

Awards for Best Float, Best Bicycle, Best Moving Vehicle, Best Horse, Best Pet, Best Walking Participant, Best Representing the Theme, Best Over All Around.

By Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin

Citizen of the Year Nomination

It's time to send your nominations for this year's Citizen of the Year 2009. The town council will be choosing in May this year's winner for presentation at the 4th of July picnic. We want you to think about who is deserving this year for their efforts for the community above and beyond the call of duty. You can email me at btdt@peoplepc.com or the town council with deserving nominations. Thanks for your help and we all see everyone at the 4th of July picnic to find out who this year's winner will be.....

By Bill Telesco

Elfin Forest Garage Sale

Dear Friends & Neighbors:

Time to clean out those closets and that garage! Spring cleaning can be fun – and profitable – by selling all your unwanted items at our Neighborhood Yard Sale, scheduled for Saturday, May 16th, 8am – 11am.

I will provide:

- * Signs for your front yard, as well as directional signs on major streets
- * Advertising in the Union Tribune, North County, Penny Saver and on-line garage sale announcements/websites
- * The day before the event I will provide you with a sign and a list of participating household's addresses
- * The morning of the sale I will come around with some doughnuts to get things going!

You will provide:

- * Your yard and items to sell
- * Advertised time for the yard sale is 8am-11am – early birds might show up sooner. You're welcome to put your sign up earlier and down before or after 11am. Just put your sign up when you're ready and take it down when you're done. I'll come by and pick it up later that day.

Please don't hesitate to call or e-mail me with questions or concerns. Do let me know that you will participate.... In the meantime, I'm looking forward to our first Elfin Forest Neighborhood Yard Sale!

By Eveline F. Bustillos,

858-354-0600

E-mail – Eveline@coldwellbanker.com

Gating Private Roads in Elfin Forest

You might have heard the word on the street: gates are coming on several private streets in Elfin Forest. There are several efforts afoot, all in the works for many years, which are now nearing fruition. Some of you might ask yourself one or more of the following questions:

Why on earth would we want to gate the private roads in our neighborhoods?

The quick answer is safety, security, and stewardship. Let's take those one at a time.

Safety: Several of the roads under consideration to be gated (Fortuna del Este, Suerte del Este, Canyon de Oro, and Fortuna del Sur) lead to the last dirt roads left in Elfin Forest, which are sites of regular partying on week-ends, usually including bonfires. At least twice in the last few years a bonfire burst out of control in the middle of the night, and it was only because of vigilant neighbors and our awesome fire department that those fires did not get out of control. Fire safety is something all of us living in the wildlife/urban interface need to take very seriously. Gates will prevent the party-goers from accessing those favorite spots, increasing everyone's safety. If you think it doesn't matter to you because you are on the other side of the valley, think again. The last wildfires to rush through in Elfin Forest during the Harmony Grove firestorm in 1996 engulfed the entire community in a matter of minutes.

Traffic safety is another side of the same coin. On all of the roads mentioned above, traffic has ballooned over the last few years as more and more non-residents discover all the shortcuts through our community to Encinitas and Rancho Santa Fe to avoid the traffic around San Elijo, or on Del Dios Highway. As a result, the private roads that your neighbors pay to pave and keep in shape are being used by many drivers who a.) don't contribute to upkeep, b.) have created traffic safety issues in some cases by driving too fast on roads not designed for the current load, and c.) sometimes dump all sorts of garbage, including at least one instance of hazardous materials on Canyon de Oro near the creek.

Security: As more cut-through traffic "discovers" Elfin Forest in their search for a quicker commute, the community's visibility is increasing, and our historically very low crime rate may become a thing of the past. We have been sheltered for many years, and under the radar of most crooks and thieves, because few people knew we existed. As the parade of traffic from Escondido makes its way through our private streets at rush hour, the chances for the casing of houses and other nefarious intents increases. Just a few weeks ago, a local resident was robbed, in all irony, while a neighborhood meeting to discuss gating was taking place in full daylight!

Stewardship: Most of you must have heard by now about the gift of 244 acres of open space the County made to us recently with the Sage Hills property, along Elfin Forest Road. We have in fact many acres of protected biological open space in Elfin Forest (1,827 acres at last count!), and as a community which benefits from the open space vistas and beautiful nature walks, we are also responsible for taking care of it. That means discouraging dumping, trespassing through the chaparral, motorized vehicles outside of paved roads,

Gating Private Roads in Elfin Forest ... Continued

and any other activity that puts at risk the integrity of the natural habitat and associated critters which are also our neighbors.

Won't putting up gates in one place just move the problems to another street?

This is a long haul project, which will take several phases to complete. The first large scale effort by the community was to gate Questhaven Road, which used to be a dumping (and partying) hotspot. Recently, the County open space off Canyon de Oro was protected through a partnership with the Community Foundation, SDG&E, County Parks Department, and a generous neighbor who donated rocks. Other projects underway include gating the two dirt roads to Rancho Santa Fe and to Encinitas, and securing the perimeter of Sage Hills. So as a community we can attack these common problems in phases, knocking one after the other, until would-be trespassers and party-goers understand they are not welcomed to come dump or light bonfires in our community.

Where exactly would these gates be? Will they affect me?

Gates are proposed on Fortuna del Este and Seaquest Trail (a gate was installed in 2003 but not locked – efforts are underway to electrify it and make it accessible electronically by clicker), on Fortuna Del Este towards Canyon de Oro, on Suerte del Este (the dirt road to Rancho Santa Fe) and Via de Las Flores (the first paved road in Rancho from here), and somewhere on Canyon de Oro (possibly at intersection with Seaquest).

Whether or not the gates will affect you depends on where you live and what roads you use currently in your daily commute, be it to school or to work. The basic framework for most of the proposed gates is to allow access for residents who derive a benefit from using the roads they block, and who therefore will be expected to share in the cost of erecting and maintaining them. A potential further benefit once gates are erected will be the possibility to improve some of the dirt roads to make all of our driving easier on our vehicles (and our backs!), once the risk of cut-through traffic has been eliminated.

How can I find out more and get involved?

A community meeting will be held on Tuesday May 12th at the Fire Station at 7 pm. The neighbors who have been working on these projects (the last ones in a long line of valiant efforts over the years to accomplish the same goals, and without whom this would not be possible) will be presenting their plans, listening for feedback, and looking for volunteers to help refine the plans and carry out these major projects. We hope to see you there!

By Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin

Finally a School Bus for RSF Students



Next year the RSF School will begin offering a parent-paid bus service for Elfin Forest students. This has been confirmed by Lindy Delaney, Superintendent for the RSF School District. Our bus will only make stops in Elfin Forest, minimizing the time the kids will have to spend driving to school. The cost will be determined by the number of families using the service. However, they are estimating it to be approximately \$500 - \$600/child. When considering if the bus would be financially feasible please take into account the personal time you will save, your current gas expenses, and the wear & tear on your car. Also remember that the school will be under construction next year and drop off/pick up will be a challenge to say the least. According to Ms. Delaney more details and enrollment forms will be available in May.

By Lynda Clerke

Another Traffic Impediment



I suppose that some might accuse me of overreaction, but my Libertarian principles have been threatened again, this time by the San Marcos School District. As Elfin Forest commuters who travel west on Elfin Forest Road know, there is a boulevard stop sign at the intersection of Calistoga Lane and Elfin Forest Road, two blocks prior to the arrival at the main intersection in San Elijo Hills. This stop sign is preceded by a notice to reduce speed to 20 MPH, in view of possible entering traffic.

In addition, the local school administrators have now successfully petitioned the City of San Marcos for another boulevard stop sign at School House Way, only one block from the other boulevard stop sign and one block from the traffic signal at San Elijo Road! The city plans to eventually, when funding is available, place another traffic signal at this intersection.

It seems to me that there is little need for this additional traffic impediment. Few children use this intersection going to and from school, can use the crossing at the traffic signal only one block away, and for those who will not do so, pedestrian crosswalks and traffic guards, now present when school begins and ends, can mitigate any potential problems. There certainly is no need for traffic to be interrupted at any other time of day or evening. In other words, the solution to a perceived problem is well beyond reasonable.

The notification that the signs would be erected was posted about two weeks in advance. I am told that a hearing was held on the issue, but wonder how many other residents of Elfin Forest failed to receive proper notice of this meeting, as did I.

Those who believe that three stops within three blocks on a major street is within reason and justification may respectfully disagree with my position. However, those who agree are encouraged to notify me at momz-er1@att.net to share their views. If there are sufficient numbers of respondents, it is my intent to request another hearing at which both sides of this issue can be addressed. Without any measure of support, I will direct my attention elsewhere.

By Alan Lasnover

New Yahoo Group for Local Equestrians

Elfin Forest Equestrians (elfinforestequestrians@yahoo.com) is an informational and educational site for Elfin Forest residents and friends who are equestrians. You may share your equine experiences, trail conditions, equine sports activities, stories, tips and ideas. This site can also be used to pool resources to order large hay loads, sale/swap tack, horses and other equipment, plan group trail rides and activities, share innovative ideas for common problems and issues. In the case of fire or other emergencies this site can assist with evacuations and locate stabling.

We in Elfin Forest have an amazing pool of experience in all of the various equine disciplines from casual trail riders to national caliber dressage competitors. We all have the best interests of our equine partners at heart. With the rise in all equestrian costs including hay, stabling, gas and land let us support one another by sharing our experiences in our small slice of paradise, Elfin Forest.

To join go to elfinforestequestrians@yahoo.com and follow the instructions. Any suggestions are appreciated!

By Nancy Reed

Garden Festival 2010

Hits on the Elfin Forest garden festival website (elfinforestgardens.info) tell us that LOTS of people are excited about enjoying our gardens in the spring. The next garden festival is planned for 2010. So far, the Alemanni, Arsivaud-Benjamin, Coburn, and Macon gardens have committed to be open. How about you? If you're willing to have 300 – 500 people through your garden in about 6 hours, we want to hear from you. Volunteers will be provided if you need them.



Proceeds benefit the community. At least 25% of the proceeds go to beautification, for example, planting wildflower seeds along the trails and flower bulbs around the road monuments. Each year, the majority of the proceeds have benefitted a different organization. Beneficiaries include the Elfin Forest Landscape Foundation, the FireWise Demonstration Garden, construction of a trail on the vacated road easement of Questhaven Road, fire department, town council, and more.

A date has not yet been decided, but sometime in April 2010 looks good. If you would like to open your garden for the betterment of the community, or if you'd like to help with any of the volunteer opportunities, please contact garden festival chairperson Bonnie Baumgartner at bonnie@doubleb-ranch.com.

By Evelyn Alemanni

Come get involved in Conservation with your Town Council

In a conversation with neighbors recently, we realized many residents do not know that your Town Council is very involved with the goal of land conservation in our area, and that you can help as well, should you be interested. Many of us moved here because of the open space, the hikes or rides in nature right outside our front door, and even if you don't like the exercise, the peace and quiet which benefits us all.



Elfin Forest from the Way Up Trail

The Town Council motto is “*keep it rural*”. What better way to keep it rural than to try to do our part to preserve the hundreds of acres of open space in our community as permanent open space? Of course The Escondido Creek Conservancy (TECC), started back in 1991 by several of your neighbors, is the preeminent local organization that deals with land acquisition and stewardship, and to date has been instrumental in saving over 1,000 acres of open space. Like all conservancies and land trusts, they bring expertise in biological issues and the ability to look after high value open space after it has been purchased. The role of the Town Council is complementary to TECC's, and spans the following areas:

1. Provide long term vision and leadership for land use decisions affecting our community through input and shaping of the County policies.

a. Community Plans

Several of the Town Council board members, most notably Melanie Fallon, Mid Hoppenrath, and Karen Gardner worked diligently over the last several months to gather input from over 60 different community members, to produce the Elfin Forest and the Harmony Grove Community Plans. These will affect land use issues and community standards well into the next decades, when they are finally approved by the Board of Supervisors. As part of the planning process we will be working with County staff to discuss implementing a pilot program in Elfin Forest to secure open space using several innovative mechanisms not widely used in the county so far.

b. MSCP North

On April 6th we turned in our 11 page comment letter to the County Multiple Species Conservation Program draft plan. This proposed plan identifies the areas within North County that have especially sensitive flora or fauna, and direct development away from those areas. We are aggressively advocating for Elfin Forest to be the focus of target land acquisitions as part of the implementation plan of the MSCP goals. It turns out that we are home to the largest patch (1,200 acres) of undisturbed coastal sage scrub, which is probably what many of you see outside your kitchen window not realizing perhaps it's a dwindling resource, and which provides habitat for a federally endangered little bird called the California gnatcatcher. Because gnatcatchers prefer gently sloping terrain close to the coast to breed, and the same habitat is pre-

Town Council Conservation ... Continued

ferred by land developers to build housing developments, there are literally no larger areas left in all of San Diego than our valley.

2. Lead the opposition to developers and other interests not following our community standards.

Sometimes the issues with a proposed project have nothing to do with the biological value of a given parcel, but instead conflict with our community standards. Those are very simple in Elfin Forest: 2 acre minimum, on septic, dark skies. As long as a land owner is willing to abide by those standards, they will find (and have found) our community welcoming them. However one of the most crucial lines in the sand, for which the Town Council will go to bat no matter what, is projects proposing sewer annexation instead of septic. The reason is very simple: since we do not have a Covenant like in Rancho Santa Fe preventing parcels to be subdivided to less than 2 acres per lot, septic is how we keep our large lots, which in turn are critical to the rural atmosphere we all enjoy. It takes at least 2 acres typically for a parcel to “perc” (percolate), or to be suitable to build a home and its associated septic system.

A great example of the Town Council leading the fight against one such project was Bridges Unit 7, which would have brought sewer to the South side of Elfin Forest, with homes clustered on less than 1 acre lots. From there the risk was that other adjacent land owners could have availed themselves of sewer connection, and tried to build another San Elijo development on that side. Partnering with TECC and other organizations, we led the effort and were successful in getting the project applicant to withdraw its application after it had been in processing at the County for over six years. In the end the considerable resources of the nation’s largest builder were no match for organized community mobilization.

3. Partner with organizations outside our community to advocate for our interests

Because the Town Council board members of the last twenty plus years have each fought various encroachment and related battles, the community commands a respect frankly not in keeping with our small size. That reputation combined with our current track record has enabled us to gain a seat at the table not only with County staff, but with several very large organizations which have and continue to help us realize our vision of a valley characterized by open space protected in perpetuity.

As part of the MSCP North review, we have been invited to sit down with the wildlife agencies like US Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Fish and Game to discuss ways we can enshrine in the new plan permanent protection for our area including connections to regional open space corridors, ideally all the way to Cleveland National Forest. The Endangered Habitats League, based in Los Angeles, and its conservancy arm, the Endangered Habitat Conservancy, have been working tirelessly at our side to fight some of the battles described above and to help develop the local capacity to do so on our own. The Nature Conservancy was also an early partner with TECC and the Town Council in trying to negotiate an acquisition for Bridges Unit 7.

Town Council Conservation ... Continued

4. Develop a strategic framework to advocate for priority conservation in our area

Our next big effort is to build consensus for, and to raise funding to hire a consulting firm to develop what is known in the conservation business as a “case statement” for our valley. A case statement is a document that approaches a given geographical area as a whole, as opposed to parcel by parcel, and takes inventory of its biological resources with a view to develop a “case” that the entire area should be viewed as one single acquisition candidate.

This is a fairly ambitious agenda, but one we are confident would greatly benefit our valley. The case statement not only lists the areas that should be preserved, it also identifies the specific potential purchasing entities, and includes a rationale tailored to each, as to why considering an acquisition in this region matches the entity’s own particular mission. Our work with the wildlife agencies as part of the MSCP North will pave the way for building awareness of the resources of the area amongst those with the largest wallets, and facilitate their involvement in future acquisitions.

If you are curious about the concept of a case statement, you can go online at <http://www.consbio.org/what-we-do/conservation-significance-of-volcan-mountain-san> and check out the one that was developed for Volcan Mountain in the East County. The same folks who have worked with us on Bridges Unit 7 were instrumental in getting that document to become a reality, as well as the subsequent acquisitions. In preparation for that effort, we have painstakingly identified at the parcel level all the protected land in our valley: depending on where you draw the borders, Elfin Forest and Harmony Grove already boast at least 1,800 acres of permanently protected open space. If we cast the net wider and include the continuation of the habitat corridor to the West of us through Alamere and San Elijo, that number jumps to over 2,750 acres! We have a great story to tell.

How can you help? If you have any personal interest or talents in any of the areas identified above, come join us on the Conservation Subcommittee! We meet every other month with TECC and other partners to review progress and map out next moves. If you don’t have the time, but you can write a check, you can make a tax deductible donation either to the Town Council and earmark it for “Rural Preservation Fund”, and/or to TECC and earmark it for land acquisitions. You can also be an informer: if you hear of open space parcels near you that could be up for sale, let TECC know. If you have more time, join Melanie on the Community Planning subcommittee and help us review the various documents we need to comment on, such as the next draft of the community plans, the MSCP North, and the Environmental Impact Reports for various projects that come our way. The main thing is to get involved at whatever level is comfortable for you: it’s a great feeling to know you are doing your little bit to keep this incredible valley the special place it is for the next generation as well.

By Jacqueline Arsivaud-Benjamin

The Opening and Dedication of the New Elfin Forest Interpretive Center



The Escondido Creek Conservancy and the Olivenhain Municipal Water District Invite You to the Dedication of the Center on Saturday, June 20 Morning Time to Be Announced

Come view the unique building design of artist James Hubbell and architect Drew Hubbell with the ceiling mural by Beth Clevensine and floor tile work by artist Laura Hershey. Enjoy a tour of our newly planted native garden.

How was the Center Created?

Efforts to build an interpretive center began in 2005 when Olivenhain Municipal Water District raised money to build an interpretive center for the Reserve with a grant from the California Department of Parks and Recreation—Land and Water Conservation Fund. The grant would provide \$68,500 (to be matched by OMWD) to build an economical concrete-block building in the Reserve's staging area to provide educational opportunities for park guests. Upon being approached by OMWD, The Escondido Creek Conservancy Board of Directors agreed to partner with OMWD to raise additional funds in order to build a structure that would better suit the Reserve and surrounding open space. In May 2007, a design contract was awarded to Hubbell and Hubbell for the interpretive center. Since partnering with OMWD, TECC has raised over \$450,000, nearly all in private funds, to design and build this interpretive center.

The Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve with over 12 miles of scenic trails is one of the largest open space preserves in San Diego. Featuring scenic overlooks, a large reservoir, picnic areas, and hiking along Escondido Creek, over 3,000 hikers, mountain bikers, and horseback riders visit the park monthly. The Interpretive Center will surprise the visitor with its artistic approach to education and inspire its visitors to continue their experience throughout the Reserve. Visitors will learn about the park, the habitat, the biological diversity, the potential for protection and restoration of the watershed.

Interpretive Center ... Continued

The building itself was designed to be environmentally friendly. It will be completely off the grid, relying on a photovoltaic system and battery bank for energy. It has a living roof with 8 inches of topsoil to help it blend in with its surroundings and to add an extra layer of insulation. The walls themselves have a very high insulation value and are made of recycled Styrofoam and concrete – it should stay passively cool year round.

How Can You Help?

Become a Docent. We really need your help! Do you have a few hours a week or every other week? What could be better than to spend a few hours in the beautiful surroundings of the Reserve sharing its many opportunities with the visitors to the Reserve? No previous experience is necessary. All docents will be able to attend a brief training session. Your contribution of time will mean the center will be open more often. If you are interested, contact Head Ranger Jeff Anderson at (760) 632-4212.

We need your support. Much of the financial support for the Center came from people such as you. Donations ranged from \$25 to over \$100,000 from individuals, families, small and large companies, and even an elementary school class that believed that this center might make a difference in inspiring people to honor not only the Escondido Watershed, but all watersheds. With everyone's support we were able to raise the money for the Center. But this is only the beginning. We have embarked on an ambitious program to enhance the Center with educational programs and the Reserve enhances all the visitors' experience.

Please join TECC and designate a donation to the Center. Your \$50, \$100, \$500 can make a difference. We are struggling to complete some of the interior items and our funds are running short. Do you want to memorialize a friend or relative? Talk to us about the many opportunities.

By Jeff Swenerton

Hitting the Dirt this Spring

Hitting the dirt this spring is more like hitting the concrete. With the low levels of rain this year, the ground, instead of being soft, is rock-hard. Not only that, water districts are threatening mandatory water restrictions and higher water rates.

What does that mean to your garden? For my family, a mandatory 30% water cutback was mandated in January of 2008 because we were on the agricultural water rate. We not only met, but exceeded the cutback requirements. It wasn't easy. We had to analyze, prioritize, and think strategically. The most important thing to remember is that most of our water use is outside, for our landscapes.

Maybe this is the year to rethink your landscaping. Redesigning will save money, save water, and maybe even result in a more attractive landscape if you do it right. First, look at ways to save water. The suggestions on the Metropolitan Water District website take the form of "are you still beating your wife". You can do better.

Hitting the Dirt this Spring ... Continued

- Don't run the garbage disposal. Compost food waste (but no meat scraps).
- Reuse water. Dump the water from vases into flower beds. Pour leftover dog water onto tree roots.
- Cover your swimming pool (and hot tub) to reduce water loss due to evaporation.
- Check your irrigation system for leaks. Squirrels, rabbits, and coyotes love to chew on irrigation lines, so be vigilant and make repairs as needed.
- Convert from Rainbird-type sprayers to soaker hoses or drip systems.
- Get rid of thirsty plants.
- Know how to set your automatic irrigation system so that you're using the right amount of water for each circuit. Group plants by water needs.

If all that sounds overwhelming, remember that you can get help with these tasks. Call me (760-471-7224). I can help you redesign your garden for water efficiency and cost savings, while making it more efficient and beautiful. You can preview my award-winning garden at www.allea.com/gardening-ea.htm.

By Evelyn Alemanni

Passing the Torch

Our good neighbor, Zana Parman will be taking over the editing and production of the Chaparral. Her introduction follows

Mom- who's that person waving to us? When we moved to Elfin Forest at the turn of the century, there were so many neighbors hiking, biking, trail riding & hand waving too! June of 2000 seems like a long time ago now... so maybe it's time to start some more hand waving on my own.

It's always nice to know about what is happening in our community. There are many talented people & resources next door and throughout the valley. The Chaparral, EFHGTC Website & Elf Alerts are wonderful tools which our Town Council has used to help keep us informed. By using our existing tools & perhaps even expanding upon new social networking technology, I believe that our neighbors can get to know each other better, work together better & even have a lot more fun too!

The current Town Council Board has a lot of energy and work together well.

I'm looking forward to helping out.

By Žana Parman

Land Acquisition Update

In our Fall Watershed Voice we talked about the incredible opportunities presenting themselves for land acquisitions. The market downturn has all but stopped development speculation. Combine this with the recent release of \$100 million in TransNet funds designated for habitat preservation as mitigation for TransNet transportation projects and we are in a window of opportunity that will not come again. For every dollar donated we are leveraging an average of a \$100 of public funds to permanently set aside some of the richest habitat in the United States. One more hot real estate market and most of the lands worth preserving in our watershed will be gone forever. This is the moment.

With this in mind TECC has moved forward on numerous acquisition projects. We recently entered into escrow on a 120 acre parcel known as Family Stations. This is a key acquisition if we have any hope of preserving the huge area of open space that exists between the City of San Marcos, Elfin Forest, and Harmony Grove. It is the 120 acres that is across Harmony Grove Rd. (north side) from the parking lot of the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve that goes up into a beautiful bowl in the hills above the Escondido Creek Canyon. We are in the process of getting appraisals, HazMat clearances, and funding lined up to complete the transaction.



Family Stations 120 acres

Another strategic parcel that is in the final days of escrow is a 17 acre addition to the Quarry Property in southeastern Harmony Grove. This will begin to connect the Escondido Creek and TECC preserved property to preserved parcels in the Del Dios community in the San Dieguito River Watershed. This is critical in creating habitat corridors giving wildlife access to several sources of a food and water. This will be a precursor to other acquisitions in Harmony Grove.

There has long been discussion of TECC growing into its name, The **Escondido Creek** Conservancy. The Escondido Creek encompasses over 75 square miles and is 26 miles long, with headwaters above Lake Wohlford and terminating in the Pacific Ocean at the San Elijo Lagoon. With that in mind we have become involved in acquisitions outside of the Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Core Area within the Escondido Creek Watershed. One tremendous opportunity that recently presented itself is a multi-parcel acquisition effort totaling over 400 acres on the western edge of the 3500 acre Daley Ranch Preserve in northern Escondido. We have named this Council Springs Ridge as 90 acres of this project includes the Council Springs Ranch property where ages ago local tribes held councils. Once you are on this property you know why they chose this magical place with its majestic views and abundant springs. This acquisition would completely preserve the ridgeline to the east of I-15 overlooking the North Broadway/Jesmond Dene neighborhood of Escondido.

The list of species that call this home is long and inclusive of numerous listed and endangered plants and animals. It would be one of the most significant additions to an existing open space preserve in our watershed

Land Acquisition Update ... Continued

since TECC purchased what is now the 350 acres Del Dios Highlands County Park adjacent to the Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve. These are the projects that we are openly discussing at this point. There are several others that are being developed. Each one of these projects is dependent on your continued financial support. There has been no other time in the history of TECC in which we could leverage your donation so effectively toward open space and habitat preservation. The residents of this neighborhood are donating time and money to the effort to acquire Council Springs Ridge.



Council Springs Ridge overlooking Escondido

You can donate directly to any acquisition project in which we are engaged by designating the project on your donation form. Donate now to this effort to keep these lands pristine and preserve the open spaces of our communities. You can also easily donate on-line at escondidocreek.org.

By Kevin Barnard



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Letter from OMWD to Metropolitan Water District

April 13, 2009

Board of Directors Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
Business and Finance Committee
700 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Re: ***Olivenhain Municipal Water District's Objections to the Proposed Wholesale Water Rate and Charge Increase***

Dear Business and Finance Committee Board of Directors:

The Olivenhain Municipal Water District (District) would like to officially be entered into the public record of the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) Business and Finance Committee Public Hearing as objecting to the proposed wholesale water rate and charge increases as presented by MWD Staff at the 2009/10 budget Workshop on March 24, 2009.

The District is a member agency of the San Diego County Water Authority, and provides retail water treatment and supply to approximately 68,000 customers in north county San Diego. On behalf of our customers, the District must express its deep concern and objection regarding the substantial and unplanned water rate increases now being proposed by MWD. Our customers are already faced with challenging economic conditions. We, therefore, need to be sensitive to their current financial situation.

The District, in its own prudent financial planning, looks to MWD rate forecasts to project its own future rates and charges. In September 2008, a 15-21% rate increase projection for 2010 was provided by MWD Staff to retail agencies for planning purposes, to follow a 14% rate increase that took effect January 1, 2009. Most recently, four (4) rate increase options, with one option showing a rate increase projection as high as 33.9%, including \$61 per acre foot for a Delta Fix surcharge, and with an aggressive rate increase implementation date as early as September 1, 2009, were presented by MWD Staff. A smooth ramping of rates for the next five years, rather than large rate spikes such as this, would be more equitable to our rate payers.

We understand that these are unprecedented times related to water supply shortages. However, it is unfair to punish the end water users who have stepped up and participated in the "20 Gallon Challenge" and the farmers in our service area who have absorbed a 30% cut in their water use since last year. Retail customers should not be expected to absorb all of these impacts.

OMWD Letter Continued

Today we are proposing the following suggestions for your consideration:

While we really appreciate the \$17.9 million in cost cuts as presented by MWD staff at the March 24th budget workshop, in these difficult economic times, a 4.4% budget reduction of total discretionary spending of \$408 million is insignificant. It is especially important to show the public that we are doing everything we can to reduce expenditures and demonstrate that the budget is as lean as possible. For that reason, we are requesting the Board to further evaluate Staff cost cutting proposals for things such as: additional cuts to the Real Estate Department? What is the percentage cut being considered at Diamond Valley Lake? A review of all professional and outside services for a possibility of deeper cuts? Further cuts in Pay-as-you-go funding in future years not just Fiscal Year 2009/2010?

The District is also concerned with the proposed \$61 “Delta Surcharge”. We believe that MWD should consider the cost of bringing alternative water supplies, such as seawater desalination, recycled water, ground water management, or purchasing water on the spot market to improve water reliability. We do not believe that the \$61 “Delta Surcharge” should be applied to all water delivered on MWD system. This discourages member agencies from developing alternative water supplies. For this reason, we would ask that the Finance and Administrative Committee take these alternative options into consideration as an offset to the \$61 Delta Surcharge on every acre foot of water delivered on MWD system.

We appreciate the opportunity to be heard today. We believe that it is critical that MWD take into account the perspectives and needs of the retail water suppliers who are on the front line and directly accountable to the public. Rate spikes like this reduce our credibility and make it harder to get the job done.

Respectfully submitted,

Olivenhain Municipal Water District Board of Directors



Conservation Ambassador Orientation

Water supply conditions are in a critical state. Consecutive years of drought have left reservoirs at their all time low. Conservation is more important than ever!

Are you interested in water conservation? Are you interested in helping spread the word for the need to save our precious resource? Are you connected in your community? Then you are the person we are looking for to serve as a Conservation Ambassador.



Join us on **April 28, 2009 at 6:00 p.m.** at the Olivenhain Municipal Water District offices for an orientation on becoming a Conservation Ambassador.

Breaking News

BREAKING NEWS as we go to press: The State of California Wildlife Conservation Board has approved \$6 million for funding habitat conservation primarily in the Elfin Forest area. This is really wonderful news and sets us well on our way, along with the recent Sage Hills acquisition off Elfin Forest Road and other current acquisition efforts by TECC (detailed elsewhere in this issue), to assemble the largest swath of conserved open space West of 1-15 South of Pendleton. Kudos go to EHC, the Endangered Habitat Conservancy, for having done the work to secure this very large block of funding for our area.

By Jacqueline Arsivaud– Benjamin

YOU ROCK JACQUELINE!!!!

Rattlesnake Season ...

It's that time of year The rattlesnakes are out looking for food and mates. A little scarier are the babies that attack without rattling. Before killing the rattlers on your property recognize that they help control the rodent population! You might think of relocating the snake instead of killing it. The fire department is also quite helpful with snake removal. You should probably wear boots when working on your property during the spring. If you are bitten by a snake ... call 911 and keep the bitten affected limb lower than the heart. Wash the wound with soap and water if possible. If your pet is bitten by a snake, take it to the veterinarian immediately.



By Karen Gardner

Permaculture Workshop in Harmony Grove

I spent this past weekend at an amazing workshop in our valley. As many of you know, The Escondido Creek Conservancy and The Sky Mountain Institute hosted an organic gardening class as part of a four series workshop on permaculture. What in the world is permaculture you might ask. Wikipedia defines permaculture as “an approach to designing human settlements and perennial agricultural systems that mimic the relationships found in natural ecologies”. Workshop topics include organic gardening, mulching, soil typing, water harvesting, companion planting, composting, landscaping, hardscaping and most important to me — the sharing of amazing food.



The class is being taught by Kate Tirion, a permaculture expert and dryland consultant from Arizona and Alden Hough (Lali Mitchell’s son, resident expert on organic gardening and former manager of the garden at the Tree of Life Rejuvenation Center) at Lali’s beautiful property in Harmony Grove. The amount of gardening and sustainable living knowledge amongst the people at this workshop is awe inspiring. Even if you don’t garden — but just employ a gardener — this workshop will inspire you to go home and start digging in the earth.

The next workshop will focus on water harvesting and will be held over the last weekend in May. This is a great way to meet your neighbors and learn a little bit more about the benefits of living in a rural environment. I hope you will join us.

american haiku #101

on the seventh day

God rested

let's wake him now.

By Owen McGoldrick

By Karen Gardner

Photos on this page by Owen McGoldrick©

Mountain Lion Sighting

Elfin Forest Sightings

It is that time of the year and our local mountain lion has had TWO babies this spring. The lion has been seen on Circa De Media, Elfin Forest Road on the Sage Hills property, along Fortuna del Este and at the Reserve.

Protecting Your Homes

- Don't feed deer
- Deer-proof your landscape
- Trim brush to reducing hiding places for mountain lions
- Don't leave pets or small children outside unattended
- Install motion-sensitive lighting around the house
- Provide sturdy, covered shelter for vulnerable livestock
- Don't allow pets outside when mountain lions are most active—dawn, dusk, and at night
- Bring pet food inside to avoid attracting raccoons, opossums and other potential mountain lion prey.



Mountain lions average between 75 and 150 pounds, are a tawny gold, have very long tails and have wide-set ears.

By Karen Gardner

Staying Safe

Mountain lions are quiet, solitary and elusive, and typically avoid people. Mountain lion attacks on humans are extremely rare. However, conflicts are increasing as California's human population expands into mountain lion habitat.

- Do not hike, bike, or jog alone.
- Keep a close watch on small children.
- If you encounter a mountain lion, do not run; instead, face the animal, make noise and try to look bigger by waving your arms; throw rocks or other objects. Pick up small children.
- If attacked, fight back.
- If a mountain lion attacks a person, immediately call 911.

Newcomers' Corner

Thanks to Minoosoha, the welcoming committee is back! If you know of anyone new buying a house near you, please send Minoosoha an email at minoosoh@yahoo.com and she will drop off a basket of goodies for new neighbors. Then at their choice we'll introduce them to the community at large in these pages. This month's newcomers:

Sandra Bartsch and Yeano Erforth on Camino Sereno.

Sandra and Yeano moved here from Encinitas and Los Angeles with their 14 month old baby Lasse, their border collie Lea Jones, and three horses: with their love of horseback riding sounds like they'll fit right in! They say they moved to Elfin Forest partly because of "proximity to the beach and the fact that it is a real community".

Deanne Gray and Boris Said on Paint Mountain Road.

Deanne and Boris enjoy the great outdoors with their son Boris Jr., 4, who loves to drive around with his race car driver dad, and their Jack Russell Jackie. Mom, being a former mountain climber and athlete, can sometimes be spied running on the community trails. Deanne works at Camp Pendleton as a psychotherapist specializing in PTSD, and Boris flies around the world driving fast cars as fast as they will go.

Classifieds

Ryan Anderson - Baby Sitting/Pet Care. High school junior, responsible, with own transportation. 760-471-5850.

Elissa Benjamin - Experienced babysitter and tutor for grades K-4, all subjects/pet care. Local references. Red Cross babysitter certification. Please call early to reserve babysitting. 760-274-5379.

Amanda Clerke – Experienced Babysitter/Pet Care. Elfin Forest resident, La Costa Canyon High School. YMCA babysitter certification. 15 years old. Please call 760-510-0143.

Jessica MacKinnon - Babysitting/Feed Animals, EF Resident, 15 years old, SFC High School - 10th grade, took babysitting course through Red Cross. Contact at 760-744-8955.

Hawaii condo rental rates are the lowest in years. Rent one of our beautiful 1 bedroom condos. Choose from Wailea Maui or Poipu Beach, Kauai. <http://www.ekahimaui.com> or <http://www.poipukapili.net> 10% Discount for EF residents.

Wanted: 8 X 8 pipe corral shade/shelter and mounting brackets for a 12 X 12 stall in good condition, reasonably priced. 760-61-0967.

Need a gardener? Consider using ours - has worked in Elfin Forest for over 15 years for several families, extremely hardworking and reliable, experienced with horse care, available either for regular weekly service or as needed. For references call Jacqueline at 760-855-0444, Jose cell is 760-443-7855.

GREAT housekeeper has available slots with recent cancellations due to the economy. Has worked in Elfin Forest for over a decade for various residents, very good English, extremely thorough, trustworthy and very pleasant. For references call Jacqueline at 760-855-0444, Reina cell is 760-812-9267

Elfin Forest/Harmony Grove Town Council Board members: Eric Anderson 471-1464, Jacqueline Ar-sivaud-Benjamin 891-9061, Bonnie Baumgartner 510-1175, Christ Dye 747-0575, Melanie Fallon 744-7090,1145, May Meintjes 744-7336, Zana Parma 752-9599, Manu Sohaey 510-9114 and Bill Telesco 746.4692.

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