



LOS TRANCOS WOODS & VISTA VERDE **Newsletter – October/November 2011**

VOTE - Water Board Election on November 8th

These three candidates are competing for two Los Trancos County Water District (LTCWD) seats in the election coming up on November 8, 2011:

- 1) Claudia Mazzetti, web site: www.claudia4waterboard.com
- 2) Susan Coons, web site: <http://susanforlwcwd.WebStarts.com/index.htm>
- 3) Nancy Neuer, web site: www.votency4lwcwd.webstarts.com

Please take some time to get to know the candidates and vote on November 8th!

<http://www.smartvoter.org/2011/11/08/ca/sm/race/690/>

LTCWD News

Plant ID signs have been placed on District lands. Please take a moment to learn a new plant or two as you walk by, and please do leave the signs in place.

The Water Movement Control Program is completing 6 demonstration projects for roadside culvert and outlet drainage channel improvements. The District has just received a Geotechnical Investigation and Slope Stability Evaluation report with recommendations for near and long-term improvements to the Ramona Road slide area. Specifically, a down-slope protection demonstration project involving waterproofing improvement of the “Spanish Creek” entry basin at Ramona Rd. is in the engineering phase. A draft, electronic “Drainage Flows and Features Map” for the Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde portion of the District has been created and will be posted on the District web site for residents to review and comment.

Longevity and continuity - Most residents favor District continuation with its attendant local control of property tax for broadly beneficial public purposes that cannot be otherwise adequately served. For that reason, the Board is exploring possible greater normalization of its operating status through, among other things, formal activation of chartered responsibilities. A successful outcome might enable both transformation to a more flexible category of special public district (e.g., Community Services District), and enhanced overall public standing. And finally, reducing Board member responsibility for the ongoing administration of increasingly complex District programs through the hiring of a part-time coordinator is being actively considered. Such an addition could establish better program management continuity; allow Board members to focus on strategic and policy issues; encourage a greater willingness by District residents to serve on the Board.

Submitted by David Smernoff, LTCWD

Another Amazing Community Fall Picnic

Over 200 people took advantage of excellent weather on Saturday, September 24th, and enjoyed another amazing fall picnic at Pony Tracks Ranch. The tank tours were well attended as usual, and the trains ran continuously. Two bands provided music, and Wendi and Mimi provided the kid’s tattoo parlor. None of this could have happened without the volunteers. About 30 community volunteers and about 20 Train Club volunteers did everything from directing the parking which was greatly restricted this year, to setting up tables and chairs, to buying food, beer and wine, to clearing the train tracks, to watering the train tracks for fire safety, to staffing the grill, to laying yellowjacket traps, to cleaning everything up, and what about the sumptuous food that was brought. The community owes all these people a great big THANK YOU, AGAIN AND AGAIN!

Submitted by VVCA Board

EARTHQUAKE EXERCISE - Los Trancos Woods and Vista Verde

Saturday, October 29th 9am-12 Noon at 184 Vista Verde Way

Save this date to learn or brush up and practice your radio communication and disaster first aid skills. Volunteers from both of our neighborhoods will be sharing their emergency response tips. Come join us in learning ways you can help your family be better prepared for when the next quake strikes. Beverages and snacks will be served. Contact Steve Friedman for more information.

Check out the CERPP website which is filled with great resource information: www.cerpp.org. For more details contact Steve Friedman at 851-7407 or steve@sffmarketeam.com.

Submitted by Steve Friedman, LTW Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Fire Safety and Habitat Conservation

Fire safety remains a looming concern for communities everywhere who enjoy the joys and risks of living in a rural, mountainous setting. Our community is no different.

On October 4th, Woodside Fire Protection District hosted a panel to discuss the balance between fire safety and habitat conservation. LTCWD Director Charlie Krenz was one of four speakers - all of whom offered interesting information on striking this balance.

Denise Enea – Woodside Fire Protection District Fire Marshal:

In general, Oaks are fairly fire resistant with the exception of SOD Oaks which become very dry and susceptible to fire. Scotch and French Broom are extremely vulnerable to fire and do not provide habitat except to wasps. Mowing grasses works and being sure to clear out dead underbrush EVERY year is essential to defensible space. Open space and meadows are an important habitat for all kinds of critters.

Eric Abelson – Stanford PHD Candidate/Biology. Research at Jasper Ridge

Different species have different requirements and a wide variety of landscapes are good. Riparian corridors are productive for animals to move into and find food/water. What we do in our own backyards can impact habitats – native plants invite a variety of important species into our yards. Good sources for natives are: Yerba Buena Nursery, Las Pilitas Nursery (online), Acterra and the local California Native Plant Society.

Meghan Scanlon – Program Manager/POST

POST has utilized all of the following techniques to strike the balance between habitat preservation and fire safety: mowing, grazing, spot treatment with herbicides, prescribed burns, removal of invasive species in urban interface areas, and Eucalyptus thinning and removal followed by painting cuts with herbicide to inhibit regrowth. Recently, POST inherited a large parcel with a vast Eucalyptus forest that was deemed a significant hazard by the Fire Chief of Half Moon Bay, Cal Fire and POST; a major fuels reduction program was recommended and initiated that greatly reduced the hazard while also taking habitats into consideration.

Charlie Krenz – LTCWD Director

LTCWD is surrounded by overgrown forests of Chaparral and Oak Woodland that have not burned in decades. Our community has had to find that trade-off between habitat preservation and fire safety. We have followed the recommendations of Ray Moritz who studied what happened in the Oakland Hills fires along with the fire safety recommendations presented to the Blue Oaks development by Carol Rice. We have focused on Eucalyptus extraction/clearing to reduce flying embers, escape route integrity to save lives, broom removal (pull and treat), and defensible space creation. These are multi-year efforts that require patience, prioritization and on-going commitment.

Submitted by Tracy Sherman, Los Trancos County Water Board

Sudden Oak Death News

Now is the time to plan your fall spraying for Sudden Oak Death. Black, live and tan oak trees are most susceptible to the Sudden Oak Death (SOD) pathogen. These species should be sprayed or injected with AgriFos once a year to reduce the possibility of infection and subsequent death. Once an oak is infected, there is no cure. Due to the late spring moisture we had this year expect an increase in disease the next few years, especially if you do not treat your trees. At highest risk are your oaks within 20' of California bay trees. Presently there are over 40 properties in VV/LTW currently using the services of Tree Solutions for their oak treatments. Our SOD Task Force has helped arrange the following pricing for our neighborhood and feels it is competitive and fair:

- A minimum charge of \$75.00 (usually \$125) when scheduled on the same day as multiple local area properties.
- * Spraying with AgriFos/PentraBark: \$2.00 per inch trunk dbh (diameter at breast height)

Quotes for SOD treatment are free of charge. Please keep in mind that there are a number of circumstances that can impact standard pricing. If you are interested in having Tree Solutions give you a quote or treat your oaks, please contact Jim Neve: 650-269-0540 / jim@TreeSolutions.com / www.TreeSolutions.com

For other questions, contact the co-chairs: Amanda Lee or Linda Drey-Nightingale.

Just out from the Oak Mortality Task Force:

SOD has increased dramatically in areas surveyed during the spring 2011 fourth annual SOD Blitz, with increases up to three-fold of infection levels compared to 2010 data.

Approximately 500 participants gathered nearly 10,000 samples from 2,000 trees covering at least 50,000 acres of California woodlands and parks. While not a scientific sample, it indicates that a higher than expected infection level is present in the San Francisco Peninsula as well as in the densely populated western hill slopes of the San Francisco East Bay. For maps showing the distribution of the disease: <http://nature.berkeley.edu/garbelotto/english/sodblitzresults2011.php> (red indicates positive trees, while green indicates trees negative for the pathogen)

Submitted by the Sudden Oak Death Task Force

BEWARE ON HALLOW'S EVE!!

Come Hallow's Eve, Monday, October 31st, our gang of ghouls, goblins, and super heroes will once again be wandering the streets looking for tricks and treats. So we don't surprise you -- be warned -- we are coming again ... woo-o-o-o-.

Families with neighborhood tricksters are welcome to assemble starting at 4pm at the Gillbrands' at 1215 Los Trancos Road. Around 5:30pm, we will begin our wandering up Los Trancos Road, over to Bonita and El Rey, down Lake Road and back around to Los Trancos Circle and then down to Los Trancos Road ending at Foxwood.

We've heard a tale that a spooky surprise awaits the brave and bold at 1124 Los Trancos Road. For those lucky enough to survive the ordeal, a goblin gathering is planned at 112 Foxwood from 6:45 or so to 8:30pm or earlier (time to get the little ones in bed for school the next day).

Boo-o-o-o-...from the Neighborhood Tricksters!

Submitted by Tore Gillbrand, David Smernoff, Jane Leibowitz, and Karen Tate

Community Associations' Web Sites

The web site addresses are:

<http://lostrancoswoods.org/>

<http://www.vistaverdepv.org> NEW

The group e-mail list is:

VistaVerdeLTW@yahoogroups.com

VistaVerdeCommunityAssoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Thank you, Jerry Jensen & Rob Kalman for maintaining web sites