

President's Message



Bill Hunt

A Look At Foundation Values

The Foundation board has discussed changes to Open Space trail use rules in our April, May, June and July, and August board meetings. We aren't done yet. We want any changes to make our Open Space better, not worse. This statement from our bylaws goes back many years but it still sums up our values:

"The primary purposes of the Foundation are to:

- Encourage widespread appreciation of the scenic beauty, recreational benefits and natural environment of the Walnut Creek Open Space.
- Improve understanding of the responsibilities entailed in maintaining and enhancing the natural environment in the Walnut Creek Open Space.
- Enhance and protect the integrity of the natural

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Fire Damage – WCOSF Board members view fire damage on Paradise Valley Trail. In foreground, from left: Kime Smith, Linda Judd, Gary Muerle. Photo: David Ogden

Fire Scorches Central Lime Ridge

On June 29 and 30 a significant section of Central Lime Ridge Open Space was lost to a grassland and woodland fire. Since the fire, staff has worked with other public agencies, researched fire recovery methods, and created a plan for the restoration of this area. We are planning on engaging several methods of resource protection that will allow the majority of this land to restore itself. Nature is best at restoring wildlands but humans can help by removing road blocks to recovery.

Fire Not Devastating For Grassland

Grassland fires and woodland fires behave very differently. While looking at the charred remains of the grassland it's hard to remember that a fire is not devastating for a grassland. During a grass fire the fire rushes over the surface and doesn't burn deep into the soil. As a result small wildlife can normally go into their burrows under the ground and allow the fire to sweep overhead. Non-native and invasive plants can be removed by fire as they generally have not developed with fire being a part of their life cycle. Seeds from native plants that have laid dormant in the soil are available for new growth and have the broken down nutrients from the fire to help their recovery. These seeds are our nursery for the future so when visiting Lime Ridge it is very important that you stay on the established trails.

Woodland Fire A Different Story

A woodland fire as reached into the old oaks in Paradise Valley is a different story. In most circumstances oaks can withstand a moderate fire due to their heavy bark.

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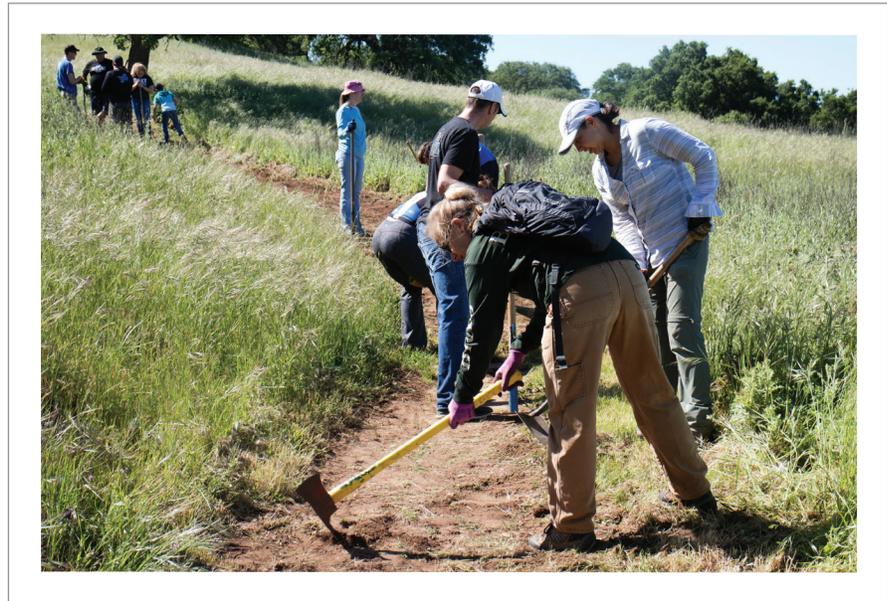
Trails Committee Summer Update

The Open Space Foundation Trails Committee has led two trail maintenance days in Lime Ridge, with the help of over 50 volunteers. We regraded sections of the Lime Ridge Trail to make it safer for hiking, realigned one section to avoid an area that gets very wet in winter, and closed a couple of cut-through trails.

With the assistance of the City, we also hosted a sixth public community meeting to discuss trails and trail usage. A total of over 350 people have attended these meetings. In addition, the Foundation issued an online survey on trail usage, which received 700 responses. Clearly, there is significant interest in trail use in our open space areas.

The Committee is working on refining some recommendations for trail use in the future. The recommendations will be designed to respond to three principal concerns: safety, respect for the precious resources in the open space, and respect for other users.

I anticipate that there will be one more community meeting before the



Pitching In – 50 volunteers from several different groups pitched in with City staff, Trails Committee, and Foundation members for two trail maintenance days this summer. Here, they're working on Lime Ridge Trail. Photo: Kime Smith

recommendations are finalized for consideration by the Board of the Foundation. The Board will decide on what recommendations, if any, the

Foundation will present to the City. Your continued interest in this important process is very much appreciated.

—Bob Simmons, Committee Chair

Going Green: Electronic Newsletter Available

You can view our newsletter on your favorite mobile device or computer. We post it on our website (wcosf.org), and we'll be happy to send you a pdf version as well. For the pdf, just send an email to newsletter@wcosf.org.



Fire Scorches Central Lime Ridge (continued from page 1)

The long five year drought in our recent past damaged many oak trees in ways that opened their bark. Fire was able to enter into the tree and we lost several trees for this reason. The recovery of this area will involve observation and assessment over the next several years to determine the fate of many of these trees.

How You Can Help

Members of the public have asked how they can help and we are very happy to welcome their participation. Staff over the next year will have work parties as time and circumstances dictate. Watch for information on how to join in and be sure to check out the Walnut Creek Open Space Facebook page for volunteer opportunities and programs to help you learn about and enjoy our Open Space lands.

—Nancy Dollard, Supervising Ranger
Walnut Creek Open Space

Century-Old Pipes Revealed By Fire

As a result of the Valley Fire in Lime Ridge this year, at least 1,000 feet of metal pipe from the limestone mining era, ranging from two to eight inches in diameter, was uncovered.

In late August, a group of 15 volunteers, most of whom work with the Mount Diablo Interpretative Association's Trash Removal Project came to Lime Ridge and worked about six hours cutting and hauling 1,000 feet of metal pipe and about 300 feet of remnant PVC from yet another era.

The metal pipe removed ranged from three to five inches in diameter.

Because it was very heavy, it was cut into approximately ten-foot sections. The pipe that was larger than five inches will have to be removed via a contract. The volunteers were assisted by City staff. The project was organized by Bob Simmons.

The photo shows one of six areas the crews worked on, with two more areas left for another day. Although very tired at the end, several volunteers expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to help clean up Lime Ridge. It was a very good day for our Open Space!



Pipes Galore – Volunteers, most with MDIA's Trash Removal Project, cut up and remove 1000 feet of metal, and 300 feet of PVC pipe uncovered after Valley Fire in Lime Ridge. Photo: Dave Hammond

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environment in the Walnut Creek Open Space.

- Support the City of Walnut Creek in maintaining, enhancing and expanding the Walnut Creek Open Space.
- Conduct programs and activities to improve the Walnut Creek Open Space.
- Support the historical and educational programs in the Walnut Creek Open Space."

Our work restoring native plant communities and controlling invasive plants stems from these values as do our efforts to make residents aware of and appreciative of our Open Space.

It is up to Walnut Creek's city government to make final decisions about changes to rules governing our Open Space. The Foundation will take positions that reflect our values and then speak out about our positions. We spoke out 20 years ago when Lime Ridge Open Space was opened, proposing changes to protect the special value of the valuable plant and animal resources in central Lime Ridge. The Foundation will continue to be a strong voice in support of our Open Space.

—Bill Hunt, President
Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation

Want To Help Restore Native Plants?

Your Open Space Foundation carries out several native plant restoration projects, and we can always use help.

Here's a list of our projects, and contact info for the project leaders. If you'd like to lend a hand, just send an email to the project leader.

Bayberry Pond (Shell Ridge)
Project Leader: Lesley Hunt
Email: lesleyh@wcosf.org

Indian Valley Pond (Shell Ridge)
Project Leader: Sean Micallef
Email: seanm@wcosf.org

Deer Lake (Shell Ridge)
Project Leader: Bob Simmons
Email: bobs@wcosf.org

Oak Habitat for Wildlife
Project Leader: Gary Muerle
Email: garymuerle@yahoo.com

Fossil Hill (Shell Ridge)
Project leader: Phil Johnson
Email: philj@wcosf.org



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 **Yes, I want to help protect and preserve Walnut Creek's Open Spaces.**

We invite you to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation. Memberships and contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. There are numerous areas where you can help. Interested? Drop us an email at volunteer@wcosf.org, visit our website at www.wcosf.org, or fill out the form below and mail it to WCOSF, Box 309, Walnut Creek, CA 94597-0309.

I would like to join the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL (WE NEVER SHARE) _____

PATRON-\$500 BENEFACTOR-\$250 SUSTAINING-\$100 SPONSOR-\$50 FAMILY-\$40 INDIVIDUAL-\$25

I WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO: MAINTAIN OAKS PLANT NATIVES CREATE WILDLIFE CORRIDORS HELP WITH OUTREACH

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Open Space Foundation

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