



Irvine-Laguna Wildlife Corridor

Connecting Habitats
from Mountains to Coast

THIS NEWSLETTER'S FEATURED ARTICLES:

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Laguna Canyon
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BEING WATER WISE | CREATING WILDLIFE- FRIENDLY LANDSCAPES

By Giovanni Di Franco

It is well known that California is experiencing an extreme drought. It is affecting all parts of our state stressing the agriculture industry, water availability, and flora and fauna native to our region. To help adapt to our changing climate, California has enacted strategies to reduce water use and take full advantage of rainfall by implementing restrictions on water use and increasing water storage capacity.

To help support these goals, the average Southern California resident can participate by reducing their water usage.

(Continued on next page)

On average, urban water use accounts for approximately 10% of the total water usage in California.

Cities such as Fullerton, CA have enacted water restriction laws to limit outdoor watering to three days per week. Unfortunately, many residents may witness the yellowing of their lawns and plant dieback. To combat this occurrence, a viable solution is to transform these large grass patches into native gardens.



Native plants, such as California Sagebrush and California Buckwheat are adapted and resilient to the drier Mediterranean climate present throughout Southern California. These types of plant species do not necessitate the amount and frequency of water as compared to grass lawns commonly seen decorating the exteriors of homes.

The inclusion of more native plant species can also help reduce the stressors placed on local wildlife that are impacted by drought.

With reduced water availability, wildlife are forced to leave their familiar territories and explore populated areas that sustain more resources. Having native plant landscapes increase habitat connectivity for stressed species that would have been impacted by drought. Wildlife corridors can be large, formal, infrastructures that funnel and assist the travel of animals, but small patches of green space can be seen as stepping stones for wildlife to travel across urban landscapes.



Big box stores may carry palettes of native species, but here are just a few nurseries that specialize in carrying native plants for your garden:

Tree of Life Nursery, San Juan Capistrano, CA

Theodore Payne Nursery, Sun Valley, CA

El Nativogrowers, Inc., Online Only: elnativogrowers.com

LAGUNA CANYON CREEK UPDATE

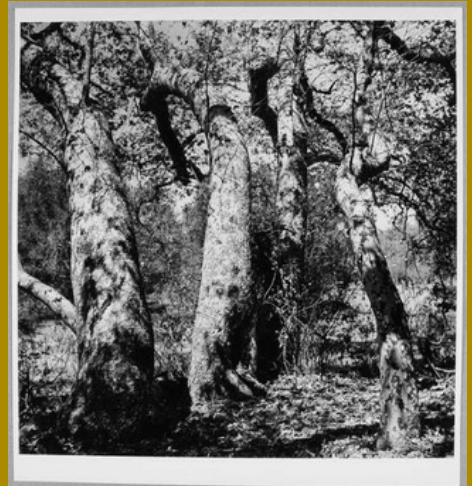
By Bob Borthwick

Laguna Greenbelt, Inc. has always supported and defended its namesake Laguna Creek and its tributaries in the Canyon open space. Due to the scope of LGB's defined mission, "urban" projects [within cities] that are not connected to open space are excluded from LGB purview. However, such projects can be part of the wider Laguna Canyon and Creek ecosystem, and therefore are important to monitor.

The proposed County of Orange Channel Replacement Project in the Laguna Arts District is such an urban project. LGB Board Member and landscape architect Bob Borthwick has been a key member involved in reviewing this project as a private citizen, assisting the neighborhood residents and other environmental groups. The proposed project involves removing the concrete channel and adjacent trees and landscaping for the entire length of the Laguna Canyon Frontage Road, in the area from the Hive Center to the Mobile Home Park at Woodland Drive. This includes Seven Degrees, the Sawdust Festival, and the Boys/Girls Club frontages. The concrete channel will be replaced, but almost all of the large existing trees [5 pines and 2 sycamores] were originally planned for removal without replacement. The pine trees are over 60 years old.



William R. Current



William R. Current



William R. Current

The first submittal by the County in 2021 included no replacement trees. After Planning Commission and public comments requesting more trees, in May 2022 the County proposed adding 7 small street trees in the pathway, yet no trees in the creek parkway. Due to continuing requests by stakeholders and the public, on August 2 the City Council directed staff to request approximately 30 trees along the creek parkway and to carefully examine the existing mature trees to consider preservation of the existing trees where possible.

Thanks to LGB supporters and other local environmentalists, including neighborhood residents, this project will hopefully be much better than the County originally proposed it. In these times of climate change and planet-warming, we need all the trees we can get. From an aesthetic standpoint, this section of the Laguna Canyon streetscape should frame and enhance our Art Festival venues, beautify our creek, and create a memorable entrance to our city. Stay tuned!



FIRE SEASON LINGERS

After experiencing a historic 10-day heat wave, droughts in California have never been more apparent. Dry air and wind storms are a recipe for wildfires. As we enter the ever-extending fire season this year, it is vital to make the necessary preparations to reduce the chances of disaster around your home. The following are helpful tips from CalFire.



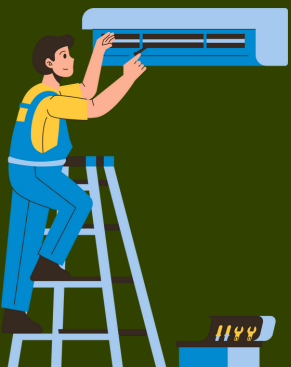
Defensible Space

CalFire suggests that homeowners and residents create a 100 foot barrier with well-maintained landscape that reduces the availability of potential fuel sources. This can help reduce the likelihood of a house fire and provides space for fire fighters to reach and protect your home safely.



Emergency Kit

Creating a go-bag containing emergency essentials can help expedite decision making when an evacuation is mandated. Important personal items and documentation along with face masks, water, and other safety items complete an emergency kit. Battery operated radio may be helpful as well.



Air Quality

It is well documented that fires even hundreds of miles away can deposit ash and soot creating harsh air to breathe, especially for sensitive groups. Consider purchasing a portable air purifier and regularly check your HVAC system filter to ensure its performing as efficiently as possible.



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Laguna Greenbelt, Inc. works to preserve open space and support wildlife that depend on local habitat to thrive.

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<https://lagunagreenbelt.org/donate-membership/>

or mail a check to

Laguna Greenbelt, Inc.

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