



Spanish Lakes News

A Publication of the Spanish Lakes Homeowner's Association

Spanish Lakes Homeowner's Association

President
Victor Pickering

Vice President
Roger Zolldan

Treasurer
Paul Nevosh

Secretary
Lynn Crawford

At Large
Jim Hagen

Editor
Lynn Crawford

Mark IV
P. O. Box 1988
Atascadero
CA 93423-1988
(805) 466-6275

President's Report

Believe it or not we are almost halfway through the election year with the current Board of Directors.

We have been working toward open meetings and volunteer participation. To that end, we have begun a social committee headed by John Fazio. His first function will be a July event, complete with food and drinks, in our park. Watch for further details.

There are projects being studied:

- South lake's water level
- Upper lake's dam
- Middle lake's dam
- Drainage issues
- Ongoing talks with Los Amigos Development

Long term, we have rules and regulations to re-work and, in some cases write, as well as charting the future direction of the Association, its role and function.

Thanks to all: it can work!

Board's Report

Fire Safety

Craig Thomas, at the request of the homeowners, contacted the CDF regarding our special fire safety needs and got some very encouraging information. Both CDF and Paso Robles share responsibilities and help each other out. This is good news, as Paso's trucks are often quicker to get here due to their close proximity. All groups that respond have pump trucks, so pressure to our hydrants is not an issue. Anywhere from two to five trucks with these pumps could respond. Of course, there are special responses in the event of a brush fire, including helicopters. Apparently, we had a vehicle fire here recently, 911 responded, and the truck arrived in minutes to quickly douse the flames. I think we were all relieved to get such a positive report. If any of you have further questions, you may contact Lora Brown,

with the CDF fire prevention office at (805) 543-4244.

Other Safety Issues

- We have been told that the abandoned docks in the middle lake and lower lake are not safe. Consider them a delightful decoration, and climb on them at your own risk.
- We are working to remove the barbed wire from the open space, but we might inadvertently overlook some areas. Be aware; this used to be cattle country.
- We are also removing the tall brush from the trails, so those lovely walks/jogs will be unimpeded and safe. Hopefully, this weed abatement will not be allowed to get out of hand in future, and that a regular maintenance contract can be secured.
- There may be open wells undiscovered on the property. If you find any, please let us know right away. Children should be made aware of all of these potential dangers in the open space.

Meeting Notification

Our next scheduled meeting is on Tuesday, June 6 at 5:30 p.m. It will be convened at the Paso Robles Senior Center located just off Creston on Scott Street.

Your editor was "shot down" after suggesting that flags be flown at the entrances to remind owners of the meeting (when I reported this to my husband, he had to be picked up off the floor from laughter). I will see that a notice is posted on the mailboxes. Our president will Email those who have published addresses.

Ongoing Reminders

We realize the wet weather has made it difficult for construction trucks to keep from tracking dirt and mud onto our roads, but we must make some attempt to shovel the areas, so that others won't have to drive through this debris.

Another often cited concern is about exposed RVs and trailers. These continue to be a source of complaints.

Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 2 2006

5:30 P.M.

**Paso Robles Senior Center
Library**

270 Scott Street (off Creston)

Thanks All Around

All members of the board and the water board are putting in many hours on your behalf; each is to be commended. Other volunteers are also in need of a big thank you -- Craig Thomas particularly comes to mind. But no one thinks to thank those who are planting beautiful full-sized trees, developing creative landscaping, and generally making Spanish Lakes even more spectacular. I won't single you out, because others might be disappointed if I forget to recognize them. But you know who you are, because you naturally take pride in your community. I am in awe of your efforts as I plant my little trees and native shrubs. Thank you so much from the rest of us.

Focus on Our Wildlife

Rattlesnakes

As it warms up, those critters that depend on heat to become active start to show up. I noticed a couple of children walking cross-country on the open space recently, and would caution parents to have a conversation with their youngsters about rattlesnakes, ticks, and barbed wire and other items mentioned below—all of which may be encountered in the open space.

Rattlers will mostly be seen coiled on rocks or sunny places soaking up the sun's rays. They will warn you if you invade their space with a nice rattle of their tail. If you startle them, they can strike. This is why I recommend high boots when walking through brush, even on hot days, to help protect you.

The Western Rattler looks a lot like the gopher or garter snake, but its head has that unmistakable width to carry its venom. The bite of a rattler isn't usually fatal with prompt medical care. There is a 4% death rate. But all bites, with or without symptoms must be dealt with quickly. It is important to keep the area of the bite below the heart, and to remain calm so as not to elevate the heart rate. Baby rattlers carry a full dose of venom, and they don't have their rattlers yet, so be careful around them. I recommend carrying a cell phone for that 911 call. Are they a big problem here? No, not really. But they do like warm pavements, so checking your decks and being aware that they do

exist here, is always a good precaution. Dogs, particularly, can die from bites, because of their smaller sizes and because they may be bit in their muzzles.

Ticks

Ticks will mostly be found on deer trails. It is a good idea to wear long sleeves tucked in as well as long pants. After coming in from the trail, do a tick check, and if you encounter any, pull them out slowly with tweezers making sure to get the head.

Poison Oak

We also have one stand of poison oak that I know of on the left side of the lower lake by the street. The leaves are glossy, oval in shape, come in clumps of three, and are jagged. "Leaves three, leave 'em be," is a saying worth remembering.

Editor's Comments

Guardians of the Open Space

I had the chance to read through the original documents granting, in perpetuity, the use of the open space. There are some very wise safeguards to this unlimited use. We must be the custodians of this space, caring for it, keeping it pristine, and not adding items that would destroy its natural beauty. These include buildings, parking lots, trailer storage areas, trash of any kind, to name a few. We can't hunt on it or take anything from it. We must protect all living things and preserve the habitat of our endangered species.

We are allowed to repair trails, roads, bridges, and dams. We are allowed to enjoy its beauty. Our open space can be taken away from us if we flagrantly abuse our duty to care for it. Now, I know there are those who say, "The County doesn't care what we do with it." But this flies in the face of the written documents that are available for you to read if you will just give me a call.

As a former teacher of elementary children I had the privilege of taking nature trips with my students. During those trips I tried to instill in them the simple rules for using pristine spaces: "Take only pictures, leave only footprints, kill only time." (Of course, when I taught junior high, these students changed the wording slightly which I can divulge to you privately.)

When I taught in L.A. I lived in a place where I watched the moon rise over the Honda Agency. I listened all night to trains, helicopters, sirens, and drunken kids doing wheelies in the parking lot outside my window.

I am so very very lucky to be here. Hope you feel the same way.