



The Bonita Highlander

July 2020

6 Feet Back - Distancing the Open Space - Michelle Kriz, OSC Chair

Thanks for your support. As Open Space Chair, I want to thank you to all who have taken the time to let me know what is going on in the open space around your properties. It is helpful to have extra eyes out there.

New Open Space Contractor Hired. We have hired a contractor, **LandCare USA**. You will see their orange trucks and hear them working all around the Highlands. They will begin working on the open space mowing and weed whacking project, beginning on Monday, June 29th. The manager-supervisors are very enthusiastic and will even be working on Saturday, July 11th, with a double crew, to try and knock things out more quickly. Because Saturday, July 4th is a holiday, they will be unable to work that day.

Uniqueness of our Trails and Open Spaces. Did you know that our trails are part of the County of San Diego's trail system? How blessed we are to live in such a special place. We even have three Eucalyptus trees in our open space that are unusual. The arborist is trying to identify them. See if you can spot them and let us know where you think they are. Hint: They have been here a long time and they are a single trunked tree with a beautiful, smooth bark.

Prioritized work. On June 23rd, seven of us spent three hours walking a small portion of the open space with the new contractor and their tree service. It is certain that we will spend many more hours getting a game plan together to tackle some of the issues we have in our open space. The number one priority has always been safety to your homes and people walking and riding horses on the trails.

Spending many hours in the open space over the last two months, has revealed a great many maintenance issues. Ten years of drought followed by two years of unusually heavy rains have left us with eroded trails, brow ditches full of soil and debris, as well as an overgrowth of trees and shrubs. All items that will need to be addressed over the next few months and years. We are developing a plan to tackle the worst areas first, then prioritize the remainder. You will see crews mowing the open space, clearing the trail entrances, working to clear brow ditches, and cleaning up our cul-de-sacs.

Brow Ditches. There are a couple of critical issues we have taken note of on our walks that require the help of our homeowners. If you live on a property with a brow ditch, it is important that it stay clean and unobstructed. These are the life blood of our drainage system. Please contact us if you need help or are unsure of what to do. If you are unsure if the brow ditch behind your house is on your property, we can help with that, too. A brow ditch should never be blocked. If you have a pet you are trying to keep from escaping, there are options available to you that will keep Fido in and allow the water to drain out. Please contact us and we can help you with some ideas. Also, let us know if the brow ditch needs repair. We cannot see it if it's on your property and will assist with ideas and recommendations, but maintenance of brow ditches on private property is the responsibility of the property owner.

Does your property run alongside a brow ditch, and do you have plants growing next to it? If so, please keep the plants from over growing into the brow ditch or leaving leaf debris that may clog it up. If you have planted trees next to a brow ditch, check to make sure the roots are not causing cracks and that fallen leaves are not keeping the ditch from flowing freely. Keep in mind that only the Association should be planting anything in the open space. Draining or backwashing a pool or spa, or even a fountain into the brow ditch is not permitted. The County of San Diego has some strict guidelines regarding this practice. Check out their website for the exact codes and regulations. Our brow ditches empty into the storm drain and are for the sole purpose of keeping water moving away from houses during a storm. Doing your part to keep them flowing, helps everyone.

Many of you took notice of the **six (6') foot clearing allowance** mentioned in the last newsletter. Good for you. Those of you who took advantage of this will notice that there will be less debris and seeds in your yards when the weed whacking

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From my perspective...

I've lived in the Highlands for 40 years and have been Recording Secretary since 2016. I have come to realize a few things recently: First and foremost, homeowners DO read the newsletter. Many of you have written with questions and concerns after reading the newsletter! Yay! Another thing I have noticed is that many of you feel as blessed as I, to live here...again Yay! But the thing that surprises me the most is that there are those among us who choose to disregard letters with the Bonita Highlands return address. If you get a letter from the HOA by all means **OPEN IT!** Don't just toss it in the recycle bin and hope we don't write again. Every month as I type the board minutes, I marvel at the people who have not responded to letters regarding the condition of their property. Not responding doesn't make the situation better. Open the letter, if you disagree then write or email the HOA. If you agree but are unable to correct the issue immediately, respond and let the staff know. There are all kinds of solutions and suggestions that will prevent letters from continuing and fines growing. Fines that grow DO NOT go away. A word to the wise, address the problem before it gets out of hand. - *Mary Ellen, Editor.*

REMINDER: Any projects that involve the exterior of your home: paint, roofing, solar, additions to structure such as patio covers, fencing, pools or patios, all require an approved SCR **BEFORE** you begin the project. An SCR is good for 120 days so please submit SCRs for summer projects soon. If there is no meeting, John Gilman hand delivers SCRs for approval.

Congratulations! 99.5% of BHHA Property Owners have PAID their Annual Assessment fees for 2020-21.



The Highland's Financial Officer, Sandra Jones, is preparing for the annual audit. This fall, we will mail to each homeowner of record the Audit Report, along with the request for Annual Notice of Address, Representative and Rental Status form.

If you do not return your form, then your last mailing address provided will be used for legal notices.

U.S. Postal Address for Correspondence

Bonita Highlands Homeowners' Association
P.O. Box 458 Bonita, CA 91908-0458



This is also your opportunity to provide an e-mail address and phone number to make response to any issue easier.

Thank you in advance.

E-mail address: bhighlander@cox.net
FAX only: (619) 479-2200 (24 hours) You may also find documents, forms, meeting minutes, and notices on our **BHHA web site:** www.bonitahighlands.org



The next monthly **BHHA Board of Directors meeting** is scheduled for Tuesday, July 14, 2020 at **6:30 PM** in the Bonita - Sunnyside Fire Station's Community Room, located at 4900 Bonita Road.

However, this meeting may be canceled of we are still under strict COVID-19 separation/Shelter-in-Place restrictions. We will post status and intent on our BHHA web site (bonitahighlands.org)

If a meeting is held, an Executive Session may follow, if required.

All Bonita Highlands homeowners are welcome to attend!



The Bonita Highlander

...is the newsletter of the Bonita Highlands Homeowners' Association, a California non-profit corporation whose mailing address is:
P.O. Box 458
Bonita, CA 91908-0458

This newsletter is published periodically (usually once per month) at Bonita, CA, and is distributed (postage paid) to each residence within the Bonita Highlands community.

Editor / Distribution: **Mary Ellen Phillips**

Submissions for publication should be sent to the editor, copy-ready, at bhighlander@cox.net. The deadline is the 15th of the month for publication the following month. The Association reserves the right to edit any copy submitted for publication.

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begins. Please also take notice to remove the small volunteer trees and shrubs from your fence. These grow up to be big problems for you by growing into the fence and eventually pulling the fence over.

Trail Entrances and Trees. Our trail entrances are cleaned several times a year. Our contractor removes weeds and trims back some overgrown shrubs. They won't trim tree limbs that are overhanging a homeowners' fence on to the trail. Look and see if your trees are overhanging the fence on to the trail entrance and cut them back for the safety of people using the trails. If you have planted shrubs on the outside of your fence for privacy and they are encroaching onto the trail entrance, please trim them back to your property line. Also, if the plants from your yard are escaping over or under your fence, these should be cut back as well. If you maintain your plants, it makes it easier for the contractor to determine which plants belong to the homeowner and which ones belong to the Association.

Eroded Slopes and What to Do. Our walks have revealed several homes where slopes have eroded due to our heavy rains and poor soils. The County of San Diego's website has a list of plants that can be used in slope stabilization. If you are concerned about erosion on your property, or need to stabilize a slope, please visit their website for great ideas and tips. Concerning drainage, all properties are to drain to the street. Draining to a trail, trail entrance or into the open space causes erosion and added expense when repairs are needed.

Open Spaces are Not for Private Use. Lastly, the open space should not be used for storage. No wood piles, no furniture, no bricks, no fencing, no yard waste is to be placed in the open space.

The newsletter is a great way for us to communicate with you about what is going on in the open space. It is our intention to keep you informed about all our plans and how we are progressing. Keep your eye out, let us know if you see anything that needs attention. Let us know if you spotted a volunteer tree that might need to come out, or if you just have a question. Let us know if you have an idea or a direction you would like us to consider. This area belongs to the "collective" homeowners, and is for all to equally enjoy. Help us keep it beautiful and fun for all.

Michelle Kriz, BHHA Open Space Chair

Possible Outside Meeting in August

You may have noticed that we have not held a regular, open meeting since March due to the coronavirus pandemic. Our

usual meeting venues are unavailable and others want us to rent, then clean up and sanitize after we meet. So we've been holding Executive meetings to deal with emergent items only and have put fines "on hold" for now. Please take note, however, that our diligent Architectural Control Committee for Conformance Chair has made her regular rounds and noted conditions that are out of conformance. At the next open meeting, we will begin assessing fines.

But where to meet? The fire station training room won't be open in August and the library community room remains closed. If we rent, we would then have to sanitize the room and furniture. So an idea came up to perhaps hold an outdoor meeting in one of our open space areas on a Saturday afternoon/early evening. Since we wouldn't have electricity or lighting, the daylight meeting is a must. We could have paper copies printed of any slides we needed to show.

So here is a proposal:

- A regular meeting in the open spaces of our upper horse ring (not in the ring, but near the ring).
- There is ample space for parking and social distancing.
- Bring tables for directors and staff, but everyone will need to bring their own chair or blanket to sit on.
- Start the meeting at 4 p.m. on a Saturday to ensure enough light and allow working couples to attend.



Please send in your thoughts on this idea, via e-mail, to: bhighlander@cox.net

Thanks. ~ *Mike Seiler, BHHA BOD President*



New Neighbors: Call the Bonita Highland's "Welcoming Committee" representatives Bobbie and Ray Snider and "get mugged" (a coffee mug, that is)!

Call (619) 421-9384 to set up an appointment or ask questions.





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P.O. Box 458

Bonita, CA 91908-0458

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There will be no regular July BHHA Board Meeting due to the coronavirus pandemic.

If a meeting is held in August, additional information will be posted on the BHHA web site and also sent to all Bonita Highlands “Flash” recipients as to the place and time.

We are considering an outdoor meeting on a Saturday afternoon (late) and would like feedback from homeowners as to such a venue. See the article on page 3 of this newsletter. If a meeting is held in August, the below would be the agenda.

1. Call to order, roll, announcement of next meeting, adoption of minutes and agenda.
2. Homeowner Open Communications.
3. Homeowner appearances for appeals to violation notices or fines, requests for structural alteration.
4. Committee and staff reports.
5. Old Business. 6. New Business. 7. Community items of interest.
8. Board Member Comments. 9. Adjournment.
10. An Executive session may be held.

The Bonita Highlands Homeowners' Association Board of Directors welcomes and encourages e-mail and letters from other homeowners. Any letter sent to the Board may be published in this newsletter. Please sign letters and include a phone number (which will NOT be published). Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author, the editor, or other contributor and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Board of Directors or any member thereof.