

The Post

News from the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy

Volume 2, Issue 2

October 2002

The Fire

We all watched with awe as events unfolded in the hills and mountains to the north of us during the recent Williams fire.

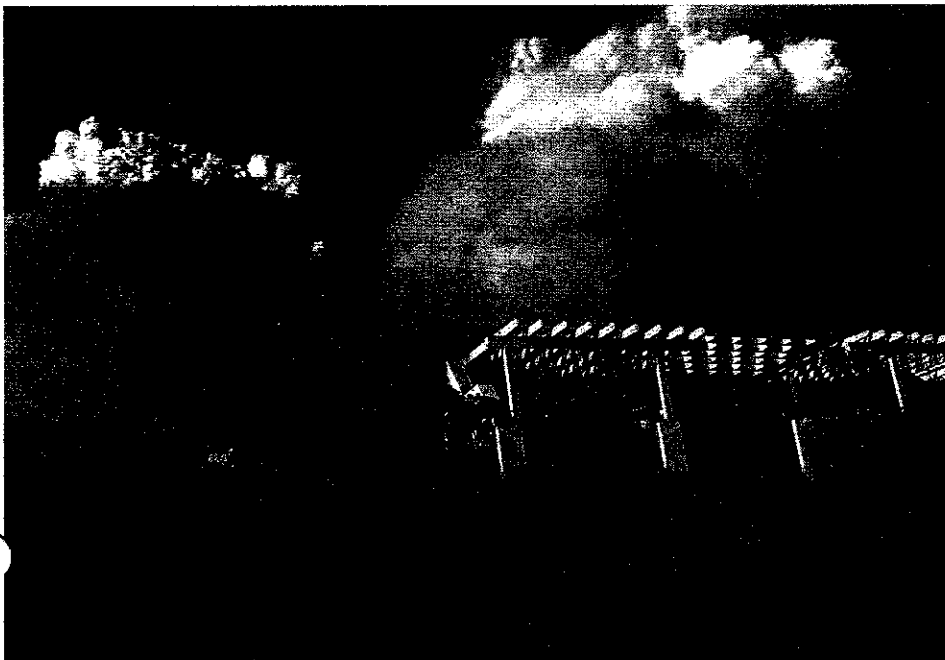
We were concerned about the threat to the homes in northern Claremont and to Johnson's Pasture but the huge fire stopped short of these areas.

In fact, the existence of the undeveloped land in Claremont's hillsides made the work of the firefighters easier.

This fire underscored that further development of the foothills would put more homes in jeopardy by removing an important buffer zone between the flammable material in the hills and people's homes.

The Williams fire.

The view toward Johnson's Pasture from the top of Mountain Avenue (at Highpoint).



A report from Johnson's Pasture during the fire

By Robin Haulman
September 24, 2002, 9:45 p.m.

A group of us (residents of Claraboya) made the trek up the trail to Johnson's Pasture to view the Williams fire from this beloved hillside. We were armed with flashlights and dampened handkerchiefs to protect our lungs from the acrid smoke-filled air. The flashlights proved unnecessary, as the almost full moon bathed Johnson's Pasture in an eerie brightness.

We hiked up almost a quarter of a mile to the highest vantage point, and as we approached our viewing position, we

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Where things stand

Update on the conservancy's progress toward hillside preservation

In our spring newsletter, we reported that the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy (CWC) had obtained an option to purchase Johnson's Pasture. Since then, we have been advised by the Trust for Public Land—our partner in preserving the hillsides—to pursue a different strategy in saving the property.

This new, broader perspective requires the applying for state funding for the purchase and preservation of a larger area of land including Johnson's Pasture. To pursue this strategy, a CWC supporter, Frank Schiavone, completed a document for the California Department of Fish and Game titled Conceptual Area Protection Plan (CAPP) for the North Claremont Ecological Reserve.

This visionary proposal would protect a corridor of land bounded by the Angeles National Forest to the north; the 1,200-acre Claremont Wilderness Park to the east; and Marshall Canyon Regional Park to the west.

The Department of Fish and Game's Wildlife Conservation Board has now approved this proposal and assigned a land agent to our case. This agent is working for the conservancy and the city of Claremont to procure state funds allocated for open space preservation. As this process moves forward, we are consolidating our organization in preparation for a major fund-raising campaign in the new year.

Report on the fire

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were simultaneously filled with awe and fear at the ferocity of the flames. The entire hillside beyond Johnson's Pasture was ablaze, with flames that looked like they must be several stories high in the "hot spots." We watched as trees ignited, like torches, and became plumes of orange flames. We began to understand how one can become mesmerized by a fire, as it is terrifying and beautiful at the same time. We continued to watch, transfixed, as the fire devoured hillsides at its unprecedented rate of 600 acres an hour. I thought of the displaced, frightened animals and I was filled with despair.

News helicopters, like light-filled gnats, hovered directly above us. Their spotlights intermittently sought out our hilltop as they anxiously probed the terrain of Johnson's Pasture.

From our vantage point, we could see the fires to the north. To the south, the fireworks from the Los Angeles County Fair in Pomona created an almost surreal mood on that moonlit mountain.

On the following day, the deer began to visit our neighborhood in Claraboya, appearing frightened and disoriented. The Humane Society instructed us to leave pans of water out, but not to feed them.

In the ensuing days, even though the traumatized deer continued to remind me of the fire's legacy of destruction, I was consoled by the fact that Johnson's Pasture was safe...for now.

***Please renew your donation
as a Friend of CWC.
An envelope is enclosed.
Thanks for your support!***



Walking the paths in Johnson's Pasture is enjoyable for all generations.

What's new

CWC Advisory Board

The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy is in the process of forming an advisory board. We are pleased to announce the following prominent and accomplished community members who are the first to join the conservancy in an advisory capacity.

Suzan Smith, former Claremont mayor and city council member, has extensive background in local government. She served on the Planning Commission, Environmental Quality Commission, the City Hillsides Committee, and the City Resource Management Committee prior to her election to the council.

Shortly after she moved to Claremont in 1977, she became involved with the League of Women Voters. Ms. Smith participated in the League committee that undertook the study of the Claremont hillsides.

Her in-depth involvement in research, discussion, and decision-making about the hillsides and her experience on the

Environmental Quality Commission have given her a rich appreciation for preservation of Claremont's open spaces.

Mark von Wodtke is professor emeritus of landscape architecture at Cal Poly Pomona, where he taught for more than 30 years. He has influenced a large number of practicing landscape architects through his teaching and writing.

Mr. von Wodtke is owner of Energy Harvester, a company that designs, integrates, and installs renewable energy systems. He is also co-founder of the Claremont Environmental Design Group.

Mark von Wodtke is on the board of the Claremont Hills Conservation Corporation (CHCC), the group that oversees the Wilderness Park in Claremont. Active in and supportive of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy since its beginning, Mr. von Wodtke has enlightened us about the numerous benefits of the open space in our

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Featured Creature



Bobcat

"Lynx Rufus"

Identification tips:

A wild cat larger than domestic cats and smaller than mountain lions.

Gray to reddish fur, spotted with brown or black.

Long legs

Short tail often barred with black

Sharp-pointed ears

Habitat:

Found in almost all types of habitats (except urban areas)

Especially numerous in mountains and rocky, brushy hillsides (such as Claremont's hills)

Habits:

Equipped to kill animals as large as deer, but typically eats rabbits, ground squirrels, some birds, and mice.

Nocturnal hunter

Infrequently seen

Do we have your e-mail?

E-mail is an efficient way for us to send out notices to our friends and supporters. We are in the process of updating our e-mail list. If you would like to be on our e-mail distribution list or if you have changed your e-mail address since you gave it to us, please send a message to sthompson@pomona.edu. Please be sure to include your name!

If you do not use e-mail, please let us know any new address information so that you can receive future issues of *The Post*. At this point, we have more than 1,400 people on our mailing list.

Taking in some nice clean air up at Johnson's Pasture...

Advisory Board

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hillsides and the hidden costs of development.

Judy Campbell Wright, community historian/writer has been active in Claremont since the 1970s. Her initial involvement was with the League of Women Voters for which she served as president from 1975-77.

As planning commissioner for Claremont from 1977-84, Ms. Wright presided over the passage of the city's general plan and hillside ordinance. She served on the city council from 1984-97 and was mayor of Claremont for three years.

She is now chair of the League of Women Voters study committee that is reviewing Claremont's general plan.

Ms. Wright authored the highly regarded *Claremont: A Pictorial History* and is currently working on her next book, *Creating a Community—Claremont women: 1887-1950*. She also writes a column for the *Claremont Courier* titled "A Sense of History."

With this background, Judy Wright will provide valuable guidance for CWC.

Don't miss this

CWC at the Village Venture

The conservancy will have a booth at the Village Venture on Saturday, October 26. Please stop by.

CWC at the Farmer's Market in Claremont

We will once again be represented at the Farmer's Market on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. If you would like to help on any Sunday, please call 621-3130.

CWC General Meeting

Sunday, November 10, 7:00 p.m. See back of the newsletter for details.

The Post is the newsletter of the Claremont Wildlands Conservancy.

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The Claremont Wildlands Conservancy (CWC) is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to keeping the foothills wild and free for all.

“Speak out for the hillsides”

at the next Claremont Wildlands Conservancy meeting

Sunday, November 10, 7:00 p.m. at The Claremont Forum, 111 S. College Avenue

(The Forum is located behind the *Claremont Courier* building. Please park in the *Courier* parking lot or on College Avenue.)

This meeting is being held to bring together the many of us who value the unspoiled hillsides; who walk, stroll, hike, bike, bird, ride horses in Johnson's Pasture, or simply enjoy the view of the undeveloped rolling hills above us.

We will share the ways in which these open hills above Claremont are important to us.

Together, our experiences in the hillsides and our passion for preserving them will help CWC develop the upcoming fund-raising campaign.

Come to this meeting if the open space in the hills above Claremont is important to you.

