

Our Dictionary Hill

DHOSA

Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates

Western Fence Lizard



December 2019

www.dictionaryhill.info

The Challenge of Invasive Grasses

Non - native “alien” Mediterranean grasses are what we see when native Sage Brush is removed by humans whether mechanically by off road vehicles or fires. Alien grasses cover our hillsides with green for several weeks after our winter rains but quickly fade to a gray, go to seed and becomes instant highly flammable fuel for wild-fires.



Non-native grasses have been dominating our landscape since the gold rush days when the introduction and spread of invasive plants into California exploded with the flood of human immigration after the discovery of gold in 1848. Invasive plants were likely introduced through contaminated seed lots, imported feed for livestock and packing materials. They don't go away without lots of extra help once they've taken over. Rangers call it “Mediterranean Type Conversion”. Native butterflies, animals and pollinators disappear when their native plant home is lost to aliens. One example is the alien annual grass called Wild Oat which has dominated disturbed landscapes since the 1800s with its ability to drill into the ground by twirling into the soil when contacted by the first rains. It repeats this each year in an endless loop. Defenseless fragile native needle grasses or larger native shrubs are then locked out of their sage scrub landscape.

What can we do as members of the Dictionary Hill Open Space community to eliminate these invaders? Lost Coastal Sage Scrub is a sad reality in an urban landscape such as Dictionary Hill Open Space Preserve. There are a limited number of management actions available to reserve and park managers. Homeowners are the best partners to remove inva-

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sive grass species such as invasive Fountain Grass, Wild Oats, Pampas Grass and others when doing fire clearances on our property perimeter. Homeowners can help to stop alien grasses by trimming their natives but not removing them. Removing natives would lead to rapid replacement by those fire prone Mediterranean alien grasses in newly created bald spots. The best response is to learn to identify two or three San Diego Invasive grasses. Get rid of the alien grasses in your garden to save our natural surroundings.

New Years Day Hike

Our leisurely New Years Day hikes up Dictionary Hill are becoming an annual tradition.

It's a chance to blow the 2019 cobwebs off you and join family and friends in a gentle amble up the hill to welcome in 2020. The strenuous striding out hikes come later in the year when we've shaken off all that Holiday food and drink.

We start at a nice and easy 10 am at the top of Buena Vista Avenue on the south side of the hill. As always we will be joined by DHOSA members who



can guide you through the plants and insects and birds we see along the way.

We aim to be back at our cars by mid-day. Please join us and bring along the whole family.

See you there.

Follow us on Facebook.

Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates



Out into Our Community

DHOSA members have put together informative and educational presentations about our remarkable Dictionary Hill Open Space Reserve. We want to deliver our presentation to community groups to raise awareness of the park's environmental value so that local Spring Valley residents become part of the care and love of our hill. The colorful PowerPoint programs have been made possible due to generous grants the past two years from the County Employees' Charitable Organization (CECO)

If you are part of a local community group - school, service club, library - get in touch with **Ken Barratt 619 788 8168** to set up a time for us to visit you to share our presentation.

This year CECO awarded DHOSA \$222 for the

purchase of a video slide projector and screen. Last year DHOSA was the recipient of a generous CECO grant to acquire a laptop computer and software. The laptop facilitates development of PowerPoint presentations, improves DHOSA's ability to communicate with its members and the

public at large, and serves as a single repository for documents and historical information about DHOSA and the Open Space Reserve.



DHOSA Meetings

We meet 9:30 am on the third Saturday of each month at The Club House, Hatfield Park at 10050 Austin Drive.

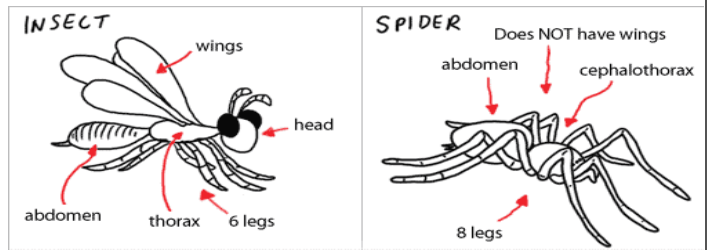
We'll enjoy meeting you and sharing our love of the hill with you. Our opportunity to show you how we are working to preserve Dictionary Hill.

Removal of an Encampment on the Hill

The plight of homeless people throughout San Diego County is a source of great concern. These are American citizens fallen on hard times and are deserving of our compassion. Nevertheless, homeless encampments on the Dictionary Hill County Open Space Reserve are illegal and pose a special threat to this sensitive habitat, especially since the risk of wildfires is becoming more urgent.

A single tent camp illegally set up in a remote area of the park was dismantled recently by Ranger Craig Newson. He discovered the tent and posted a notice for its removal in cooperation with Sheriff Deputies. After 72 hours and no contact with the individual or parties involved, he hauled out the tent, a broken bicycle and several bags of debris.

Is it an Insect or a Spider?



We have insects and we have spiders on Dictionary Hill, but can you always tell them apart?

1. Insects always have six legs. Spiders always have eight legs.
2. Insects have three body sections –head, thorax and abdomen. The legs come from the central thorax section.
3. Spiders two body sections - abdomen and cephalothorax. The legs are attached to the front cephalothorax section.
4. Most insects have wings at some stage in their life cycle. Spiders never have wings. Ever!
5. Different insects eat different foods. Spiders only eat insects or other small creatures.
6. Insects have two antennae (feelers). Spiders do not have antennae.