

Our Dictionary Hill

DHOSA

Western Fence Lizard



Newsletter Summer 2018

www.dictionaryhill.info

Destructive Vehicles on Dictionary Hill

July 4th this year was disastrous. Nineteen vehicles were counted driving up to the top of Dictionary Hill, each one tearing up that natural environment we have struggled so hard to protect and preserve. They left all their trash when their party was done. Mountains of it.

Our hill has been designated a Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) area. It was acquired by the county last December saving it from development and protecting these precious and delicate habitats.

We are not miserable killjoys. We understand that the view of firework displays from the summit must be breathtaking, and we all want to celebrate Independence Day with our friends. This however was thoughtless vandalism on a grand scale.

The county has installed signs at access points making it clear that vehicle activity on the hill is illegal. These vandals even removed boulders which blocked vehicles from further damaging the hill. They pushed a trailer out of the way which had been positioned by County Parks personnel as a temporary July 4th barrier.

Can you help us? If you see vehicles on the hill please call the County Parks at 619 644 5492 or the Sheriff's department non-emergency number 858 565 5200.

Together we can stop any future destructive invasions.



Remember to like us on Facebook. It's one more way we can publicize the importance of Dictionary Hill.



Alien Invader on Dictionary Hill

This destructive invader didn't arrive in a UFO. It came originally from North Africa and the Mediterranean. It's called Fountain Grass and out competes our native grasses. It grows in clumps and sucks the water and nutrients out of the soil on the hill. It spreads its seeds in the wind. Those seeds overcome rare native plants and quickly give rise to a monoculture which doesn't support local bird or insect life.

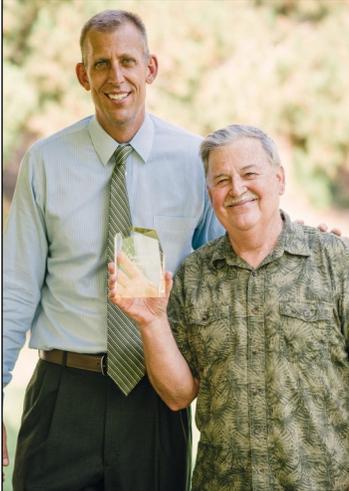
Back in the 80s people bought fountain grass from our garden centers to plant in their yards. It looks elegant with graceful flowers and green foliage. If you have any growing round your house perhaps you could dig it up and replace it with a non-invasive native. Garden centers will give excellent advice here.



New to Dictionary Hill? An easy access point is at the south end of South Barcelona Street. Many trails up the hill are currently steep with loose stones. The future County resources plan for the hill includes constructing a new system of safer trails.

Award for DHOSA President

Our president Chris Heiserman has received a Champions Award from the County Parks and Recreation Department in recognition of his dedication to preserving Dictionary Hill. For the last ten years Chris has focused on our dream of a hill



Chris with County Parks Director Brian Albright

free from the threat of developers where the public can enjoy the beauty of the area and where the native creatures and plants can flourish.

Thanks for your work Chris and for inspiring so many others to join you in this dream. It all bore fruit late last year when the County acquired the land and designated it as a protected area. Permanently.

SD County - a National Treasure

San Diego County is top of the national league. Incredibly it has a higher biodiversity than any other county in the US outside Hawaii.

We have more bird species than any other county in the country. Why is that? San Diego County has a remarkable range of ecological zones. Coast. Coastal plane. Foothills. Mountains. Desert. More zones. More life. More for us to value.

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'd love to meet you and share our love of the hill - and our coffee and donuts. In July there were an encouraging 26 of us at our meeting.

Coordinating with the County

County Parks is hiring a new ranger whose efforts will be focused on the Dictionary Hill Preserve.

The county would like feedback from DHOSA members on the level of activity on the hill, such as specific days and times of heaviest use by hikers or dog-walkers, incidence of prohibited motorized use (trucks, motorcycles), and illegal dumping or vandalism.

Please email any input to cheise9400@aol.com

Wildfire Season

After the low rainfall of last winter the fire risk on the hill is critical. We are Southern Californians, we know about reducing the risks, but it is worth re-stating. Absolutely no fires. If you do smoke make 100% certainly that your cigarette butt is dead. If you see any smoke it's 911 immediately.

The good news is that the Fire Department views Dictionary Hill as defensible. They can isolate fires here and ensure that wildfires in the wider district don't reach the hill and its outlying areas. They just need us to be alert.

Our Iconic California Gnatcatchers

This tiny grey bird is one you could easily miss. Another seemingly insignificant bird flitting past on my way up the hill.

In the 1980s it was recognized as an endangered species. Its limited habitat along the southern California coast is being taken over by housing tracts and other developments. California Gnatcatchers live in coastal sage scrub, a low shrubby habitat that is also home to other specialized animals and plants. This exactly describes Dictionary Hill. In simple terms, if this little bird is doing



well then our hill is doing well. It's like a barometer for the health of the habitat of our precious hill.

If you want to know more about the work of Dictionary Hill Open Space Advocates, contact Chris Heiserman at cheise9400@aol.com