

PARK PLAZAS NEWS

June 2022

www.ParkPlazas.org

From the President

Let's talk "déjà vu all over again" – "fire" and "water"!

Last month, as the largest fire in the country burned nearby, I wrote about our fire risk mitigation work, our community's successful water conservation efforts since submeter installation in 2005, and Santa Fe's careful long-term planning to sustain its water supply.

Fire!

As I write at this month's end, that fire is now the largest in New Mexico's recorded history, continues to burn and has burned roughly 500 square miles. A way to grasp what that means is to understand that if you were to drive to Albuquerque on I-25, considering it as the centerline of a corridor 10 miles wide – 5 on either side of you – that roughly 10-mile by 50-mile area is what has burned – and the fire incident managers don't expect to quell the fire before August.

During May, our Community Manager and Landscaping Committee Chair met with Eric Litzenberg, formerly Santa Fe's Fire Chief and now a fire risk mitigation consultant, to review our past and planned mitigation activities. Our Community Manager also had discussions with Porfirio Chavarria, the Fire Department's Wildland Urban Interface Specialist, concerning risk mitigation.

The Board has instructed our Community Manager to:

- work with Mr. Chavarria to identify further mitigation steps throughout the Common Area,
- plan a community presentation, likely via Zoom late in June or early July, for him to educate participants on recommended mitigation actions within lot lines, and
- alert owners and residents that he is available, on a time-available basis, for individual consultation regarding specific lots, at no cost (call him at 505-955-3119).

I have asked our Architectural Control Committee to research what can be done to address the most combustible elements within our cul-de-sacs – considering both private and community areas of risk –

in order to develop a long-term strategy towards fire prevention while maintaining the aesthetics of our "community amid a thousand trees".

We are lucky, in a sense, that our stucco and the roofing materials are relatively noncombustible. However, in our windy environment, once fences, vines and other growth, wooden decking and vegetation by fences ignite, wind-blown embers may spread throughout the community rapidly and develop a sufficiently intense fire that homes will burn as well.

We will publicize the date of the presentation and how to participate; please do so. If you cannot attend, it will be recorded and posted at ParkPlazas.org.

Water!

When we compare water use in the April billing each year – the end of winter – and the May billing – the beginning of spring – we find that, on average, during 2019-2021, use increased about 33% May over April. However, this year, the increase was more than 75% (versus only 22% for 2020-2021)! We used a lot of water this year – 2,186,300 gallons in the May billing versus 1,246,800 gallons in April, 2022!

In part, this is because, at our request, residents are watering trees in the Common Area near their homes, which is appreciated and necessary in this time of drought. Too, the Association and residents have activated drip irrigation systems throughout the community.

Nevertheless, Santa Fe is in the "exceptional" drought category. Water availability will remain a crucial concern indefinitely. We must remain conscious of water conservation. Some suggestions: refrain from adding new plantings, avoid unnecessary water use, and comply with the City's watering restrictions, including limiting watering to 3x weekly (one day a weekend day), not watering between 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m., not power washing or hosing off hard surfaces and not overhead spraying trees or shrubs.

Tom Carr, President

Manager's Report

- ▶ Three crabapple trees were purchased from Payne's Nursery and were planted on the north side of the entrance to the Estates at Park Plazas.
- ▶ Erik Litzenberg of Liderazgo Consulting and former Chief of the Santa Fe Fire Department, toured our property and provided general feedback and steps we can take to help reduce our risk of fire. Beyond continuing with selected tree-trimming, he suggested we engage the SF Fire Department's Wildland Urban Interface Specialist and develop educational opportunities that include the Park Plazas residents.
- ▶ Porfirio Chavarria, SF Fire Department's Wildland Urban Interface Specialist, discussed educational opportunities with us, to include:
 - ▶ making a fire risk reduction presentation to the community as a whole (via Zoom).
 - ▶ inspecting the common area and make recommendations.
- ▶ at the request of individual lot owners, inspect and assess privately owned lots and provide recommendations.
- ▶ Porfirio encourages residents to register with Alert Santa Fe, the City of Santa Fe's emergency alerts and notifications broadcast network. Registration and program details can be found at: <https://www.santafenm.gov/alertsantafe>
- ▶ The manager's office will schedule a date for the Zoom meeting, schedule an onsite visit, and create a communication to homeowners with the information needed to schedule property inspections.
- ▶ Hydro-jetting the Association's sewer lines is scheduled for June 20-22. There is no interruption in the water and sewer services.
- ▶ The violations inventory is underway and should be completed and results distributed to the Board prior to the June Board Meeting.
- ▶ Mick Nickels, Emergency Ecology Solutions, advised he would contract for assessing the remaining 32-33 cul-de-sacs at a rate of \$40 per hour with a ceiling of \$4,000. This assessment would not be as detailed as the pilot project.

Richard White

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Board Notes

At its regular meeting on May 25, the Board took the following actions:

- authorized the Sign Study Group to continue to work with Artman Productions to explore options to maintain, upgrade and/or replace cul-de-sac signage throughout the community. Funding was approved for this, not to exceed \$2,500;
- authorized the Community Manager to accept a proposal from Emergency Ecology Solutions to review the status of landscaping and irrigation throughout the cul-de-sacs that were not addressed in the initial study. Funding was approved for this at the rate of \$40/hour, not to exceed \$4,000 in the aggregate. The review is to assist the Landscape Committee in making recommendations to the Board concerning maintaining, protecting and enhancing our landscaping and significant trees;
- authorized the Community Manager to make arrangements with Porfirio Chavarria, the Santa Fe Fire Department's Wildlife-Urban Interface Specialist, to:
 - identify additional fire mitigation steps that should be taken, if any, throughout the Common Area,
 - schedule a community-wide presentation by Mr. Chavarria concerning fire mitigation strategies that can be taken by lot owners, and
 - communicate to the community that Mr. Chavarria is available at no cost to consult with individual homeowners concerning fire mitigation for their properties;
- deferred consideration of a proposal to close off selected "social paths" throughout the community and upgrade others; and
- approved modest summer bonuses for the Association's staff (other than the Community Manager).

News from the Pollinator Garden



We've been waiting with anticipation for the pollinator garden to come back to life this spring. Some of the little plants didn't make it through the dry and cold of winter, but thanks to the dedicated work of our 'Water Gang', 70 percent of them are green and growing. We will send our report on the project to the Xerces Society, showing which plants survived and which did not, for the records they are compiling.

We've been asked whether we'll do another planting of pollinators. Possibly in the future. For now, we want to replace the plants that died and will wait for the completion of another growing season before starting a new garden.

Our gratitude goes to the Water Gang who have so carefully tended the plants:

Amida Cary	Frances Keane	Elaine Pinar
John Durham	Carole Mathison	Jonni Poole
Marcus Garcia	Norma Ortega	Sandy Schwartz
Art Ireland		Phil Vergamini



Nora Haskins
Chair, Landscape Committee

Our gratitude goes out to residents who have been watering trees in the common area outside their homes. Your thoughtfulness and help in keeping the Park Plazas landscape healthy is deeply appreciated.

HAZARDOUS WEEDS IN PARK PLAZAS

Notes from residents

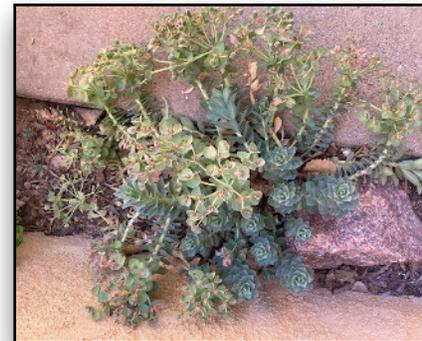
Spurge – a skin and eye irritant!

Spurge, a prolific weed in Park Plazas, produces a highly toxic milky sap that's an irritant to the skin and eyes.

A resident writes, "I was pruning it off my walkway to my house when I evidently got the white sticky sap in my eyes, which I washed off, but evidently it touched my eyes. I have never had such pain in my eyes. I could not see at all and had a friend take me to emergency and had my eyes washed out, but pain so extreme that later that evening went to Christus Hospital emergency with follow up at Eye Associates. The doctor there said he sees way too many patients who have encountered this weed."

After five days, her vision was still blurry but healing. If you are handling these plants, be sure to wear gloves and eye protection.

Find more details online: <https://askinglot.com/are-spurge-plants-poisonous>



Beware of Foxtail Grass – it can be dangerous for your pet!

A resident notes: "This weed doesn't seem to be the least bit bothered by the drought and is prevalent throughout Park Plazas."

The barbed seed heads of the foxtail plant can work their way into any part of your dog or cat, from the nose to between the toes and inside the ears, eyes, and mouth. Or, they can even simply dig themselves directly into a patch of skin. The seeds can be hard to find in your dog's fur. "This is very irritating and often takes a trip to the vet to have it removed."

The danger of foxtails goes beyond simple irritation. Because these tough seeds don't break down inside the body, an embedded foxtail can lead to serious infection for your dog. Embedded foxtails can cause discharge, abscesses, swelling, pain, and death.

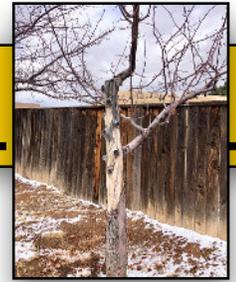
Find more details online:

<https://i.pinimg.com/736x/9c/13/09/9c130910116d82417982f0895a244d0d.jpg>

<https://pets.webmd.com/dogs/foxtail-grass-and-your-dog>



Your Monthly Assessment at WORK



Three trees were replaced at Plaza Verde entrance.

Several of the ornamental crabapple trees along the North side of Plaza Verde had been dying, with bark peeling off in large sheets. Their stress was caused by drought and exacerbated by heat radiating from the pavement, a phenomenon called Sun Scald or Southwest Scourge.

- ▶ Dying trees were removed.
- ▶ Soil was amended.
- ▶ Three new crabapple trees were delivered by Payne's Nursery.
- ▶ Oscar and Arturo carefully placed them in the ground, then watered and mulched all the crabapple trees.



PARK PLAZAS COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION

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June PPCSA Board Meeting

Wednesday, June 22
6:30 PM

~ in-person, Rodeo Plaza Office ~
(Proof of vaccination and booster required to attend.)

Community input is invited
at the beginning and end of the meeting.

Download the Board Packet 2 days before meeting:
www.ParkPlazas.org

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