

# ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2019

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**NEWSLETTER TEAM**

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**Annual RTGA meeting**

Thursday, May 9,  
6:30 p.m.  
St. Dunstan's Church,  
(28005 Robinson  
Canyon Road)  
*Hope to see you there!*

**PRESIDENT'S LETTER: FIRE GRANT UPDATE**

From potholes to barking dogs to rowdy parties in short-term rentals, RTG residents face our share of issues. But none of these problems would matter at all if a devastating fire should consume our neighborhood, as it has done to many other California communities. With that in mind, the Rancho Tierra Grande Association (RTGA) sees fire safety and fire prevention as our highest priority.

In the fall of 2016, under the auspices of the Fire Safe Council of Monterey County (MCFSC), we applied for and received a Cal Fire \$50,000 matching grant for fire prevention activities in and around our development. These grants are very hard to come by, and ours was the only one issued in Monterey County that year.

Our fire grant got off to a rocky start when the experienced project manager we hired was unable to take on the task because her own home was lost to fire and flood. Rather than turn down the grant for lack of a project manager, our Fire Safety Chair, Marta Bennett, took on the job. We owe Marta a big thanks for doing this, and for hanging tough and getting the job done despite many obstacles. The fire grant is now nearly completed. Here is a report on the program:

*In-Kind Contribution* – To fulfill the grant agreement, RTG residents needed to provide a minimum of \$50,000 of in-kind matches by documenting their own labor and expenses toward making their property more fire safe. To date, the in-kind matches exceed \$100,000. This will help us obtain future fire grants. Thank you!

To help secure the grant, RTGA pledged \$15,000 from our reserves to be put toward fire prevention activities. We haven't yet spent this entire amount and have paid out \$5,805 for chipping and genista removal during 2018.

*Chipping and plant removal* – The chipping program portion of the Cal Fire grant encouraged people to clear 100 feet around their homes, limb-up trees to prevent fuel ladders, and reduce fuel load. The genista program was designed to assist people in removing this highly flammable invasive weed from their property.

*Gabilan Teams* –The grant financed clearing operations by Gabilan crews around RTG: county open space in Buckeye Canyon clearing the RTG entrance between Carmel Valley Road and Tierra Grande Dr.; and clearing up Mercurio Road, below Rancho Alto.

*Mastication project* –With support from MCFSC we hired mastication contractors to clear three locations: Via Cazador/Tierra Grande intersection; the west side of Via Mariquita; and both sides of Tierra Grande Dr. at Via Mariquita, which will provide a secure staging area for fire and rescue equipment in an emergency.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Nine new residents were welcomed in 2018 with informational packets about RTG and fire safety. If you know of someone who hasn't been greeted, please let me know. I also have extra copies of the 2018 phone directory if you have misplaced yours or want an additional one.

The Little Free Library at the corner of Tierra Grande Drive and Venado is doing quite well. Lots of good reads here for all. Check it out the next time you drive by.



Nancy Bartell  
Welcome & Membership Committee Chair

## ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT

The purpose of The Rancho Tierra Grande Architectural Review Committee is to help facilitate the building and remodeling of our homes and property. It is also to help protect and maintain our property values. Our CC&R's have not been amended since 1980. Lifestyles have changed considerably over the last 40 years, thus some building concerns are not addressed: solar panels, pods, internet equipment, etc. When planning to build or remodel, please consider how your plans will impact your neighbors and our neighborhood. Please be considerate of your neighbors. And remember, we are here to help.

— Peggy Warren, Architectural Review Director

## WELCOME NEW RESIDENTS!

A few questions about your neighborhood you may not know.

1. How many streets, including side streets, are in RTGA?
2. How many streets start with Via?
3. How many houses are in RTGA?
4. What is the average percentage of residents who send in the voluntary \$100 per year dues to RTGA?
5. Why should people volunteer to get involved with the RTGA board and committees?

### ANSWERS

1. 11
2. 5
3. 207
4. Average 60-70%
5. Because you meet great people and it is fun too!

— Robbie Robinson, RTGA Vice President

## RTGA FIRE HAZARD MITIGATION

### What the RTGA board has done to reduce fire hazard:

- Arranged with the county to have crews from Gabilan clear brush/fuel from green belts.
- Worked with the county and tree services to remove dead pine trees from the right of way.
- Removed some smaller trees ourselves, with the help of neighbors.
- Organized programs to provide residents free chipping of brush.
- Organized presentations and programs in liaison with the Fire Safe Council.

### What the RTGA board cannot do:

- Remove dead trees or trim dead branches from private property.

So please be proactive in trimming dead branches and removing dead trees from your own property, for the fire safety of the whole neighborhood. (It looks better too.)

— Respectfully, The RTGA Board

## RTGA FIRE SAFETY COMMITTEE

### Projected plans for 2019

The RTGA Fire Safety Committee (Marta Bennett, Pam Peck, Mike Sherwood and Peter Stern) has completed and filed a new Cal Fire grant application. We will not know until April 2019 if the grant (\$175,000 requested) will be accepted.

Meanwhile, the plan is to continue under the existing grant, though there are limited funds remaining (~\$7500.) Following is the list of tasks/projects funded under the existing Grant:

1. Mastication of brush to create a fire break within the county green-belt above Tierra Grande Dr. and below homes on the south side of Rancho Alto and Elinore Place. The steepness of this slope will determine the overall width and length of the area to be cleared. We await bids from contractors.



2. Mastication of the Buckeye Canyon entrance within the county green-belt on the west side of the canyon road. Again, contractors will determine the width of the area to be cleared as determined by the steepness of the slope on this west side. We estimate that approximately 1 ½ acres may be cleared. The area is located below homes on the east side of Tierra Grande Drive and Carol Place.

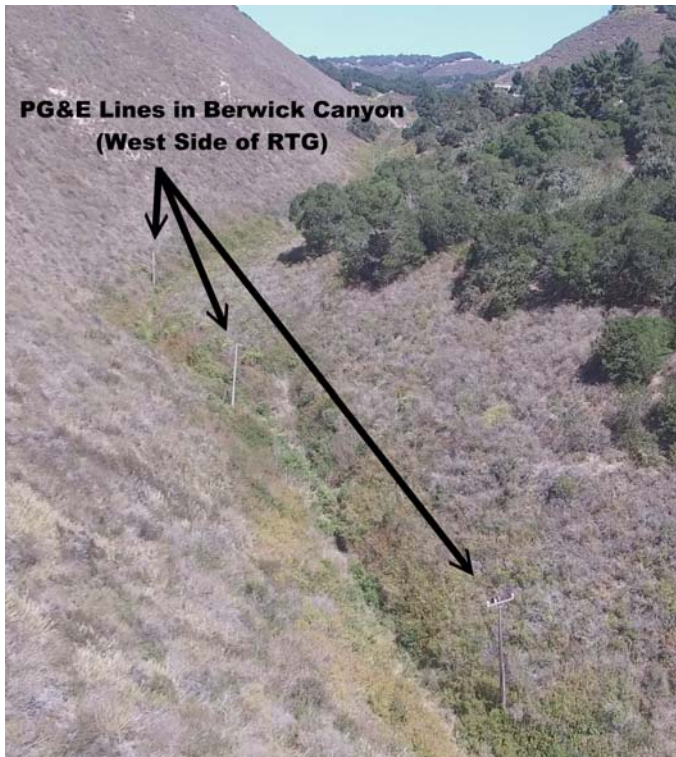
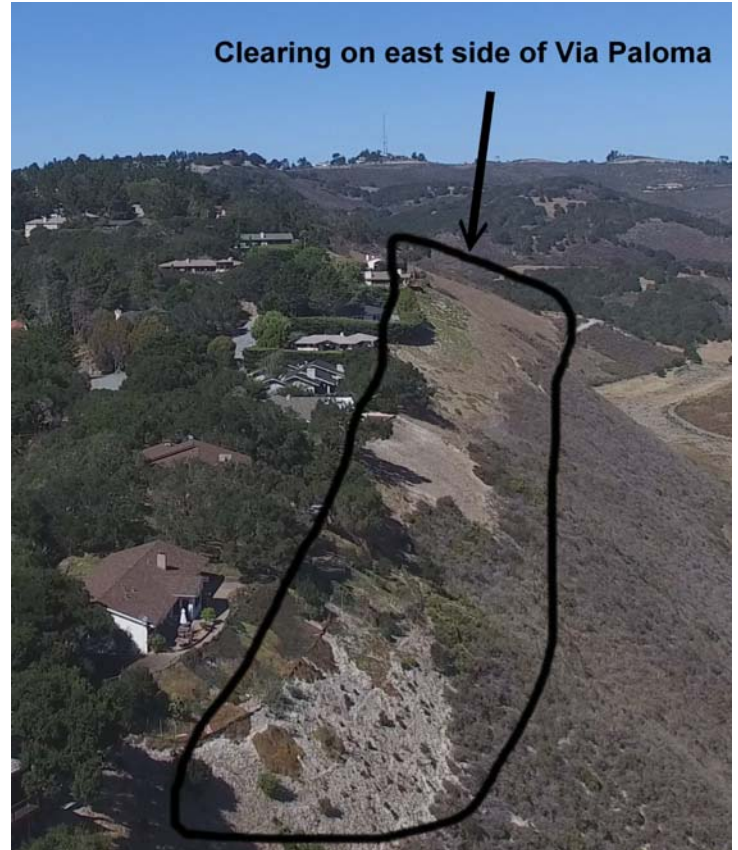


Following is the list of unfunded tasks/projects that will continue through committee member and volunteer efforts.

1. Continue/complete fire fuel mapping of RTG.
2. Complete an outreach program to, hopefully, ensure that all RTG residents receive evacuation/notification information and details (see page 5).
3. MCRFD is offering a free chipping program for various neighborhoods within Carmel Valley. MCRFD chipping information, instructions, and request forms can be found at [MCRFD.ORG/CHIPPING](http://MCRFD.ORG/CHIPPING). Completed forms can be sent by email to [chipping@mcrfd.org](mailto:chipping@mcrfd.org) or faxed to (831) 455-0646, or snail mail to MCRFD, 19900 Portola Drive, Salinas, CA 93938. Residents must cut/stack piles before submitting the form. Our committee member Mike Sherwood has reserved chipping specifically for RTG the day of May 20, 2019. To comply with the MCRFD rule the "Request Form for Chipping" must be completed and submitted the week of May 13, 2019. The FS Committee will prepare a banner to be displayed at the RTG entrance to remind neighbors of the chipping date as well as the necessity to complete and submit the form.
4. AGAIN, IT IS REQUIRED THAT THOSE WHO WISH TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROGRAM PLACE THE MATERIAL TO BE CHIPPED ON THE STREET AND ALSO TURN IN A COMPLETED "REQUEST FORM FOR CHIPPING" THE WEEK PRIOR TO THE CHIPPING DATE.

5. This is a free program and all should take advantage of it.
6. Fire extinguisher purchase/recharge: A few years ago the fire safety committee worked out an agreement with a local fire extinguisher company to offer fire extinguisher recharging at a discounted price, as well as an opportunity to purchase 5-pound ABC-rated fire extinguishers. As of now we do not have a vendor lined up but are planning to organize this program in May, prior to the fire season. You will be notified.
7. Fire Safe committee to review and access control burn projects that may be possible to create fire breaks on the exterior margins of Rancho Tierra Grande and Mercurio.
8. Continue researching the acquisition of fire-resistant trees for planting in masticated areas.

— Peter Stern, Fire Safety Committee Chair



## BEAUTIFICATION COMMITTEE

During this great rainy season we are set to purchase 12 to 15 plumbago bushes to add to those planted last year along the cyclone fence. Our hope is that, over the years, these drought-tolerant flowering shrubs will maximally cover the unsightly fence with color. In conjunction with this, we will be removing the sparse and marginally attractive honeysuckle bushes.

Also, we are excited about the prospect of removing the last of the pines on the right as you drive in and replacing them with olive trees spaced at 10-12 foot intervals. There will also be some new flowering plants—cistus or lantana—enhancing the Tierra Grande sign area. It is worth the investment, we feel, for the residents and visitors to be welcomed by a beautiful and well-maintained entrance. Let us know your thoughts—we are happy to receive input from you.

— Mary Cushing and Nancy Bartell

## **RANCHO TIERRA GRANDE EVACUATION/NOTIFICATION/COMMUNICATION**



If a resident sees an uncontrolled fire or smoke, call 911 and report specifics. Do not panic. Mid Valley Fire will respond with fire crews within 10 minutes. Residents can leave anytime. On scene Fire Incident Commander will assess the threat and, if deemed necessary, will send evacuation orders to the Monterey County Regional Fire District (MCRFD) dispatch center. The dispatch center will alert sheriffs, CHP, and other emergency responders. Fire/police officials will determine areas to be evacuated and the routes to use depending upon the fire's location, behavior, winds, terrain, etc. Firefighters, sheriffs and CHP officers will alert residents of evacuation procedures and directions by door-to-door contact and loudspeakers. Follow their directions promptly. If necessary, officials will open gate on northern end (top of the road) of Tierra Grande. Residents will be advised of potential evacuations as early as possible. Affected area residents will receive notice via reverse-911, cellphones, and internet alerts. See below for info about the county alert system.

ALERTMONTEREYCOUNTY is a system used by county public safety to deliver emergency notifications and fire evacuations. The system uses the 911 database to call and deliver a recorded message in English and Spanish to all landline phone numbers in a specific geographic area. Residents can also be notified on their cell phones, Voice-over IP (VoIP) phone, or at their email address if they have registered with the county. Residents wishing to receive such messages are encouraged to register at [ALERTMONTEREYCOUNTY.ORG](http://ALERTMONTEREYCOUNTY.ORG).

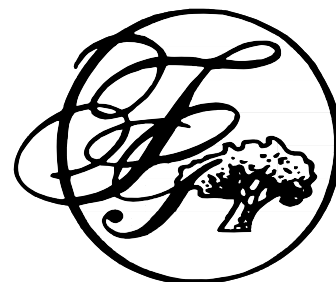
A comprehensive list of tips and checklists to help families prepare for evacuation can be found at [FIRE.CA.GOV](http://FIRE.CA.GOV) (evacuation tips). Another source is [READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG](http://READYFORWILDFIRE.ORG) which includes information about preparing both the inside and outside of homes prior to evacuation; what to do about your pets, emergency supply kits, family communication plan, contact with neighbors, and post-evacuation routines.

**WILDFIRE IN RTG IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM. BE PROACTIVE! DOWNLOAD THESE WEBSITE ACTION PLANS AND MAKE AN EFFORT TO CARRY THEM OUT.**

Among the checklists for evacuations, are instructions regarding the evacuation of individuals with disabilities who require assistance. **PLEASE BE SURE TO ESTABLISH PLANS FOR THE ASSISTED EVACUATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN YOUR HOME. IF YOU HAVE NEIGHBORS WHO REQUIRE ASSISTANCE, PLEASE BE SURE TO CONTACT THEM AND SUGGEST WAYS IN WHICH YOU MAY BE ABLE TO HELP.**

## RANCHO TIERRA GRANDE

P.O. BOX 22244  
Carmel, CA 93922



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CON'T)

We conducted a cutting/trimming operation on the east side of Tierra Grande between Via Cazador and Via Paloma, obtaining sign-off agreements from homeowners who had properties within the work areas.

*Tree exchange* — The committee began a small pine tree removal/oak tree replacement program. Residents who remove pine trees can exchange these for potted/planted oak trees. Cal Fire highly encourages pine removal and replacement with fire resistant trees such as oak, maple and redwood.

These are the major accomplishments from our almost-complete grant. I would again like to thank Marta Bennett, as well as Peter Stern, Chair, and Mike Sherwood, deputy director, of our Fire Safety Committee.

— Bob Rice, RTGA President

PS – If you see a man working across the street from our entrance, please give him a wave and a thumbs up for tidying, chipping and landscaping the area next to Carmel Valley Road. He is George Simcock; he lives up Los Prados Drive so is not an RTG resident, but has made pulling out onto Carmel Valley Road much safer for all of us. Thanks so much, George!

### NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH/SAFETY

Numerous residents have reported missing mail and packages due to multiple issues, so please ensure you request signatures upon delivery for crucial items such as passports, legal documents, large checks, etc. An increase in the number of crimes at the Mid-Valley Shopping Center, usually involving parked cars, should raise our awareness. Put valuables in the trunk, lock your vehicle and set alarm, and avoid nighttime ventures there by yourself.

### RTGA BOARD & COMMITTEES

Bob Rice, President	625-1425
Robbie Robinson, Vice President	626-3955
Mary Gale, Secretary	626-3565
Mary Cushing, Treasurer	625-7155
Nancy Bartell, Membership	625-5489
Marta Bennett, Fire Safety	601-1109
Peggy Warren, Architecture	624-5405
Jeff Hawkins, Neighborhood Watch	622-0424
Joel & Sherry Farson	
Committee members at large	262-3787