



Newsletter

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South of the Creek Committee Leaders

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Ray Goff, *Chair*

Scott Towslee

Donna Fisher, *Landscape/Plant*



Blackberry Fire South of Covey Court

By now you have heard of the wildfire in the blackberries and woods south of Garrison Creek in Phase 5 about a month ago. Thanks to Dave and Luba Hernandez, Phase 7 neighbors, for their dramatic photo of the blaze last month (above). Since the fire, our volunteer crew has hauled away the burned out logs and brush-hogged an additional quarter acre of un-burned blackberries south of Phase 5 to reduce the risk of additional fires. We also took advantage of the brush-hog loaned to us by Ike Muro (A big thanks, Ike!) to also reduce the fire hazard by brush-hogging and pushing back the blackberries south of the walking trails south of Phases 6 and 7. If you haven't walked that part of the trail, please do so and see the newly-seeded grass emerging and several trees (some over 30 feet tall) rescued from the blackberries!!!

2017 Tree Removal Program

Last year we began our 5-year plan for removing dangerous and nuisance cottonwoods and willows bordering the walking trail alongside Garrison Creek. Planning is underway for 2017's portion of the plan. The 2017 Budget includes approximately \$14,000 for the removal of 30 trees, compared to approximately

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60 trees removed last year. The work will be done in the July through September time frame by Town & Country Landscaping and our volunteer crew. The Villages appreciates its hardworking volunteers. They perform the day-to-day work that keeps our community beautiful and safe.

Fallen Trees Blocking Trail

If you've been on the walking trail along Garrison Creek, you have seen the mess created by four large willow trees that randomly split and fell across the walking trail. That scene is a great reminder why the VGC Board recommended (and we homeowners approved) the multiyear program to remove dangerous trees along the Creek. FYI...our program does not address trees from the eastern border of Phase 8 to Bridge 4 (where the willows are currently blocking the walking trail) because they do not pose a risk to any VGC residences or structures. We contacted the Walla Walla Housing Authority and asked them to handle the cleanup since the fallen trees border their property and their residents use our walking trail. Thanks to Renee Rooker of WWHA for promptly engaging their maintenance crews to chainsaw the trees and partially clear the walking trail. **One caution: there is still one dangerous split tree hanging over one part of the trail.** We will discuss with WWHA and might devote our volunteer crew to assist in the chainsawing of that remaining hanging tree. In the meantime, **we recommend not using that part of the trail.**

Problem Tree Removal Elsewhere

Our South-of-the-Creek volunteer crew has also been working with Donna Fisher to remove dead, dying or over-crowded trees along the walking trail and other areas in our neighborhood north of Garrison Creek. The piles of tree limbs you see on our VGC streets are the remains of last week's volunteer project.

Walking Trail from Clock Tower to Bridge 4

We have received numerous complaints from homeowners about the lack of maintenance on the walking trail between the clock tower and Bridge 4. Again, this part of the trail is located on Walla Walla Housing Authority land. Therefore, VGC does not control maintenance on this part of the trail. However, we

contacted Walla Walla Housing Authority to see if we could prevail on them to improve maintenance on that part of the trail. Thanks again to Renee Rooker, WWHA Executive Director, for getting their maintenance crew to mow that area. She also reports their crews will also address weed control in that area more frequently. For information, Renee also reports that that area is now planted in natural grasses that require no irrigation and are only mowed once each year.

Our Volunteer “South of the Creek” Crew: Join Us!

Our volunteer crew strives to continue improving our great neighborhood...and to save our homeowners thousands of dollars vs hiring outside contractors to do the work. Many thanks to Scott Towslee, Karie Jacques, Dick and Bob Cook, Jack and Eric Gisler, Roger Williams, and Donna Fisher for their unselfish volunteer time on our many projects! And...we can also use more help! If you can devote a couple of hours (usually 4 pm to 6 pm) on a weekday next week for our next priority, please contact Ray Goff at ray@goffvineyard.com or 406-799-0501.



****Important:** Sign up for email alerts here: <http://villagesofgarrisoncreek.com/news-events> It is the best way to stay informed. Fill in the form at the link above and you're all set!

“Block Watch” Safety Committee

We had a good turnout for our initial Block Watch/Safety Committee meeting with representatives from the College Place Police Department on June 19, 2017 at Lions Park Community Room. Thank you, Daryl Schreiner, for organizing this important public safety partnership! We also appreciate the support we received from our new Police Chief Troy Tomaras, Officer Steven Harris, and Chief Clerk Marianne Barr.

How Does Block Watch Work?

Block Watch is a public safety program of neighbors helping neighbors. It is a free community-based crime prevention program administered by our local College Place Police Department. In our case, it is organized by Phase. Residents in each Phase form a communication chain, aided by a block list of names, telephone numbers, and addresses. They make a commitment to watch out for each other's homes, and report suspicious activities to the police and to each other. They also keep each other informed about neighborhood safety concerns, burglary, thefts, and other crimes or problems occurring on their street. We hope to see more social/information sharing events like block parties, new resident welcoming receptions, or potlucks within each Phase to give neighbors a chance to get to know each other. Neighbors who are well-acquainted with each other tend to care about each other and their neighborhoods in a way that deters crime and increases a sense of friendship, safety, and security.

Rich and Michele Wollert, Phase VII homeowners, agreed to serve as Block Watch co-chairs. The following VGC homeowners have also generously offered to be Phase Block Watch “Captains”: Phase I: Scott Towslee; **Phase II: VACANT**; Phase V: Joyce Beecroft; Phase VI: Jim Murphy; Phase VII: Michele Wollert; Phase VIII: Jack Gisler; Phase IX: Mark Minne; Phase X: Mark Benzel. As you can see, we are still seeking a representative from Phase II to make our Block Watch team complete. We need all Phase “neighborhoods” represented for maximum success. Please contact Michele or Rich Wollert at 503-756-5875 (cell) or michelewollert@gmail.com if you can help us.

Parking Reminder

Our parking rules are meant to protect the beauty and safety of the Villages. Our private streets are narrow, and need to be clear to allow emergency vehicles like fire trucks, ambulances, or police cars to pass. Our Land Use Standards allow parking on only one side of the street during the day. Please remind your guests to note the signs and park where indicated. Also, please avoid parking with wheels partially on the grass. We have had to repair several sprinkler heads recently due to the damage this causes.

Volunteers Needed

We need you! The following leadership positions are available: Architectural Review Committee; Master Board; Block Watch Safety Committee; South of the Creek work crew; various Phase vacancies. Our volunteers do much of the work that a professional property manager would have to do for a considerable fee. Can you help? Please contact Dick Cook at 509-386-4118 (cell) or 509-529-1924 cookpines@charter.net.