

Friends of Carmel Forest

Progress Report, 2007 — Our 18th Year



We greatly appreciate the assistance of talented cartoonist and artist Ron Ferdinand, creator of the Dennis the Menace Sunday strip.

Ron and his friend Dennis are always eager to help promote the important contribution of trees to the ambiance and livability of Carmel.

Carmel isn't alone in struggling to maintain its forest

The quantity *and* quality of Carmel's majestic Monterey Pines and Coast Live Oaks is declining according to a recent study discussed on the following page. However, Carmel isn't the only city with a declining tree population. According to Dan Cray in the July 2 issue of *Time Magazine*, San Diego and other U.S. cities have lost from a quarter to half of their tree cover over the past few decades.

Dubbed "urban deforestation" by the U.S. Forest Service's Ed Macie, this phenomenon is caused by pests such as bark beetles, larger houses taking up space where trees could be planted and tight city budgets which limit the planting and maintenance of large trees.

The results of this deforestation are more pollution, higher temperatures, more flooding and diminished ambiance.

On the hopeful side, more than 2,000 cities, large and small, have initiated long-term plans for restoring and preserving their urban forests. Los Angeles is planning to plant one million trees in the next three decades; other cities have similar plans. According to Cray, San Francisco now "treats mature trees like historic buildings."

In allocating funds for Barrie Coate's study of Carmel's trees, the Carmel-by-the-Sea City Council has indicated an interest in and commitment to the health of our urban forest. Carmel Forester Mike Branson has been extremely helpful in working with Friends of Carmel Forest to identify areas where new trees should be planted and in finding solutions to ensure adequate watering during the trees' critical first year.

As the city proceeds with the review of our General Plan, it is important that existing policies remain which promote preserving and enhancing the urban forest and that throughout the document should be a recognition of the degree to which the city's ambiance and economy depend upon a healthy urban forest.

The majestic Monterey Pine creates the distinctive "village in a forest" identity which shelters residents and attracts worldwide visitors. We must do all in our power to preserve and protect this native tree that occurs naturally in the world in only three central California coastal locations. The native Coast Live Oak, Monterey Cypress and Redwood are also integral parts of Carmel's urban forest.

The Status of Carmel's Trees

Barrie Coate Report

In a March 22 report to the Forest and Beach Commission, nationally acclaimed consultant and arborist Barrie Coate, after a tour of trees in the commercial district, made a number of observations. Among these were:

“It is not an exaggeration to state that the general condition of trees in the City of Carmel is deteriorating fairly rapidly, nor is it an exaggeration to state that Carmel will not be as attractive either to residents or to visitors within a fairly short period unless significant, municipally supported steps are taken to reverse the tree decline where possible or alternatively to plant new trees of appropriate species as part of an organized program on an ongoing, long term basis.”

One of Mr. Coate's recommendations that the Friends of Carmel Forest heartily support is:

“Assignment of a well-trained person or persons to the responsibility of irrigation and pruning of newly-installed trees using recommended procedures.” The Friends know this is a necessity from having planted and watered numerous trees. The Forest Department staff has been reduced from nine to three and one-half people over the past ten years.

Mission Trail Nature Preserve

A specific example of the need for increased maintenance is found in Mission Trail Nature Preserve. Few communities the size of Carmel have a near-pristine urban forest park of 37 acres. Trails are used and enjoyed by a great many walkers, joggers and dog owners.

However, just off the trails, the preserve is suffering from neglect. Invasive, non-native plants and trees have been allowed to grow and expand, overtaking native species. These invaders include English and Cape Ivy, Poison Hemlock and Genista, which, when dry, creates a potentially dangerous fire hazard. Also, native Poison Oak is edging out onto the trail in many locations, posing a problem to walkers and their dogs.

Crews of able workers are needed year round to maintain the preserve and bring it to its full glory, but this must be done only with adequate, knowledgeable supervision.

As Clint Eastwood says in the movie *Don't Pave Main Street*, “Mission Trail Nature Preserve is an almost-mystical place.”

362 Missing Trees

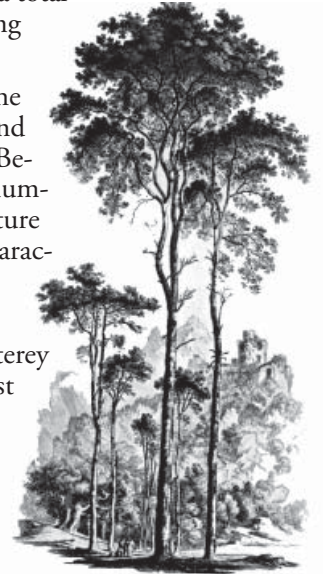
Last November Friends of Carmel Forest surveyed all publicly-owned lands throughout the village and recorded the number of trees cut during the past several years with no replacements planted. We tallied a total of 362 stumps and empty planting places.

In a further review of results of the city's annual tree surveys, we found a serious decline in public trees. Between 1971 and 2004 the total number of Monterey Pines, the signature tree emblematic of our village character, has dropped 20.4%.

Coast Live Oak have declined 36%. On the positive side, Monterey Cypress nearly doubled and Coast Redwoods on city property increased 30%.

What these trends signal is that the two most dominant native species, comprising most of our urban forest canopy, essential to our quality of life and economic vitality, are in serious trouble. Friends of Carmel Forest considers an aggressive tree replacement program essential to our community's well being—economically, environmentally and aesthetically.

To start to fill the gap of Monterey Pine and Coast Live Oak, the Friends have agreed to begin planting 25 trees annually. The Forest Department will choose the species and location of the trees and will water the newly-planted trees once a week for a year.



Annual Tree Giveaway



At the annual tree giveaway held in January in the Post Office parking lot, the Friends were successful in distributing 83 pitch-canker-resistant Monterey Pine seedlings grown by the Pebble Beach Forestry Ecology Department and 25 Coast Live Oaks planted and nurtured by Carmel River School students. In addition, board member Gene McFarland gave away pine seedlings grown by Carmel Middle School students during the school's annual native plant sale in May.

In the photo at left, Friends board member Steve Brooks gives a pine seedling to Pine Cone reporter Mary Brownfield. Mary emailed, “It looks like our pine seedling will be planted at the ranch in Carmel Valley.” The ranch Mary refers to belonged to her great-grandfather Samuel F.B. Morse.

Friends use grant funds to plant and water 31 trees

As reported in 2006, California ReLeaf granted the Friends \$2,310 to plant Monterey Pine and Cypress trees along the



south side of Ocean Avenue between Camino Real and San Antonio and in the north beach area at the foot of Ocean Avenue.

Board member Peter Quintanilla, a certified arborist, directed the planting on sites approved by City Forester Mike Branson. Volunteers directed by Quintanilla, who spent a long day planting 31 trees, were Steve Brooks, Kay and Harvey Kuffner, Gene McFarland, Dick Stiles, Mike Cunningham, Michael Davidson, Bob Condry, Don Carr, Wayne Kelley and Clayton Anderson. City employee Jaime Aquino also helped out.

Each of the 31 newly-planted trees required a weekly watering

of 5 gallons each. The 19 trees on Ocean Ave. were watered by part-time Forest Department employee Kimberly Muscato, a necessary addition to the Forest staff. Volunteers hand carried 40 pounds of water to each of the 12 trees in the north beach area. After four months, Forester Mike Branson was able to install an automatic watering system that spared our aching backs from this chore. Thanks, Mike! Heavy-lifting water volunteers were Wayne Kelley, Kay and Harvey Kuffner, Mike Cunningham, Lee Eldred, Mike Wilson, Steve Brooks, Dick Stiles, Monte Miller, John Kerby-Miller, Dick Laney, Dick Dalsemer, Paul Webb and Clayton Anderson.

The 12 cypress trees planted in the North beach area grew an average of 9 inches in 6 months.



In the photo above, from left, Mike Cunningham and Don Carr get planting direction from Peter Quintanilla. On the right, Mike Wilson waters one of the newly-planted Monterey Pine trees.

Annual Tree Survey

For the third year, volunteers from Friends of the Forest conducted the city's annual tree survey. Twenty-six two-person teams covered one-fourth of the city, gathering significant information on the number, size and type of trees on public property in Carmel. The survey, for the past 34 years, has tracked the number of trees in Carmel.

Forest Facts

Friends of Carmel Forest have developed a series of *Forest Facts* with helpful information for Carmel residents. The following one-page flyers are available:

- *Finding a Good Arborist*
- *Tidy Gardens or Benign Neglect*
- *Grow Your Own Oak*
- *Oaks in Your Yard*
- *Watering Trees—Water Is the Life Blood of Trees*
- *English Ivy—in a League of Its Own*
- *Talking Trees to Your Contractor*

If you would like a copy of any or all of these publications, please send a note with the name/s of the publications you would like and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Friends of Carmel Forest, P.O. Box 344, Carmel, CA 93921.

Helping out at River School

Under the direction of board member Gene McFarland, a summer crew gave the faculty and staff of Carmel River School a well-deserved breather by watering, weeding and harvesting the beautiful garden. River school students under the auspices of school gardener Laurie Fanin have been very helpful to the Friends, growing and nurturing oak seedlings. Included in this group were Judy and Mike Cunningham, Nancy Jones and Charlie Grauling, Sarah Berling, Nancy Collins and Mary Ellen Okelberry.

Library's Holly Tree Saved

When the plan for the new library landscaping called for removal of the large holly tree, Friends of Carmel Forest members Dianne and Jim Brun, unable to bear the thought of the magnificent tree being destroyed, agreed to pay the costs of moving it into their garden on Camino Real.

Moving "Holly," as the Bruns refer to the tree, to her new home was not a simple task. Their gardener told them there was only one person for this job—David Teas of Environmental Design in Marina. "It was the luck of the draw," says Dianne, "that he had a little window of time to help us. It was meant to be!"

Oaks in Your Yard

The majestic Coast Live Oak that we enjoy in Carmel is an integral part of the landscape. Since this is a native species, it is well-adapted to our climate, soil and geographic environment. Native oaks, when young, are very adaptable and fairly quick growing, making them excellent landscape assets.

The Coast Live Oak is a hardy tree that provides beauty, shade and is essential to many species of birds and animals. Oaks increase property value — a single mature tree can add thousands of dollars to the value of a homesite. Under ideal conditions, oaks should live for hundreds of years. While oaks are hardy, mature trees cannot tolerate many changes. They are sometimes subjected to stress which could endanger their lives. Two items to consider are:

Watering

Once established, native live oaks need little or no irrigation to survive, since they are adapted to this climate, but they may benefit from some watering and fertilizing. Do not over-water. Damage due to over watering may not appear immediately, but will hasten the demise of your prized tree. When watering, (and it is best to water in the fall or winter), keep water at least four feet from the trunk of an oak. Moist, warm soil near the base of a native oak promotes crown and root rot. Water on the outer edge of the root-feeding zone, which is beneath the tips of the outer branches. Irrigation should be by the “deep watering method” only once or twice a season. Frequent, shallow watering

not only encourages root rot, it also results in ineffective, shallow roots near the surface, a needless waste of the tree’s energy. When watering, you can use a soaker hose, or deep water with a probe attached to your hose.

A good mulch three to four inches deep out to the drip line (outer tips of branches) is helpful in retaining moisture and eliminating competing plants. Avoid raking within the root zone of trees.

Fertilizing can be helpful. For large trees, it is best to apply fertilizer in holes spaced two feet apart — out at the drip line.

Planting Near Oaks

Planting lawns, flowers, ivy, ferns or shrubs, which require extensive watering around the base of oaks, can be detrimental to the trees in that the roots could get waterlogged and rot. Only drought-resistant plants that require no summer watering should be selected.

There are a number of plants, some of which are native to California, that can be grown beneath oaks. For an extensive listing of compatible natives to plant around oaks, contact Friends of Carmel Forest at 624-3208.

The information above is an excerpt from a Forest Facts of the same name. See article on previous page.



Friends of Carmel Forest is an officially-designated support group of the City of Carmel-by-the-Sea

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