



South Orange County Fire Watch Volunteer

The Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy

Summer 2009

PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY!

Help prevent local wildland fires by joining *South County Land Stewards** as a Fire Watch Volunteer!

- Wildland fires endanger lives and property in adjacent communities.
- In the last 100 years, nearly all Orange County wildfires have been caused by humans.
- Portions of South County wildlands have not burned in over 50 years.
- Wildland fires threaten plants and wildlife, including endangered species such as the California gnatcatcher.
- The 2008 Freeway Fire cost \$6.1 million to fight, damaged or destroyed 381 structures, and burned 30,000 acres, including sensitive ecological areas.

*South County Land Stewards includes *The Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy*, OC Parks, Rancho Mission Viejo and Starr Ranch Audubon Sanctuary.

FIRE WATCH TRAINING

Volunteers will receive training from Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) personnel. Although a specific date and location have not yet been chosen, training will most likely take place in mid to late August on a weekday evening. Training will last three hours and focus on:

- understanding basic fire behavior
- identifying signs of wildfire
- dealing with suspect behavior
- providing useful fire information
- contacting proper fire authorities

Plans also call for a practice deployment on a date subsequent to initial training.

OCFA training prepares volunteers for deployment under conditions of severe fire hazard. On "Red Flag" days, South County Land Stewards will assign pairs of volunteers to wildland vantage points in rotating shifts of up to 4 hours to serve as deterrents and lookouts assisting fire professionals. We seek to place participants in locations easily accessible from where they live or work.

HOW TO HELP

Orange County Fire Authority requires a critical mass of volunteers before a training date can be scheduled.

South County Land Stewards seek volunteers from **Dove Canyon, Coto de Caza, Wagon Wheel, Las Flores, Ladera Ranch, Rancho Santa Margarita, San Juan Capistrano, and San Clemente.**

The Conservancy is collecting contact information from interested volunteers. Please email name, address and phone to <staff@theconservancy.org>. We'll add your name to our firewatch volunteer list and inform you when a training date is scheduled.

Tell your neighbors and friends about volunteering for South County Firewatch! Please circulate this brochure freely.

We welcome your suggestions and input! Contact us at <staff@theconservancy.org> or call 949-489-9778.

THE DONNA O'NEILL LAND CONSERVANCY

The Donna O'Neill Land Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation originally established in 1990. *The Conservancy* provides stewardship for a 1200 acre south Orange County wilderness reserve located in the coastal foothills just east of San Juan Capistrano. Our mission is to create awareness of the rich natural and ecological resources of the San Mateo Watershed by providing opportunities for environmental education, biological research, and sensitive recreational access to *The Conservancy*. The public is regularly invited to join us for nature walks and hikes, butterfly counts, astronomy nights, bird walks, bat & owl outings and more.

For a schedule of current events, please consult www.theconservancy.org, email <staff@theconservancy.org> or call 949-489-9778.