



For Immediate Release

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Rancho Palos Verdes City Council Approves Plan for Palos Verdes Peninsula Land to Remove High Hazard and Invasive Acacia in 2019

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA: September 12 - The Rancho Palos Verdes City Council has approved up to \$200,000 for removal of Acacia shrubs to reduce the fuel load inside the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve. This project will augment current City efforts to maintain fuel modification zones near homes by addressing major threats to property and wildlife habitat that are posed by Acacia throughout the Preserve. The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy will oversee and complete the work in the next six weeks. The plan will address the larger-than-expected amount of invasive weeds that are growing around the Peninsula due to heavy rainfall followed by warm weather. With technical expertise in vegetation and natural resource management as Habitat Manager of the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, the Conservancy will provide expert guidance and augment City staff in efforts to reduce fuel load vegetation by targeting the removal of invasive plants, such as Acacia.

The areas identified for the additional fuel load reduction are 38 acres in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, including Portuguese Canyon and areas near Vanderlip and Narcissa Drives, as well as further goat grazing in the San Ramon Reserve. The work will take place for an estimated 4-6 weeks. Due to Acacia being comprised of approximately 90% dry plant matter and volatile resins, it is highly combustible and is a high-hazard plant, which puts it on the list for priority removal.

Acacia is the number one plant of concern by the L.A. County Fire Department. It is particularly problematic in areas close to power lines. Fire agencies agree that Acacia should be removed wherever possible. Acacia is designated as a “high-hazard” plant by the L.A. County Fire Department’s recent publication, “Ready! Set! Go!” (image right). A video on how to create a defensible space around your home is available on the home page at www.pvplc.org.



Rancho Palos Verdes Mayor Jerry Duhovic explained, “Safety is always the No. 1 priority for us... and this is a very important project. Fuel modification/remediation is the City’s responsibility – we’re talking about protecting against the potential loss of life and property.”

Efforts to remove Acacia have a dual benefit for the Conservancy restoration program due to the ecological benefits. When invasive plants like Acacia are removed, native plants can develop and thrive to provide improved habitat for local wildlife, including the federally-threatened coastal California gnatcatcher and the cactus wren, a California Species of Special Concern.

“The Conservancy is pleased to implement this project in coordination with the City’s efforts, where together we can make a big impact to remove vegetation that exacerbates the threat of wildfire spreading to homes and through the Preserve open space,” said Adrienne Mohan, the Conservancy’s Executive

Director. “We are thrilled that the City Council agrees this is a priority project and is willing to take important measures to ensure public safety and protection of our local natural environment.”

The Conservancy currently works with the City of RPV to implement fuel modification as required by the L.A. County Department of Agricultural Commissioner/Weights and Measures as a part landowner with responsibilities for fuel modification near adjacent homes. Additionally, the Conservancy clears over 90 acres of weeds in restoration sites within the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve and other Peninsula open space areas, and aims to clear overgrowth from 30-plus miles of trails annually. The weeding approach approved in the plan is very specialized and must be accomplished while complying with the Natural Communities Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan for meeting federal requirements to protect natural wildlife diversity while allowing for compatible and appropriate development and growth.

The Conservancy’s qualified staff experts will oversee the work to be performed, assuring the correct and safe removal of the invasive plants using the most effective and cost-efficient techniques. Where possible, volunteers and/or goats will be deployed to augment the work volume and control costs. As part of the Conservancy’s restoration activities, there will be volunteer and internship opportunities in invasive plant management that will help keep the areas free of Acacia. Where possible, the Conservancy will coordinate with the L.A. Zoo to provide Acacia leaves to the zoo’s commissary for browsers such as zebras, gorillas and giraffes.

Conservancy staff and interns are currently doing extensive vegetation mapping of Acacia throughout the Preserve – a major field monitoring activity. Once this data is available, the Conservancy will develop a plan to identify strategic priorities for the additional removal of Acacia and other combustible vegetation in the Preserve. “The goal is to have an action plan that is comprehensive and to incorporate that into the budget each year,” declared Councilman Eric Alegria. Councilwoman Susan Brooks further supported these plans, saying, “This is such an important issue and I am pleased that the Conservancy is partnering with us for the dual purpose that will result in protecting both our residents homes and the natural areas we value that are so important to all of us. It behooves us to have a peninsula-wide plan to explore fuel load reduction for safety in all four of the Peninsula cities and the unincorporated area.”

The approval of Acacia removal comes as the City of Rancho Palos Verdes launched a disaster readiness campaign for National Preparedness Month: the Ready RPV Challenge. RPV residents who prepare or purchase an emergency kit, complete the L.A. County Fire Department’s “Ready! Set! Go!” Personal Wildfire Action Plan and post a photo or video showing each completed part of the challenge on social media with the hashtag #ReadyRPV by October 12 (the final day of Fire Prevention Week) will be entered into a drawing to win a one-night stay in an Ocean View King Guest Room at Terranea Resort with either golf or spa day passes for two; plus breakfast for two at Catalina Kitchen. The winner will be announced at the end of the campaign. For contest details, visit bit.ly/2zuDnfm.

The Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community-based organization dedicated to preserving land and restoring habitat for the education and enjoyment of all. The Conservancy owns Linden H. Chandler Reserve in Rolling Hills Estates and Lunada Canyon in Rancho Palos Verdes. The Conservancy also manages the habitat restoration in the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, the Linden H. Chandler and George F Canyon Preserves within the City of Rolling Hills Estates, the White Point Nature Preserve, a facility of the LA City Department of Recreation and Parks, and habitat restoration on the Defense Fuel Supply Point in San Pedro.