

Villas De Las Flores Home Owners Association President's Report July 30, 2021

July is ending and it will not be long before we will see the holiday sales ads appear. 2021 is cruising right along. While the Board does not traditionally meet in July and August, it does not mean we have not been busy. Even when we record the hottest temperatures in June and July with several around 120 degrees and on June 17 it reached a record 123 degrees!



Sunset on June 17, 2021

Our regular, planned, roof repairs and re-coating began in the first part of the month and will continue into August. The annual palm tree trimming is now complete. The areas along the Berm were also “freshened up” with the addition of boulders, gravel, new agaves, and bender board placement. Minor work continues with our landscape elsewhere as we install a few new irrigation controllers and convert older shrub bubblers with drip irrigation systems.

The annual repairs to pool furniture have taken place and the chairs have been put back at their respective pools. We replaced the door and frame to the Clubhouse Gym that was badly damaged by someone that attempted to break into the space. A reminder - the key for the spas and tennis courts also opens the gym handle lock.

We are also doing some minor asphalt driveway work by filling some of the larger cracks. We still plan to do a major asphalt repair/resurfacing in a few years so this is just a stopgap measure to keep the current

conditions from deteriorating. As planned, the major project will include grinding up the top layer of the existing asphalt, compacting it to be a base and then adding a new layer of asphalt to create a smooth surface. This will be especially challenging in the carport areas, however we are looking at various alternatives so that we can properly budget for the work.

We have been monitoring the discussions that the Palm Springs City Council is having regarding the future of the Tahquitz Creek area golf courses. The Oswit Land Trust has approached the City with an idea to convert the Bel Aire Greens golf course (currently closed), Mesquite Golf Course (privately owned) and Tahquitz Creek courses (owned by the City of Palm Springs) into a nature preserve with a restored Tahquitz Creek as the centerpiece. The organization previously was successful in creating the Oswit Canyon Preserve on the southwest side of Palm Springs. They are collaborating with The Trust for Public Land to acquire the properties. Here is a brief excerpt from the Mesquite Preserve website:

The homeowners, who are lucky enough to live around Mesquite Golf Course and Bel Aire Greens, enjoy open space, unobstructed views, quiet, bird watching, dark skies, a beautiful walking path and more. However, golf is a dying sport. According to the National Golf Association, 205 golf courses closed last year in the US and more are scheduled to close in the coming years. That is why it comes as no surprise that both the Mesquite Golf Course and Bel Aire Greens are currently for sale. Both golf course owners are trying to sell to developers. Instead, our vision is to purchase the land and make it a desert preserve for the entire community to enjoy. This desert preserve would create a beautiful natural desert setting with walking paths, educational plaques, community gardens and more. Just ask yourself, would you rather look at a construction site (or another failed construction site) or a phenomenal desert preserve? We must not miss this one chance to create something special in the heart of our city. Once the open space is gone, it's gone forever. Join us in our quest to create the 'Mesquite Desert Preserve'. A place where everyone in the community, regardless of their age and fitness level, can walk and enjoy the spectacular views of the San Jacinto Mountains.

For more information please refer to <https://www.mesquitedesertpreserve.org/>

While the City begins to research the potential options for the City owned Tahquitz Creek Golf Resort, we have reached out to the Oswit Land Trust in hopes of having more detailed discussions about their vision and how it would affect our property. The discussions and deliberations by the City will unfold over the next few years. We want to make sure we stay vigilant and participatory throughout and ensure that Villas is properly represented.

Meanwhile, if you do not live in the western part of the U.S. you may be surprised to hear that California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Nevada and Arizona are again in a period of prolonged drought. As an avid golfer, I often wonder when a drought may affect our ability to maintain golf courses, let alone our property. I recently came across an article in the summer 2021 edition of FORE magazine, published by the Southern California Golf Association that sums up the current conditions. The following is an excerpt from that article:

Here are the facts as we sit between precipitation seasons waiting to see if Mother Nature gives the southern part of the state the reprieve it requires next rainy season to avoid what is already unfolding in the northern half of California, where water cutbacks of 40 percent and more have already been applied to golf properties.

After a below-average year in 2019, California did even worse in 2020, receiving only 60 percent of the rain and snow that falls in a normal year. 2021 is not entirely spoken for yet — the precipitation year doesn't formally end until September 30 — but it is shaping up to be even drier. As of mid-May, precipitation levels were tracking at 48 percent of average for the year in the Northern Sierra region, 49 percent in the mid-Sierra/San Joaquin region, and 36 percent farther south in the Tulare Basin region, with scant chance for additional precipitation until fall. As for points south of the Tulare Basin, substitute near zero for "scant chance." Rain and snow just don't fall in Southern California past mid-May. Bottom line: 2020-2021 represents the third driest year on record, and the two driest were in the recently concluded 2012-2016 drought, or as future academics may later inform us, during the previous spike in the ongoing mega drought.

Current snowpack levels are roughly nine percent of normal for this time of year in the Northern and Central regions of the Sierra Nevada, and four percent of normal in the Southern Sierra. Worse, because those levels are higher than the bone-dry year of 2014-2015, a snow melt runoff that was anticipated to be much higher than 2014-2015 hasn't occurred, its disappearance due to capture by soil still bone dry from the last drought, as well as a higher evaporation factor caused by unusually high spring temperatures, the highest on record.

As of June 1, all of the major reservoirs across the state contained less water than historical levels on that date, with the two largest reservoirs, Shasta and Oroville, at 56 percent and 50 percent of average levels, respectively. Long overdrawn and over-allocated, the Colorado Basin, despite some welcome late-spring snowfalls, is also in the throes of what those same academics have taken to call a mega drought. Given that both are the main sources of the imported supplies upon which Southern California depends for its full needs, it's easy to understand the industry's alarm. Yes, the Metropolitan Water District informs us that those supplies, in conjunction with substantial conservation successes, will keep Southern California secure for the next year, but another year like the last two and all bets are off.

It's also easy to understand why, on April 21, Governor Newsom declared a regional drought emergency in Mendocino and Sonoma Counties, directed state agencies to take actions to prepare for worsening conditions statewide, and quickly followed that up on May 10 by expanding the emergency to apply to an additional 39 counties and directing the State Water Regional Control Board to consider modifying requirements for reservoir releases and water diversions.

The good news in those gubernatorial actions involves something SCGA suggested in its reporting about the state's COVID response, namely that Governor Newsom seems to prefer regional models of response over the one-size-fits-all approach that his predecessor preferred. Whether it's his actual preference — and the result of intense lobbying by Southern California water jurisdictions — or the residue of lessons learned from the 2012-2016 experience is hard to know, but it's welcome nonetheless, nowhere more so than the Coachella Valley, which suffered mightily from the one-size-fits-all approach in 2014-2016.

Sobering news. For the entire 2020-2021 rainfall season in Palm Springs, we have had 1.08" of rain total—about 20% of the annual average. Since that article was written, Governor Newsom has requested that Californians implement a 15% reduction in water usage. At Villas, we have been steadily working to find ways to reduce our water usage, with varying degrees of success. The most obvious action taken is the ongoing landscape conversion projects over the last 5 years to a more drought tolerant landscape. Updating our irrigation systems has also been key. We still have a ways to go, however in time we believe this will be worth the effort. The Board is looking at where we can further reduce high water usage such as the turf areas along the streets.

As homeowners, **we urge you to do your part** by converting your personal patio landscaping to be more drought tolerant or, at the very least, install a drip irrigation system. Thank you to those who have already made that decision-much appreciated! The rest of you join the “in” crowd and do your part! Additionally, Desert Water Agency also has rebates for water efficient washing machines, toilets and hot water recirculating pumps. Check out their website at <https://dwa.org>

Last, but not least, the Board will schedule a brief Board meeting, in later August, to handle a few items of business. We will also set up a date for discussing updates to the rolling five-year maintenance improvements plan that was created last year. Invites to all will be forthcoming. Dress will be casual but shoes and shirts are required (Hey, it is a video conference meeting- we do not care what you wear below the camera angle) and you are responsible for your own refreshments.

So stay cool, enjoy the summer and be safe!

Respectfully submitted,
Scott Gaudineer
VDLF Board President