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Rainy Season Preview

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga Creek still cluttered as flow picks up as of Dec. 22 Photos Sophie Braccini

simply clearing debris is not enough. Linda Gilson in the Sanders Drive neighborhood had a sudden problem when water from her neighbor's driveway started running down into her front garden, flowing through her own driveway where there is no curb. The water overwhelmed her drainage system. "My daughter rushed to OSH and bought 12 sand bags," she said. "We put them along our driveway entrance and fixed the problem; it was like having an instant wall blocking the flow."

Kwan adds that the town has provided three cubic yards of self-serve sand and bags behind Fire Station 41 at 1280 Moraga Way (see related story on page A1, which notes where other sand and bags are available in Lamorinda). "People should get only what they anticipate they will need," he said. The recommendation is to fill bags approximately one-half full for stacking. Kwan also indicates that there are now better tools available to project possible floods. "We can measure a soil's saturation level, and we have better projection for duration and intensity of coming rains." He and his team will keep monitoring conditions through the winter; at this time the soil is not yet saturated.

In a recent "About Town" newsletter, staff noted that the creeks and drainage channels are susceptible to flooding with the potential to cause property damage. Walking on the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail between Country Club Drive and Canyon, along the Moraga Creek, it is clear that some property owners have not done their due diligence: debris, branches and tree trunks are still piling in the middle of the river bed, and are accumulating under the Canyon bridge. Kwan said that he did not know off hand who was responsible for cleaning up that portion of the creek, but that the owners of all properties adjacent to town creeks have been reminded of their responsibility to maintain their sections of creeks to prevent flooding.

The town also informed the residents that certain areas are designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as 100-year flood zones. Visit FEMA's website for flood zone designations at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>.

The first winter rains have started to soak the Bay Area and already a few incidents served as a wake-up call to residents to be prepared. The town of Moraga recently sent letters to all property owners residing next to creeks to remind them to clean up their sides of the creeks. But there is still work to be done - and deferring the maintenance has consequences outside of the property line.

"(When the rain started pouring) the Rheem Shopping Center was flooded next to Starbucks. The problem was that the inlets were clogged with leaves that fell all at once," said Moraga Public Works Director Edric Kwan. "We contacted the property owner, and once that was taken care of, the water drained normally."

Cleaning up is part of a property owner's responsibility to avoid flooding, but sometimes



More debris under the Canyon bridge

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