

Second lawsuit filed in attempt to keep PG&E chainsaws out of Briones

By Pippa Fisher

Save Lafayette Trees has initiated another lawsuit in its attempt to save trees that PG&E says need to be axed in order to protect underground high transmission gas pipelines as part of the utility company's Community Pipeline Safety Initiative, this time in Briones.

The organization Save Lafayette Trees, which formed from concerned residents in response to the Lafayette City Council's March 27 decision to allow the removal of 272 trees from within the city, many on the Lafayette-Moraga regional trail, filed a second lawsuit on Sept. 29 against the East Bay Regional Parks District and PG&E in an attempt to save an additional 200 trees threatened in Briones. Save Lafayette Trees already has a lawsuit outstanding against the city of Lafayette and PG&E.

PG&E claims the trees in Lafayette need to be removed to provide access to the pipes in case of emergency and to protect the pipes from damage caused by tree roots.

However, Save Lafayette Trees, headed by Lafayette residents Michael Dawson and David Koters, disputes the necessity of such drastic tree removal measures, saying that PG&E has failed to document a single case of tree roots damaging pipes and suggests instead that the utility company wants to make aerial observations easier by removing the trees.

"The California Environmental Quality Act lawsuit against EBRPD (and PG&E being named as real party) was filed as a direct result of EBRPD not being willing to extend our existing 'tolling agreement,' which would have assured both parties we would continue to discuss the issue of tree removal without risk of them implementing it," Dawson said.

"Since EBRPD was willing to let that tolling agreement expire, it was clear they were going to allow the removal of over 200 trees in Briones Park, which was separately negotiated with PG&E from the March 27 Tree Cutting Agreement with the city of Lafayette," Dawson continued.

PG&E has not released a map of the threatened Briones trees but a pipeline map is available on its website. Dawson says most of the trees are clearly marked for removal with most of the largest trees on the south side of Briones along the ridge.

"PG&E is paying East Bay Parks \$245,000. This amount is on top of the additional \$531,000 PG&E is paying to the city for the 272 trees within Lafayette," Dawson noted. "The bottom line is that with tree removal costs, it's easy to see PG&E is spending close to \$1 million taking down these trees, although it won't make our pipeline any safer."

EBRPD Assistant General Manager of Public Affairs said that they are currently evaluating the case.

While unable to comment on litigation, Dawson says that, regarding the original lawsuit, although they do not have any further settlement meetings scheduled before their Nov. 8 court appearance, they have not stopped talking to PG&E or to the city.

"Safety is and will always be our top priority," said PG&E Marketing and Communication Manager Jeff Smith. "We understand how important trees are to the community and are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders on plans to address those trees that pose a community safety concern."

As of now, PG&E has yet to respond to the EBRPD lawsuit but Dawson hopes that if they are able to come to a mutually agreeable resolution to the city lawsuit, it will help them resolve the EBRPD lawsuit as well. "It depends on how willing PG&E is to listen to the community concerns regarding unnecessary tree cutting and to address our ongoing pipeline safety questions.

"Again," Dawson said, "the (second) lawsuit was our last resort, after attempting to work directly with the agency to save the trees."

More kids than ever participate in Lafayette Walk/Bike to School Day

By Pippa Fisher



Plenty of bikes in the bike rack on Walk/Bike to School Day

Photo Pippa Fisher

With at least 50 percent of the school student population taking advantage of this year's Walk/Bike to School Day, Lafayette Elementary School's event was clearly a big success.

More walkers and bikers took part this year than in the past, according to event organizer Jenny Champion. "We definitely have parent support for walking to school and we love the walkability of Lafayette Elementary School."

School Principal Ann Kim elaborated that being located in close proximity to so many neighborhoods allows for much of the school population to live close enough to bike or walk to school on a regular basis. She makes the point

though that days such as Bike/Walk to School Day heighten that awareness within the community.

In exchange for stickers, bagels and juice, kids were encouraged at least on the day of the event, Oct. 4, to arrive at school by some means other than by car. Many youngsters enjoyed the snacks and music before school. And even after the bell sounded and the kids had all trooped back into their classrooms, parents continued to congregate and enjoy coffee.

"An additional benefit is that our parent community has an opportunity to come together on campus to socialize and share a light breakfast," said Kim.

... continued on page A9



KEITH KATZMAN

I'M SELLING MORAGA!

Moraga resident since 1966.
Sucessfully selling real estate for over 31 years.

925 376 7777 | kkatzman@pacunion.com

License # 00875484

PENDING | 1217 RIMER DRIVE | MORAGA
5 bedroom, 3 bathroom | 2471± sq. ft.
Offered at \$1,435,000

UPDATED WITH EXCEPTIONAL DESIGNER FINISHES
AND REMODELED TO IMPECCABLE STANDARDS



PACIFIC UNION INTERNATIONAL

I'm selling homes fast! Yours could be next!
Call me for a no obligation visit!

925 376 7777 | kkatzman@pacunion.com



BRYDON & IVES
REAL ESTATE TEAM

Simply Beautiful!

3420 Goyak Drive, Lafayette

PENDING
W/MULTIPLE OFFERS



This delightful sunlit Springhill property has been remodeled throughout with lovely attention to finishes and detail. With 4BD/3BA and 2,840+/- sf, this fabulous home enjoys a well laid out floor plan, gourmet kitchen that opens to a great room, large dining area and beautiful Andersen French doors that take you out back where you can enjoy the peaceful setting. This .56+/- acre lot includes a flat grass area, an outdoor kitchen and dining space, a back deck and a wonderful sitting area with fountain off the master bedroom. Don't miss this enchanting oasis. Offered at \$1,725,000 3420GoyakDrive.com

Trail Neighborhood Gem!

866 Birdhaven Court, Lafayette

SOLD OFF - MARKET



3BD | 2BA | 1,784 sq ft Sold for \$1,426,000

Lisa Brydon 925.285.8336 | Kristi Ives 925.788.8345

www.BrydonIvesTeam.com

BrydonIvesTeam@apr.com

CalBRE#: 01408025
CalBRE#: 01367466

