

FRIENDS OF THE NATURE AREA – 2023 FALL NEWSLETTER



NATURE AREA TEMPORARILY CLOSED & NEEDS YOUR HELP

As many of you know, the winter 2023 storms of the Bay Area wreaked havoc all over the East Bay and especially in the Orinda Nature Area. Very old and stable heritage trees toppled over like dominoes, and hiking trails washed away, rendering the entire 18-acre Nature Area unsafe for students, teachers and volunteers. The Nature Area has been closed for safety by the Orinda School District since March 2023.

Since March, we've been unable to offer the Nature Area Programs, by our Naturalists Toris Jaeger and Kim Curiel. We've also been unable to offer volunteer opportunities to middle & high school students, including Boys Team Charity, National Charity League, Others First, Scouts, and other organizations. This has been a very, very challenging time for FONA.

Fortunately, there is hope for a reopening in the coming months. OUSD, FONA and other community partners are working together to mitigate the hazards to safely reopen areas of the Nature Area. Once those areas are safe to enter, FONA will undertake significant restoration work. Your generous donations are needed to help FONA do these critical restorations as well as to continue with our current conservation, maintenance, and preservation projects.

Once the gardens are safe for people, work will start, (funding permitting) to make the areas around the kitchen and pond safe. Work will continue outward from the core activity area until access to trails, olive grove and the meadow is restored.

The Cynthia Crespe Green House is damaged and unsafe for children, so we are seeking funds to rebuild it. A donation from Orinda One will provide 20% of what will be needed, and Student Board Members are leading efforts to raise funds.

Tribute to Scouts

Every year several high school students complete Eagle Scout and Girl Scout Gold projects in the Nature Area. The projects range from wildlife habitat enhancements to construction of bridges, tables and wheel chair accessible trails. Naturalist Toris Jaeger and Reginald Barrett, work with students to plan and implement their projects. Recently the William Penn Mott Jr. Award was presented to Scouts. We want to highlight a few of their dozens of great projects:



Owls in Nature Area



Titmouse in Bird Box



Amphibian Cover Board



Bridge over Wagner Creek



Raj Bains & Helpers at Kiosk



Decorative Masonry Bench

We want to thank you and the Orinda community for the ongoing support of the Nature Area. We look forward to continuing the legacy programs and will do so with the help of your tax-deductible, financial support.

Tax ID # 30-0472974

Visit: www.FWRNA.org/donate; or, please make your check payable to FWRNA:

FWRNA/FONA, P.O. Box 821, Orinda, CA 94563