



# The Bommer Buzz

Volume 1, Issue 1: Winter 2005

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**Open Space volunteers have contributed over 1,200 hours to the Preserve this year!**

## Second Saturdays Restoration Gives Nature a Helping Hand

By Amy Litton

Irvine has long supported the concept of "Open Space," but a newly developed program is allowing participants to work "hands on" in the field to help restore Irvine's wilderness. Known as "Second Saturdays" because the program runs on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month, volunteers assist staff by working at the 5-acre Nature Center site and in 735-acre Bommer Canyon. Project assignments include trail maintenance, non-native plant removal, painting, and other assorted projects.

Already a phenomenal amount of work has occurred. The opportunity to work outdoors is attracting a growing cadre of volunteers. Often the accomplishments are subtle. In December, however, Trails4All and SHARE, two groups supporting trail restoration, assisted students from Woodbridge High School in Irvine and Pacifica High School in Garden Grove in tackling Bommer Canyon's East Fork trail. Participants broke into groups to create channels that help direct water flow, create water bars, and fill in trail ruts formed by erosion. Their efforts will improve trail safety and reduce future maintenance. Participants on the "Full Moon Hike," the "Mountain Bike Ride," and other programs will benefit from this project. Removal of non-native or exotic species

is a priority within the Open Space Preserve, and volunteers to date have focused on efforts to eliminate castor bean in Bommer Canyon. The species is poisonous, and can

be used to create Ricin. Hundreds of saplings have been culled; dozens of young and mature plants removed manually. The removal of exotics allows native plant species to expand back into their former range, and potentially increases the biological diversity of the area by improving habitat for birds, mammals, and other wildlife.

Whether the program attracts students needing community service hours, people who enjoy working outside, or those who enjoy working as a team toward a common goal, the program seems to be an unqualified success. The atmosphere is relaxed, the

volunteers friendly and dedicated. The volunteer force is directed by staff and experienced volunteers who oversee projects and ensure participant safety. If you've joined us already on a "Second Saturday" project – thank you! If not, simply stop by the Nature Center in the Turtle Rock Community Park on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the

month at 9 a.m. Join us for an hour, or two, or three. The scenery is awesome and the work rewarding.

**Volunteers can and do make a difference.**



Volunteers clearing the Nature Center trail.



"Second Saturday" volunteers creating a water bar on the Bommer Canyon East Fork trail.



**Greetings from the Volunteer Coordinator**

By Kevin Livergood

Welcome to the first edition of the Bommer Buzz. As the volunteer coordinator I wanted to create a newsletter that not only highlights the many programs offered by the Open Space, but also showcases the amazing efforts of our volunteers. This quarter, Senior Naturalist Amy Litton has written our cover story about the great success of the Second Saturdays program. In future



*Join us on the next mountain bike ride! I'm on the far right. Volunteer Steve Larson is to the far left.*

editions we will continue to highlight programs, but we will also share volunteer training opportunities, spotlight our volunteers, and announce special events occurring in and around the Preserve. If you have a penchant for writing and would like to contribute to the newsletter sometime, please let me know. We are always excited to discover the many talents and skills of our friendly and diverse group of volunteers.

**Throughout 2004 we shared the Irvine Open Space Preserve with over 1,350 program participants!**

**Winter Program Calendar / Volunteer Opportunities**

PROGRAM	DATE	DAY	TIME
Second Saturdays	January 8	Sat	9am - 12pm
Birding in Bommer	January 15	Sat	8am - 10:30am
Buggy Brigade	January 19	Wed	9am - 10:30am
Full Moon Hike	January 22	Sat	8pm - 10pm
Volunteer Open House	January 27	Thu	5pm - 6:30pm
Mountain Bike Ride	January 29	Sat	8:30am - 11am
Jammin' in the Canyon	January 30	Sun	4pm - 6pm
Explorer's Club	February 2	Wed	10am - 12:30pm
Meditation Hike	February 5	Sat	9am - 10:30am
Second Saturdays	February 12	Sat	9am - 12pm
Buggy Brigade	February 16	Wed	9am - 10:30am
Starry Night	February 18	Fri	7:30pm - 9:30pm
Cardio Hike - Hicks	February 20	Sun	8am - 10:30am
Explorer's Club	March 20	Wed	10am-12:30pm
Get Into It: Bommer Canyon	March 12	Sat	8am - 1pm
Second Saturdays	March 12	Sat	9am - 12pm
Buggy Brigade	March 16	Wed	9am -10:30am
Cardio Hike - Bommer Canyon	March 19	Sat	8am - 10am
Jammin' in the Canyon	March 20	Sun	3pm - 5pm
Nature's Nectar	March 20	Sun	1pm - 3pm
Full Moon Hike	March 25	Fri	8pm - 10pm
Hicks Canyon View	March 27	Sun	9am - 12:30pm
Second Saturdays	April 9	Sat	9am - 12pm
Volunteer Workshop	April 16	Sat	8am - 2pm



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