



Santa Cruz County Drought Emergency and Long-term Plans for Domestic Wells

A PRESENTATION BY
SIERRA RYAN, WATER RESOURCES
MANAGER, COUNTY OF SANTA
CRUZ ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Rural households and small communities across the West are increasingly at risk of having their groundwater wells go dry. Stories of shortage in recent years come from many places. Towns at the foot of normally wet redwood forests trucked drinking water from inland rivers to the coast over tortuous mountain roads last summer. Communities that rely on wells in the San Joaquin Valley had bottled water delivered when groundwater levels sunk below their pumps in 2021. Residents living in the foothills on the western slope of the Central Sierra have had to deepen wells as, on average, water levels in the fractured rock system have declined about 50 feet from the mid-1970s.

Unlike their urban neighbors, residents of these areas do not have the water infrastructure to provide drinking water when the wells go dry. California passed a law in 2021 requiring counties to develop drought emergency and long-term plans for domestic wells. Sierra will provide an overview of the Santa Cruz County Drought Response and Outreach Plan for Small Water Systems and Private Wells.

Sierra Ryan is the Water Resources Program Manager for the County of Santa

SSA General Meeting— Live and Zoom

Friday, April 21, 2023

TIME 7:00 pm – Refreshments
7:30 pm – Featured presentation and Q&A

PLACE Saratoga Cal Fire Summit Fire Station
12900 Skyline Blvd.

DIRECTIONS Located on the west side of Skyline Blvd. approximately .6 of a mile north of the intersection of Skyline Blvd. and Highway 9.

Note: Parking at the fire station is limited, and overflow will have to park along Highway 9. Be safe, use a flashlight.

PLEASE BRING A sweet or savory dessert to share.
SSA will provide beverages.

ALSO ON ZOOM To join click on the link:
<https://zoom.us/j/99987547154>

(This link is also available on our website: southskyline.org)

Cruz. She has been with the County since 2015, working on water resources issues such as groundwater management, fisheries and watershed protection, drought response, stream and beach water quality, and water conservation. Sierra grew up in Santa Cruz County and has degrees in Environmental Studies

from UC Santa Barbara and the University of Edinburgh.

Note that this is a Santa Cruz County drought response, but this presentation could be of interest to anyone with a private well in the South Skyline area.

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What the SSA Board is Doing...

BY EVAN DELLOR, SSA PRESIDENT

I'm writing this with the wind blowing and the rain falling on March 9th. This is yet another 'atmospheric river' event to fall upon us this winter. Although we can all appreciate the precipitation, it becomes increasingly more challenging as we encounter delayed commutes and property/access damage as a result of the rain/wind/snow. So far, I've witnessed an impressive amount of community effort to patch the damage and support other members in carrying out the necessary work. Thank you to all involved!

Along these lines, the SSA is actively involved with Caltrans with regards to the erosion along several segments of Hwy 35, in particular the sections adjacent to the chestnut farm. We all hope that repairs can be prioritized so as these damaged sections don't deteriorate and impede our access. The SSA is also supporting the South Skyline Firesafe Council in their efforts to organize and fund clearing around upper Page Mill and Portola State Park Roads. In addition, we are considering grants involving fire safety and emergency communications modernization.

This last month we had an informal meeting with the Kings Mountain Association board. The purpose was to discuss possible collaborations, exchange ideas, and to get to know each other in general. It was an enormously successful meeting, and I know we all appreciated being introduced. Thanks to the KMA for setting this up!

The SSA Board sends out a big thanks to Sarah Hitchcock-Glover for over 10 years of volunteer service with the important task of setting up refreshments for our quarterly

meetings and picnics. Another big thank you to Matt Voss who has volunteered to step in to continue this service for all of us.

Lastly, I'd like to mention that we have a new board member, Julie Snyder, from the SkyLonda region. It's really good to have some representation from this area, as we lacked it previously. Thanks, Julie for stepping up!



SPUG Quarterly Report

Month/Year	Amerigas	Ferrellgas	Kamps	Suburban/SV
March 2023	2.750	3.379	3.650	4.350
February 2023	2.750	3.405	3.650	4.400
January 2023	2.750	3.435	3.650	4.500
December 2022	2.750	3.146	3.240	4.150
November 2022	3.250	3.031	3.240	4.410
October 2022	3.250	3.058	3.540	4.410
September 2022	3.250	3.045	3.540	4.380
August 2022	2.750	3.049	3.540	4.330
July 2022	2.750	3.069	3.540	4.480
June 2022	2.750	3.059	3.640	4.500
May 2022	2.750	3.418	3.840	4.500
April 2022	2.750	3.059	3.840	4.750
March 2022	2.750	3.444	3.750	3.970

Skyline Propane Users Group (SPUG) was formed to benefit SSA members. For information about joining, or for members wishing current information on the agreement go to our website: www.SouthSkyline.org/spug/. If you have questions, please email propane@southskyline.org.

SSA has agreements with Amerigas, Ferrellgas, Kamps, and Suburban Propane Scotts Valley. Existing "Associate Members" will continue to enjoy SPUG discounts, and long-time SPUG members who switch to Ferrellgas will also be eligible for the SPUG discount. **Please note: Prices are subject to change as frequently as wholesale prices change. The prices SSA posts are for the first of the month. Our SPUG rate is based on a keep-full basis, not will-call service.**

You are not required to pay sales tax on propane if you do not have natural gas available where you use propane. If you get your propane from Amerigas, you will need to submit a sales tax exemption form. Contact Amerigas for the form.

Membership dues are due every January. Those whose SSA membership has lapsed can be disqualified by our propane providers from receiving the benefit of the SPUG price. Membership can be renewed at <http://SouthSkyline.org/membership/>. If paying by check use the Membership Application on the website.

SSA Membership Report – April 2023

BY DEBRA BORN, MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE CHAIR

WHAT A WINTER WE'VE HAD!

Last year this time we were well into Spring weather, and we hardly had a winter. This year has been quite different and one for the records. We hope all of you have weathered the storms and extreme weather here and anywhere else you may have been. Won't that sun feel good when the rains stop coming?

Our renewal season has been relatively routine with most members renewing and some new members, whom we welcome. We ended last year with a total membership of about 2,300 households and expect about the same number this year will renew.

Many of you have yet to renew for 2023, so if this includes you, please renew now.

To do so, open your online account by going to our website's membership page www.southskyline.org/membership and enter the email address you used when you signed up. If you cannot remember which email you used when you first joined, email us at membership@southskyline.org and tell us your name, property address, and which email address you want to use so we can change it if needed. After that you'll be able to renew online.

Temporary PayPal Issues

In early March our online payment system administered by PayPal was not working. This issue has been resolved. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

Amerigas

Finally, as was the case last year many of you participate in the SPUG program using Amerigas and are having issues with their invoices not reflecting the SPUG rate. However, Amerigas no longer has customer service telephones at local offices in our area. Calling their 800 number will route you to a call center where they know nothing of the SPUG agreement. So if you need to contact them, reach out to their customer service reps who serve each of the offices at either 282-RoyalOaksCA@amerigas.com or 270-SanJoseCA@amerigas.com depending on which billing office handles your account. We hope this helps!



Free Address Sign for South Skyline Association In-Boundary Members

BY SUSAN STUCKY AND DEBRA BORN

Along with the quiet and privacy that living in the South Skyline area provides, we also have a front seat on many of nature's biggest challenges. We rely on ourselves and our neighbors for assistance, but we count on emergency services too. Whether it is a fire truck, an ambulance, a first-responder, or even just neighbors, the driver has to find you. To help these folks out, address signs are key to timely service. SSA is making free address signs available to SSA (in-boundary) members. If you are unsure if you are



an in-boundary member, see the SSA Area Map at <https://southskyline.org/about/>

The signs are regulation compatible: green and white with 4" reflective numbers and letters and are 80 mil aluminum. Do your part. Order one today.

Applications can be found on our online April 2023 Skyline's newsletter or <http://southskyline.org/events/>

South Skyline Fire & Rescue News

BY ANDY SEIGEL, CAPTAIN, SSF&R

We had a busy start to the year. The storms brought dozens of calls for trees and wires down all around the area. In between January storms, we had a chance to break in our new roof ventilation training prop after purchasing the wood for it with your donations.

Return of The Pancake Breakfast!

After a 3-year hiatus, we are bringing back the spring pancake breakfast!

Mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 13th, 8–11am**

Saratoga Summit Cal Fire Station (12900 Skyline Blvd).

Still \$5 per person, and free for kids under 12. We hope to see you there!



Promotion

I'm excited to announce the promotion of Jeremiah Njoroge to the rank of Engineer. Jeremiah has been with the department since 2015. As engineer, he can respond as driver/operator to any incident with any of our apparatus. Congratulations!

Recruiting

We are very much in need of new members for 2024. A good time to talk to us in person will be on May 21st, noon to 3, at the SSEPO Community Preparedness Day at the Skyline Ridge Open Space preserve. We will have one of our engines on display. Can't make it on the 21st? There is



information on our website about the program. We're happy to answer any questions; email us at interest@southskylinefire.org

Visit us at: <http://southskylinefire.org>

Local Events

California Native Plant Society Santa Clara Valley Wildflower Show

Saturday, April 22, 2023
10am–4pm
West Valley College

The show will feature hundreds of species of wildflowers and native plants from Santa Clara, San Mateo and surrounding counties gathered by volunteer collectors. The event and parking are all free to the public.

The South Skyline 2023 Sudden Oak Death Blitz

Friday, April 28 at 5pm to
Monday, May 1 at 7pm
WHERE: Cal Fire CZU #21
Station (Saratoga Summit),
12900 Skyline Blvd, Los
Gatos

See article page 5

South Skyline Fire and Rescue Pancake Breakfast

Saturday, May 13th, 8–11am
at the Saratoga Summit Cal
Fire Station (12900 Skyline
Blvd).

Still \$5 per person, and free
for kids under 12.

South Skyline Community Preparedness Day 2023

May 21, 2023 – Noon–3pm
Skyline Ridge Open Space
Preserve
Equestrian Parking Lot

See article page 8

Sudden Oak Death Update

BY JANE MANNING

The 2023 Sudden Oak Death Blitz is Friday April 28–Monday May 1

Sudden oak death (SOD) is a tree disease caused by the *Phytophthora ramorum* microorganism. It infects many shrub and tree species (black, coast live, canyon, Shreve), as well as tan-oak. Rates of SOD infection in bay trees predict the amount of the *P. ramorum* pathogen in an area. The SOD blitz is an annual state-wide survey wherein hundreds of trained volunteers collect bay leaf samples for protein and PCR testing.

Given all that Santa Cruz Mountain residents have recently endured, it may seem unessential to worry about the slow-moving SOD threat. But the SOD Blitz offers a chance to contribute to a larger push for oak health in a year when our mountain trees took another big punch from the weather. Participation is easy, free, and it provides a moment to breathe in the living forest that surrounds us!

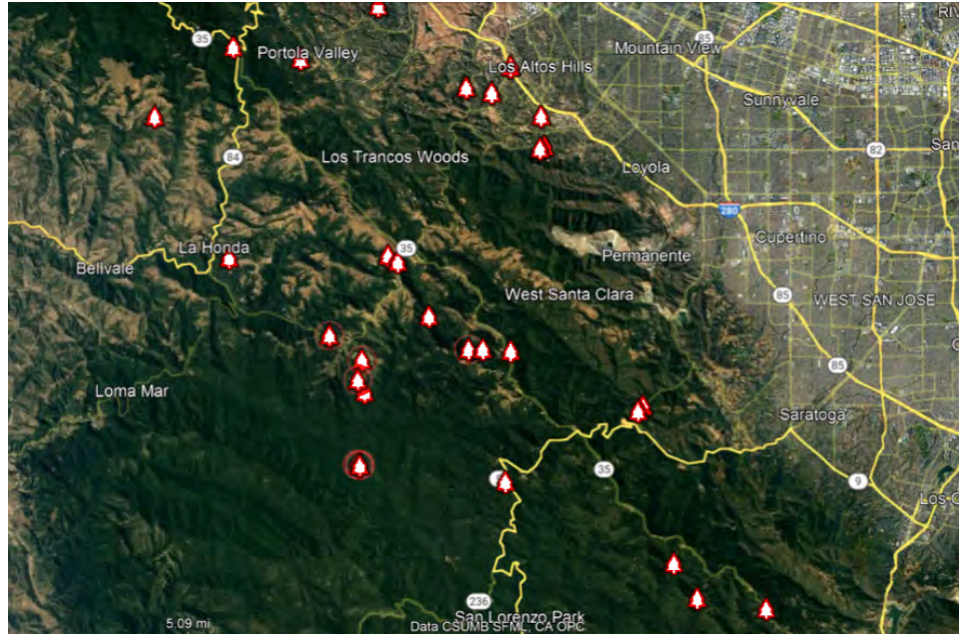
First, you must register and watch the training video at www.sodblitz.org. While you are there, download the SODMap app to your phone to help you collect LAT-LON coordinates for each sample.

Sample packet pick-up & drop-off is outdoors and self-serve at the following time & place:

WHEN: Friday, April 28 at 5 pm to Monday, May 1 at 7 pm

WHERE: Cal Fire CZU #21 Station (Saratoga Summit), 12900 Skyline Blvd, Los Gatos

Be sure to drop-off by 7 pm Monday. Even if you only have time for a few samples, everything helps! Also, please consider donating at www.matteolab.org. For questions: skyline_sod@yahoo.com (I will be present at Saratoga Summit on Saturday 9–11 as well).



Map: 2022 samples that were positive for SOD (i.e., infected bay trees).

Why volunteer?

Thank you to all of the 2022 South Skyline blitz volunteers and supporters! With a local rate of infection here of less than 10%, the South Skyline area was mostly negative and the lowest since we started surveying in 2011. This map shows only the positive samples around the Skyline area.

UC Berkeley's Matteo Garbelotto, who runs the SOD Blitz, explained that state-wide, the 2022 percent positive samples and the statistical "true infection rate" were both the lowest since the blitzes started in 2008—perhaps the only bright side from 3 years of low rainfall! Note however that his work shows that *P. ramorum* has been lingering on bay trees, especially on cooler slopes and where bays are dense.* With this winter's higher rainfall, SOD will start to re-emerge. Your participation in the Blitz is still critical because it will help reveal patterns (canyons vs. upland areas) and timing of this re-emergence. Oaks are more likely to become infected when the bay infection rate is high, but often do not show symptoms or die for several years (two years, on average). To

add to the complexity, a lot of trees presently look "stressed" or even dead due to drought and non-SOD microorganisms or woodboring insects that take advantage of water-deficient trees*. Increasing our understanding of SOD's epidemiology through SOD blitz testing directly helps all landowners decide where to focus efforts on protecting oak trees. Matteo and other researchers still recommend removal of nearby bays as THE top strategy to protect oaks.

Another reason that makes SOD blitz participation truly worthwhile is that samples are monitored for a new strain of SOD (EU1) that has raised alarms with forest managers. Migration of EU1 beyond a tiny patch in Del Norte County would likely result in mutations that intensify the virulence of the NA1 strain we now have. This could greatly magnify SOD's impact on Skyline area forests. Other efforts to detect potential spread of EU1 include monitoring many California stream waters such as Salmon Creek in Monterey County. Although that water repeatedly tested positive for SOD, there is no EU1 so far. Please join in working together to keep EU1 out of California!

*Source: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/uccemarin/files/376454.mp4> accessed 3/12/2023

The La Honda Fire Brigade and Coastside Gives

BY PAT O'COFFEY



COASTSIDE GIVES A COASTSIDE DAY OF GIVING MAY 4th 2023

Coastside Gives is an annual event that brings the Coastside together as one community while raising money and awareness for our local nonprofits during a 24-hour giving challenge. The La Honda Fire Brigade is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit, fire department that relies on donations from the community for continued operation.

As we experienced with CZU in 2020, keeping a small fire small is the best way we can prevent a large damaging fire from getting established and destroying our community. These small fires often start in very remote areas which are extremely difficult to access, even with our new Type 5 Fire Engine, which will be in use this summer. It is often difficult to get to the location of an injured hiker, bicyclist, or horseback rider with a fire engine. Time getting these victims to a hospital can make the difference between life and death. **The funds we receive in our 2023 Coastside Gives campaign will help us purchase an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV), which can get us directly to the source of the fire or to a victim.** The ERV will greatly reduce the time it takes to hike into the backcountry to get to that

small fire before it becomes big and to provide us with the ability to transport a patient from a remote area to an awaiting helicopter.



The La Honda Fire Brigade is an all-volunteer fire department, serving the entire South Coast and South Skyline since 1953. Our volunteers have received the same training as a professional firefighter, and most have received Emergency Medical Training. They face the same dangers as a professional firefighter. Yet, these men and women all have jobs in addition to their volunteer duties. The Brigade responds to many types of emergencies, not just fires: medical

emergencies, car accidents, trees down, rescues and downed electrical lines. Each year, our firefighters respond to 300-400 call outs.

2023 Giving Day is MAY 4. Early giving started on March 1. You can give anytime up to midnight on May 4. Please donate now by going to: https://www.coastsidegives.org/organization/La_Honda_Fire

Please help us get to victims in remote areas and put out those small fires before they become big fires! **As we learned with the CZU Fire, our volunteer firefighters can make the difference in whether that fire reaches your community or NOT.**

Thank you for your generous and continued support!



SC4 Amateur Radio Club and Coastsides Gives

BY PAT O'COFFEY



COASTSIDE GIVES A COASTSIDE DAY OF GIVING MAY 4th 2023

Coastsides Gives is an annual event that brings the Coastsides together as one community while raising money and awareness for our local nonprofits during a 24-hour giving challenge. SC4ARC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit amateur radio club that provides and maintains the assets that are required for emergency communications by our group of ARES® (Amateur Radio Emergency Services) volunteers.

Once again during the storms of January, the snowstorm in February and the atmospheric river event of March 2023, some areas of the South Coast and South Skyline were out of power and communications for multiple days. The only communication possible was by HAM RADIO. Volunteer Ham operators staff the Operation Center at the La Honda Fire Brigade and, when necessary, the Temporary Evacuation Point in Pescadero 24 hours a day until communications are restored and the area is cleared of major hazards.

The SC4 Amateur Radio Club (SC4ARC) funds and maintains the essential assets, such as 3 Ham Radio repeaters, radios, antenna towers and a network of digipeaters for Winlink digital communications, that are all used in an emergency. Our ARES® volunteers exchange emergency communications with all of the San Mateo County South Coast, including South Skyline, Butano Canyon,

Pescadero, Loma Mar, and La Honda. These essential communications provide emergency radio traffic to first responders at the Emergency Operation Center in Half Moon Bay or Redwood City and critical information to our residents on road closures, trees/wires down, flooded areas, debris flows and evacuations.

Ham Radio communication can and does save lives!



The equipment necessary for this vital emergency communications network requires maintenance and periodic replacement. We are asking, through our Coastsides Gives campaign, for your financial contributions to keep this equipment up and running so it will be available when it is needed most.

2023 Giving Day is MAY 4. Early giving started on March 1. You can give anytime up to midnight on May 4.

Please donate now by going to: <https://www.coastsidegives.org/organization/Sc4-Ham-Radio>

We have the assets to provide emergency communications on the Coastsides during an emergency. The question is will we have it operational during the next disaster? **THERE WILL ALWAYS BE ANOTHER DISASTER!** To be ready, our assets must be maintained and replaced when necessary. This requires funding. Please help us be ready for the next disaster, be it fire, floods or earthquake. Ham Radio communications can make the difference between life or death.

Thank you for your support!

For more information about SC4ARC and ARES®, please visit our website at www.sc4arc.org

ARES® and "Amateur Radio Emergency Service®" are registered service marks of the American Radio Relay League, Incorporated and are used by permission.



South Skyline Community Preparedness Day 2023

BY THOMAS HEMPEL, PAT O'COFFEY & JOHN DELONG



May 21, 2023 – Noon to 3:00 PM

Skyline Ridge Open Space Preserve
Equestrian Parking Lot

Defensible space. Hardening our homes. Improving the health of our forests. What to do in an emergency? Do we know where to start? It seems a lot of work. Who can help? Who would help?

You can learn the answers to these questions at The South Skyline Community Preparedness Day this May sponsored by the South Skyline FireSafe Council and the South Skyline Emergency Preparedness Organization. Our goal is to bring all of us who live here together with the first responders, community organizations, and vendors who are involved in every aspect of managing our land and preparing our houses and communities for whatever nature throws at us, for a useful and fun day of networking. You are sure to meet interesting people, see fascinating big equipment from fire engines to earth moving equipment, and get lots of useful tips as to what to do, who can help you with it, and what's involved.

This is our second time doing this event, and we intend to make it annual. We're doing it in May so it's less likely that the emergency responders will be called out, and it's also Wildfire Awareness Month. The power of the event comes from bringing everyone together, so we can all understand the challenges we face end-end. Given our multi-county area, it's powerful for the agencies and companies to all meet each other in a way that jurisdictional boundaries often preclude. In addition, they get to hear from all of us and understand our concerns.

This year we've broadened the event to include more of the home hardening, and land and forest management

contractors. Given the scope of many of our properties, the defensible space and hardening work really does require more expertise or manpower than any of us have. Finding the right vendors is really important. And understanding how the commercial work fits into how the fire department looks at things is also highly useful.

All the big toys on display will appeal to kids and...anyone who just likes looking at big toys! But the really big thing here is for us to come together as a community, find how we are handling these challenges individually and collectively, and see what our collective next steps are.

The current list of participants includes: Santa Clara County Fire Department, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, CalFire, La Honda Fire Brigade, Resource Conservation District of San Mateo County, San Mateo Department of Emergency Management, American Red Cross, California Department of Insurance, United Policy Holders, CERT, Ramaytush Ohlone Tribe, SSFSC, SSEPO, SSEPO Medical Trailer, SSEPO Communications Trailer, Brush Hog Tree Care, Irish Excavation, California Sisters Landscapes, South Coast ARES Group, and many more.

We will have plenty of nearby parking! Please mark your calendars for May 21, 2023 and plan to join us.



In Appreciation

BY JANET SCHWIND

I wish to thank the South Skyline Association for the lovely plaque of appreciation present to me at the annual meeting. In this recognition of advocacy, I see a message for our members and current and future board members, and that is "Keep Watch!" I'm sure there are still public agencies and interest groups out there formulating plans for "their" foothills, aka our area. Think boards of supervisors, planning commissions, county parks, state parks, MidPen, Caltrans, CalFire, Highway Patrol and groups like the Sierra Club, Sempervirens Fund, mountain bikers, dirt bikers, rock climbers, equestrians, and developers. We need to be on top of their proposals and have our input before it's too late.

On another note, I am heartened by the way the aims of some of these groups and those of our members have grown closer as time has passed. May this trend continue.

If you want to be shocked by some of the grand proposals of the past, I refer you to The South Skyline Story, Chapter 14, "What Might Have Been." There's food for thought.

Uncrossed Puzzle

BY JANET SCHWIND

Match the clues in **column 1**, to the correct names of places in **column 2** that can be found in the South Skyline area. Have fun!

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. Boreal Boulevard | A. Russian Ridge |
| _____ 2. Ebon Way | B. Skyline Boulevard |
| _____ 3. Palatial Stone | C. Page Mill Road |
| _____ 4. Briquette Byway | D. Stevens Creek |
| _____ 5. Deranged Seeger's Path | E. Castle Rock |
| _____ 6. Fuel Rill | F. Windy Hill |
| _____ 7. Satan's Descent | G. Montebello Ridge |
| _____ 8. The Catapult | H. San Lorenzo River |
| _____ 9. The Hilltops | I. Charcoal Road |
| _____ 10. Barrier Stream | J. Black Road |
| _____ 11. Basque Mountain | K. Devil's Canyon/Slide |
| _____ 12. Beautiful Hilltops | L. Coal Creek |
| _____ 13. Polish Hill | M. Las Cumbres |
| _____ 14. Attendant's Saw Route | N. La Honda |
| _____ 15. Saint's Stream | O. Alpine Road |
| _____ 16. Town Space | P. Mindego Hill |

South Skyline Annual Rainfall Update

BY LARRY WATSON, RETIRED BIOMETEOROLOGIST

Within the South Skyline area, annual accumulated precipitation measured at any location can vary significantly from other locations, and is characterized by significant year-to-year variability.

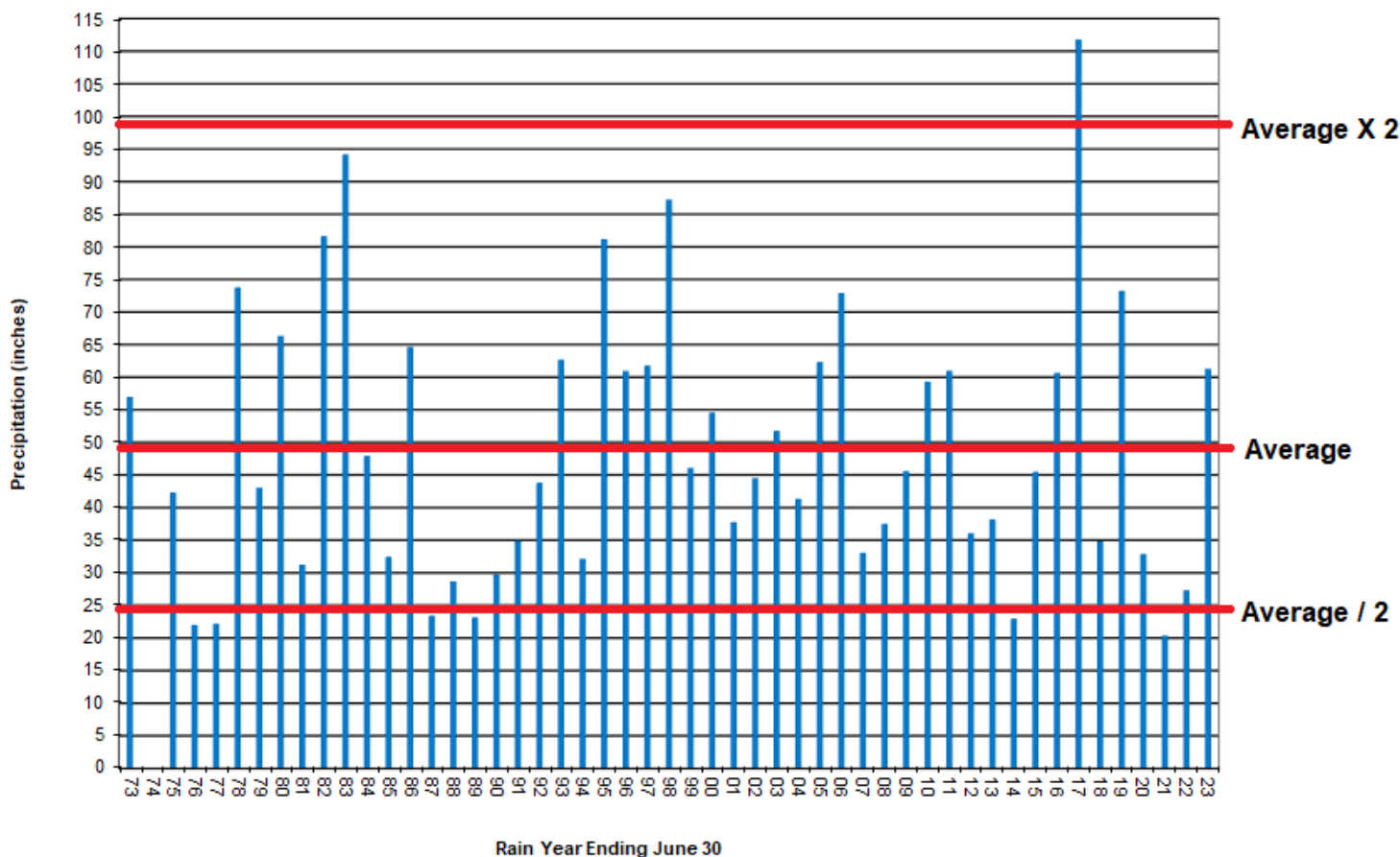
This high-quality record of rainfall near Saratoga Gap (Highways 9 and 35 intersection), spanning 50 years, was maintained by former Indian Rock Ranch resident John Heineke from 1972 until 2021, and since by me. John's measurements were collected near the center of the SSA area at approximately 2300' elevation. The more recent collection location is about 2 miles West and 100' lower elevation compared to the first location. My rain gauge siting is consistent with meteorological standards as I outlined in the October 2005 issue of [Skylines](#). The graph

above is an update to the version I last published in the April 2021 issue.

The annual average precipitation at this location is roughly 49 inches per year (50" in 2021). Rainfall is accumulated by "California rain-year" which begins July 1 of one year and ends June 30 of the following year.

In two rain-years, 1983 and 2017, measured precipitation was approximately double the average. In only six of the last fifty rain-years, accumulations were less than one-half the average. Rain-year 2021 set a new low and 2022 was not much better. At this point in rain-year 2023, we have already accumulated approximately 125% the average for the entire rain year.

South Skyline Accumulated Annual Rainfall To 03/23/2023
50-year average near Saratoga Gap = 49.1 inches



Radon Reminder

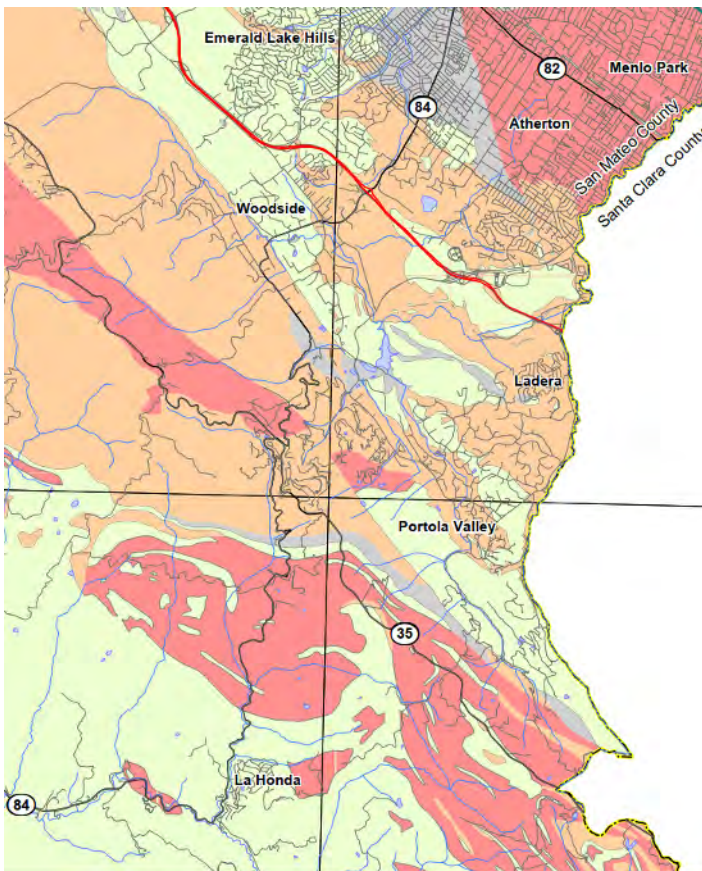
BY MATT VOSS

Moving into our first house on the Peninsula meant a lot of small projects, and some big ones. We focused on the big ones first: a failed well pump (no running water), no working internet, a leaking roof, old retaining walls, and a failing water storage tank (a repurposed wine tank). We had largely achieved a sense of security. Still, something was nagging me until I recalled a faint memory of my dad ordering radon test kits for our home in Illinois.

I thought I'd do an internet search to see if this was a problem in California as well. To my surprise, radon awareness in California was nearly non-existent despite the EPA estimate of several thousand deaths a year in California alone caused by radon induced lung cancer.

I searched the Portola Valley, Skylonda, South Skyline, and Kings Mountain forums, but came across only a few casual mentions. The pickings were slim when I searched local periodicals and only found an article from SFGate and Mercury News from 2007 and an article on patch.com from 2013. Apparently, not a lot of local folks were talking about radon.

I then began searching in our specific area, and lo and behold I found a few excellent radon maps. Below is a detailed radon probability map showing that the San Mateo County portion of the South Skyline Association is largely in red or orange indicating a higher probability of radon levels above EPA limits! Our house was in the orange portion.



(an interactive map can be found at <https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/radon/>)

I immediately went on a hunt for radon testing devices and found electronic devices for a little over \$100 that can continuously obtain accurate measurements, with the first reading taking only ten minutes. I chose the Ecosense model which is considered excellent by mitigation companies. Discounted single-use models for \$15 for California folks are also available from <https://aelabs.com/collections/california>, but viewing radon levels over time electronically is vastly superior and allows quick room placement changes to test all areas of the home.

As a result of our testing, our home did show elevated levels above EPA recommendations. Perhaps it was nothing to be too concerned about in the short term, but it certainly wasn't something I wanted to expose our family to over the long term, especially since new research showed radon might increase the risk of rare blood cancers in women, as well as some weak evidence showing an association with leukemia in children.

We found a radon mitigation company using the official state list of mitigators (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DRSEM/Pages/EMB/Radon/Certified-Radon-Service-Providers.aspx>). It was a small list of less than twenty, and many were too busy or didn't perform residential services, so the options were limited.

After they installed a single-fan radon mitigation setup, it took only a few days for our radon levels to go from above the EPA action limit of 4.0 pCi/L to 0.5 pCi/L everywhere in the house, which is similar to outdoor levels. Mitigation is especially important for smokers or folks with any kind of lung related health conditions, and The World Health Organization recommends an even more stringent 2.7 pCi/L.

I started thinking about our real estate disclosures and was in disbelief that a radon map wasn't included and that a radon test wasn't required. I had read that radon, once discovered, is not considered a big deal because it is so easily mitigated and therefore doesn't impact property values. But that made it all the more bewildering why the radon map in particular wasn't made common knowledge for all transactions.

Further exploring this topic, I found a resource in South Lake Tahoe, a radon hotspot, and reached out to Jeff Miner (<http://radonattahoe.com/>). He was great to speak to due to his vast knowledge of radon from years of advocacy and research. As Jeff did in South Lake Tahoe, I am considering lobbying government figures to include radon maps and/or required testing as part of real estate transactions, similar to many other radon hotspots. This issue took me by surprise and I'd like to prevent future radon surprises for anyone in our area.

In the meantime, I encourage residents to test their radon levels and do their own research to determine their comfort levels with the test results.

A Rainbow of Irises Along Skyline

BY SARAH SCHOEN

Fernald's iris (*Iris fernaldii*) is a lovely perennial that takes care of itself. Year round, dense clusters of narrow, gray green leaves grow in colonies, dotting the mixed evergreen forest floor.

In April and May, the flowers emerge. Iris flowers are so unusual, horticulturists have given them special names. There are 3 petals, called flags, and 3 petal-like sepals, called falls, all of similar color. In this area that tends to be creamy beige to very light yellow with narrow purple lines. The upright petals are shorter and narrower than the sepals. Sepals are moderately upright and arching downwards. There are 3 styles, 3 stigmas, and 3 stamens all on the surface of the sepals. Below the petals and sepals is a funnel-shaped calyx tube. Below that is the inferior ovary, a bulge where seeds are formed. And below that is a pedicel (flower stem) emerging from the cluster of leaves. Fernald's iris typically has 2 flowers per stem.

Iris pollination is an interesting story. The 3 petals are just for show to help get the bees' attention. Bees land on the sepals and follow the line guides to the nectar in the center of the flower. On top of the sepals are the flat, wide styles. The bee pushes under the style to get to the nectar. The stigma is underneath the style and faces outward. When the bee pushes in, its pollen-laden hairy back brushes open the stigma and fertilizes the flower.



Douglas Iris by mizgreenjeans from iNaturalist

Further in on the way to the nectar, the bee brushes against the stamen, also under the style, and picks up more pollen. After the bee takes a sip of nectar, there is not enough room to turn around. It backs out, closing the flap on the stigma, preventing self-pollination. If all this seems complicated, you can trace the path with your finger.

After pollination, the ovary forms a capsule, at first green, then drying to brown. When ready it splits at the top. Two days later 20 to 80 tiny seeds emerge. Iris can also reproduce by cloning from the underground rhizomes, forming dense colonies.

Fernald's iris can be cultivated. Divide the rhizomes and plant them just after the first winter rains. Alternatively, collect the seeds and store them at room temperature a paper envelope. In late fall, plant the seeds in pots with potting soil. Transplant them in mid spring when the seedlings are 3 to 6" tall. Fernald's iris does best in well-drained soil with moderate sun and little to no summer water. Plants should start flowering at about 2 years.



Ground Iris from Henry Coe

There are 2 other species of iris in our area – Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) and ground iris (*Iris macrosiphon*). These are not always easy to tell apart. Douglas iris leaves are generally dark green and shiny. Ground iris gets its name because it is short and blooms very close to the ground. Douglas and ground iris flowers tend to be blue or purple with white lines. However,



Fernald's Iris

this is not always the case. Another way to tell the 3 species apart when they are in bloom is to focus on the part of the flower below the petals and sepals – the calyx tube, the ovary, and the pedicel. For Fernald's and Douglas iris, the top of the calyx tube is funnel-shaped. For Fernald's iris, the calyx tube is much longer than the short pedicel. For Douglas iris, the calyx tube and pedicel are of roughly equal length. For ground iris, the calyx tube is also much longer than the short pedicel. However, at the top of the calyx tube, there is a bowl-shaped structure, rather than a funnel. If you are still not sure, these species have overlapping flowering times and locations and have the potential to hybridize, giving you an out.

Many California native peoples used Douglas iris for cordage. The fine threads on the outer edges of the leaves could be made into rope, nets and snares. Yokio also used the leaves to wrap babies during berry gathering trips to retard perspiration and prevent thirst. Pomo used the roots of ground iris to hasten the birth of a baby.

This genus of flowers is named after the Greek goddess *Iris* who delivered messages to the gods. She travelled on rainbows to get from heaven to the earth and back. The connection is thought to be that members of the genus *Iris* come in a rainbow of colors.

Fernald's iris is endemic to California. It is found below 6000' in the coastal mountains of central California, from Sonoma south to Santa Cruz County.

Fire-scared and Impressive: San Vicente Redwoods Opens New Trails

BY JOANNE IRWIN

On December 3, 2022, the newest trails in the Santa Cruz Mountains opened to the public. San Vicente Redwoods, at 12001 Empire Grade, offers 7.3 miles of newly constructed trails with ocean views and a fascinating opportunity to see the landscape recover from the 2020 CZU wildfire and a century of commercial logging and quarry mining. Stretching from the ridgeline to within a mile of the Pacific Ocean, the old-growth forests and eight creeks of San Vicente Redwoods are home to endangered coho salmon, threatened California red-legged frog, endangered marbled murrelet, and rare plants such as the Point Reyes horkelia and Santa Cruz manzanita.

Though 98% of the property burned in the CZU Complex fire, Chris Christensen, who works with the Peninsula Open Space Trust Land Stewardship Team reports “I’ve been all over the property: sometimes I find myself in an area that’s breathtakingly beautiful even after the fire. I consider myself very lucky for the experience.”

Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship constructed the new trails and described them as “winding single track with some narrow, technical, and natural sections, with a 200 feet elevation change total. The trails weave through Douglas firs, madrones, and various oaks (Shreve, Live, Tan). The trails highlight the rolling terrain, showcase natural granite from Ben Lomond Mountain, and offer ocean views in select locations. The trails are dual purpose: they provide recreation and serve as shaded fuel brakes to ease wildfire response throughout the area.”

The trails are named in the language of the Awaswas speaking people who lived at San Vicente Redwoods for centuries. If you hike northwest of the parking area, you’ll follow the Hu’mīs (great horned owl) Trail, a one-mile multi-use trail open to hikers, dogs, equestrians and mountain bikers. Southeast of the parking lot you’ll find two interconnecting trails, the half-mile Mā-rūs (panther) Trail, open to hikers, equestrians and cyclists (no dogs), and the 1.5-mile Hai-mīn’ (lizard) Trail, open to hikers and cyclists (no horses or dogs). Both trails lead to a vista point at 2,600 feet elevation. Mountain bikers and hikers can venture further on the moderately challenging 2.5-mile Rūm-me’ (canyon) Trail, while equestrians and hikers are welcome on the two-mile Yu-kīs (live oak) Trail.

All visitors must register ahead of time and carry a trail pass each time they come. Passes are free and are available here: <https://landtrustsantacruz.org/protected-areas/san-vicente-redwoods>. From April to September, trails are open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., October through March, hours change to 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Access is first come, first served, and parking is limited to 72 spaces. Be sure to pack water, there is no potable water on site.



Over 30 more miles of trails are planned in San Vicente Redwoods, connecting to other trails in the area including those being established this year at the adjacent Cotani Coast Dairies Unit of the California Coastal National Monument.

For over a century, much of the land was owned and mined by cement companies. In 2011 four local land trusts, Sempervirens Fund, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and Save the Redwoods League, joined together to purchase the 8,500-acre forest, the largest single parcel in the Santa Cruz Mountains. According to local historian Chris Christensen, 8 years later, in 2019, POST purchased the adjacent Filice Ranch. This parcel sits at the headwaters of Scott Creek, and includes redwoods, grassland, and oak woodlands. Formerly known as the Warenella Ranch, it had a colorful past. Cecil B. DeMille filmed scenes from *A Romance of the Redwoods* (1917) on the property, and movie star Mary Pickford stayed there during the film shoot. The acquisition of Filice Ranch brought the total size of San Vicente Redwoods to about 8,800 acres.

TRAIL NAME	USER GROUP	DISTANCE	DIFFICULTY
hu-mis	Great Horned Owl Trail	1 Mile	Easy
ma-rus	Panther Trail	0.5 Miles	Easy
hai-min	Lizard Trail	1.5 Miles	Easy
rum-me	Canyon Trail	2.5 Miles	Intermediate
yu-kis	Live Oak Trail	2 Miles	Easy

San Vicente Redwoods is private property. The trail network is funded by Land Trust of Santa Cruz. All visitors 18 and older must register and carry a pass. Minors not accompanied by an adult must also register. Passes may be revoked at any time. To register for your free lifetime pass or make a donation to support the trails, please visit www.landtrustsantacruz.org/svr

- Visitors must stay on trails. No off-trail use is allowed.
- Dogs must be on a leash at all times and remain on the designated dog trails only.
- Cyclists must ride in a safe manner on designated-use trails and yield to pedestrians and horses.
- All plants, animals, and fungi are protected—no collecting please.
- No motor vehicles or e-bikes allowed on trails.
- No camping, hunting, or firearms allowed.
- No open flames or smoking.
- No drones allowed.
- Picnic only in designated areas. Keep the forest crumb clean!

Los Gatos and Saratoga High News

BY TANYA DE LA CRUZ

Los Gatos and Saratoga High School students and staff continue to shine in the community, region, and beyond as they excel both inside and outside the classroom. Spring brings so many celebrations and opportunities for remarkable stories and incredible accomplishments.

■ Students from both Los Gatos and Saratoga High Schools were selected to be a part of the Santa Clara County Honor Band, the All-State Honor Choir, and the All-National Honor Choir after a rigorous audition process. With over 200 total auditionees, 23 students from the Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District were accepted into the Honor Band. Out of approximately 900 students, 14 LGSUHS students were selected out of top students that participated in each of California's regional honor choirs. In addition, two Los Gatos High School students auditioned and were selected to be a part of the All-National Honors Choir.

■ Saratoga High School junior Rohan Chopra's film *Journey to Mars* was selected as the winner of the **CineSpace International Short Film Competition** in the new category, "Education Film that Inspires the Next Generation to Join the STEM Workforce." NASA and the **Houston Cinema Arts Society** announced winners of this competition during the Houston Cinema Arts Festival on November 13, 2022.

With 169 films submitted from 38 participating countries, Rohan began working on his film in the late spring and submitted it for nomination in July 2022. Rohan reveals that the entire process required skills he learned and refined in his Media Arts Program (MAP) class at Saratoga High School.



■ Annameekee Hesik, an English Teacher and Basketball Coach at Los Gatos High School, has been selected as the Positive Cultural Identity award recipient for the 2023 YMCA Project Cornerstone's Asset Champion Awards.

A champion for youth, Annameekee aims to make her classroom a welcoming and safe environment for all learners. When Annameekee was looking for books to bring into her classroom library, she looked for books that would be representative of her LGBTQ students and show students how to appreciate and be proud of their cultural and personal identities. When she couldn't find the specific books she wanted, she wrote them herself by creating "The You Know Who Girls" series, which has a diverse cast and focuses on one high schooler's journey of coming out and finding her joy along the way.

■ Saratoga High School (SHS) students have been awarded first place in the Stanford-hosted SLAC Regional Science Bowl Championship on February 11, 2023. After nearly a decade of placing 2nd or 3rd annually, SHS's Team 1 will advance to the national tournament in Washington DC at the end of April.

■ Read about our talented and sought-after after-school sports program at www.lgsuhd.org > What's New. You can sign up to receive up-to-the-minute district news to your email by scanning the QR code and entering your email address.



Community

FREE FIRE FITTING FOR THOSE IN THE SOUTH SKYLINE FIRE & RESCUE PRIMARY RESPONSE AREA.

This 2 ½ inch fitting will allow the connection of a fire hose to your water supply and can be utilized by the fire department to access the water necessary for fire suppression. Blue reflectors are also available. Please visit <http://southskylinefire.org/> for more information in the "Help us help you" section.

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Referral Wanted

We have an older model Hydratherm propane boiler in-floor heating system. It is not clear if the company still exists. Does anyone know of a good outfit or person who could do some preventative maintenance & repair on this type of device? Contact Guy at guyrjalonde@gmail.com

These ads can also be used to list items for sale or items for free

When placing an ad: Please limit each ad to 45 words. Due to many requests, we will attempt to keep a list of ads that will run every issue. However, there is no guarantee that an ad won't be missed because of our changes in staff. If you want to be on the list, make a request to "run until canceled." It is best to resubmit ads for each issue. **Next deadline: June 25, 2023.**

Classified Ads are free for SSA members. Membership is \$20 per year. The online SSA membership application is at www.southskyline.org. Email ads to: skylineseditor@yahoo.com

SSA Calendar 2023
Monthly SSA
Board Meetings
7:00pm

May 11
June 8
July 13

For further updates
 contact Evan Dellor:
president@southskyline.org

Current SSA Board Members

Dave Anderson	Highway 9 – Santa Cruz County	Webmaster, Public Safety
Patti Begley	Highway 9 – Santa Cruz County	Skylines Editor, Website Committee
Barbara Bekins	Highway 35 – Rocky Creek	Treasurer, Public Safety/Water, Website Committee
Debra Born	Alpine Road	Secretary, Membership Chair, SSFC, Website Committee
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Julie Snyder	Skylonda	
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Ann Waldhauer	Portola Heights	

Board positions are available.

Contact Evan Dellor – president@southskyline.org

Skylines Ads and News Articles

The deadline for submitting ads and articles for the next issue is **June 25, 2023**

Skylines is published once a quarter: January/April/July/October

Skylines invites individuals to submit articles and artwork.

Policy on Classified Ads: Limit ads to 45 words. Free for SSA members.

Send all ads and articles to: SkylinesEditor@yahoo.com

We reserve the right to edit all submissions. We assume no responsibility for omissions, incorrect information or personal opinions.

FREE ADDRESS SIGN FOR SOUTH SKYLINE ASSOCIATION IN-BOUNDARY MEMBERS

To order your free 911 Address Sign, select your preferred design and mounting options below. Mail to: SSA Membership, 400 Skyline Blvd., La Honda, CA 94020

Sign size will be determined by # of numbers/letters in your address:

6" x 18" - 3 numbers only

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Mount these signs in plain sight from the road, on a mailbox, post or fence. All signs will have 4" high reflective letters, green background, are 80 mil aluminum, and will be double-sided. If a street name is selected, the letters will be sized to fit.

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Your Address: _____

The Street Name (if a street name sign is selected): _____

1 Select Design



Vertical
Numbers Only



Horizontal
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Vertical
with Arrow



Horizontal
street + Arrow



Horizontal
with Street name

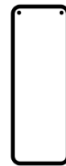


Horizontal
with Arrow

3 Mounting Options



2 side
holes



2 top
holes



No
hole

2 Select Arrow Direction

