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SERVING THE COMMUNITY OF CHINO HILLS • JULY 2007

Residents in Chino Hills treasure the rural atmosphere that has been preserved in the open space that rises above our developed areas. Our city is graced with over 3,000 acres of City-owned open space and nearly 7,000 acres of natural open space in the Chino Hills portion of Chino Hills State Park. Open land surrounding the State Park encompasses 8,000 acres, and the Tres Hermanos property along Grand Avenue includes 1,480 acres of open space. Combined, our 46-square-mile city has approximately 20,000 acres of wild land areas!

Living next to open space presents opportunities and challenges that are not faced by more urbanized areas. While Chino Hills residents enjoy watching red tail hawks soar in the sky and may catch a glimpse of a coyote or deer, we also must learn to act responsibly as neighbors to our wildlife.

The Inland Valley Humane Society provides animal care and control services for Chino Hills and has many resources for residents. Their wildlife officer can provide residents with information and a variety of brochures with helpful information regarding the responsibilities of co-existing peacefully with nature.

This year's drought has reduced the availability of food sources for the wildlife in our open space. Thus, these animals may occasionally wander into our neighborhoods seeking food and water. Residents may face an increase in wild rabbits and squirrels grazing on the lush landscaping in their neighborhoods. In seeking out their prey, coyotes and bobcats may become a more common sight in residential areas. Moreover, a cat or small dog can easily fall victim to coyotes in their quest for food.

However, residents can take action to protect their property, animals, and family from these "wild" interactions. The Humane Society recommends a solid, six-foot high fence between you and the open space areas. Commercial fence extensions are available that include barriers against wildlife. One product, known as a "coyote roller", is like a rolling pin that does not allow the animal to grab onto the fence to climb over. A heavy gauge screen can also be installed on wrought iron to prevent animals from climbing through. Coyotes, skunks,

Message from the

Mayor

by Mayor Gwenn Norton-Perry



and possums can easily dig under fences, and it is recommended that a strong gauge wire mesh or green netting be buried 18 inches underground with an L shape facing away from the property to prevent burrowing by persistent wildlife. Several other important safety tips:

Never feed a coyote: Feed pets indoors or promptly remove outdoor dishes when pets finish their meals. Pet food should be stored indoors. Do not leave water out for the wildlife.

Clear areas near homes: Removing brush and dense weeds from around dwellings reduces hiding places for coyotes and makes the area less attractive to rodents, which are a primary source of food.

Protect children: Supervise small children at all times, even in your yard. A coyote attack on a person is very rare. In fact, more people are attacked by dogs than coyotes. Even so, do not leave your child unattended in areas known to be frequented by coyotes or other large wildlife.

Protect pets: It is best to keep small pets, such as cats, rabbits, and small dogs, indoors - they are easy targets and favored prey. Additionally, large dogs should be brought indoors after dark. Cat gazebos or dog pens should be built with strong gauge fencing, a solid floor such as cement, and a top. Added safety precautions should be taken when building rabbit hutches or chicken coops.

Use negative reinforcement: Let

coyotes know they are not welcome. Make loud noises, throw rocks, jump around, and spray them with garden hoses. If you or your neighbors see coyotes - make them uncomfortable. Carry a stick with you when taking walks and wave it if you see a coyote. It is essential that coyotes retain their natural wariness of humans.

In closing, we are fortunate to live where we can experience the beauty of nature. Local wildlife provides benefits to the community. Without coyotes, the rodent population would explode! Each animal plays a necessary role in the food chain. Nature's balancing act is fairly consistent, which is why we encourage residents to be good neighbors to wildlife. The coyotes, hawks, owls, and others were here long before we moved here. It is imperative that we adapt our lifestyles so that we do not create unnecessary conflict in the areas where development meets nature.

Finally, if a wild animal behaves aggressively, appears sick, or exhibits unusual behavior such as running in circles or twitching, the Humane Society should be called immediately. Their telephone number is (909) 623-9777. As always, the City Council is interested in your questions, concerns, and ideas. The City Council telephone number is (909) 364-2620, or my home number is (909) 606-0460. Questions or comments may also be e-mailed to citycouncil@chinohills.org or to my specific address, gnorton-perry@chinohills.org.