



Los Angeles County  
Department of Regional Planning



June 16, 2015

Richard J. Bruckner  
Director

Kriss Keogh  
23535 CHATFIELD WAY  
VALENCIA CA 91354

**REGARDING: PROJECT NO. 92074-(5)  
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. 201400017  
TESORO DEL VALLE DRIVE AND AVENIDA RANCHO TESORO (APN's  
2810-119-014, 3244-177-034, 3244-159-069 AND 3244-159-062)**

Hearing Officer Bruce Durbin, by his action of **June 16, 2015**, has **APPROVED** the above-referenced project. Enclosed are the Hearing Officer's Findings and Conditions of Approval. Please carefully review each condition. This approval is not effective until the appeal period has ended and the required documents and applicable fees are submitted to the Regional Planning Department (see enclosed Affidavit of Acceptance Instructions).

The applicant or any other interested persons may appeal the Hearing Officer's decision. The appeal period for this project will end at 5:00 p.m. on **June 30, 2015. Appeals must be delivered in person.**

**Appeals: To file an appeal, please contact:**  
Regional Planning Commission, Attn: Commission Secretary  
Room 1350, Hall of Records  
320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 974-6409

Upon completion of the appeal period, the notarized Affidavit of Acceptance and any applicable fees must be submitted to the planner assigned to your case. In addition, any applicable CEQA fees for the Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be paid, and a Notice of Determination, if applicable, must be filed with the County Clerk according to the instructions with the enclosed Affidavit of Acceptance. Please make an appointment to ensure that processing will be completed in a timely manner. Failure to submit these documents and applicable fees within 60 days will result in a referral to Zoning Enforcement for further action.

For questions or for additional information, please contact Steven Jones of the Land Divisions Section at (213) 974-6433, or by email at [sdjones@planning.lacounty.gov](mailto:sdjones@planning.lacounty.gov). Our office hours are Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are closed on Fridays.

Sincerely,  
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING  
Richard J. Bruckner

Nooshin Paidar, Supervising Regional Planner  
Land Divisions Section

CC.060412

Enclosures: Findings, Conditions of Approval, Affidavit of Acceptance (Permittee's Completion)

c: DPW (Building and Safety); Zoning Enforcement; Tesoro Del Valle Master

NP:sdj

**FINDINGS OF THE HEARING OFFICER  
AND ORDER  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
PROJECT NO. 92074 - (5)  
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. 201400017**

1. The Los Angeles County ("County") Hearing Officer conducted a duly-noticed public hearing on May 5, 2015, in the matter of Project No. **92074 – (5)**, consisting of Oak Tree Permit No. T201400017 ("OTP"). (The Oak Tree Permit is referred to as the "Project Permit.") A Revised Exhibit "A" to Conditional Use Permit 92074, which authorized development of the 1,795 acres project site, is concurrently being reviewed in order to install the Tesoro pond maintenance building and monuments to be used as community identification sign.
2. The permittee, Tesoro Del Valle Master Homeowner's Association ("permittee"), requests the Project Permit to authorize encroachments into the protected zones seven (7) oak trees ("Project") on property located within the Tesoro Del Valle community in the unincorporated community of Castaic Val Verde ("Project Site").
3. The Project is located at property located at Tesoro Del Valle Drive and Avenida Rancho Tesoro, Assessor Parcel Numbers 2810-119-014, 3244-177-034, 3244-159-069, and 3244-159-062, in the unincorporated community of Castaic.
4. The Project Permit is a request to authorize the project in zones RPD-5,000-27U (Residential Planned Development – 5,000 square feet minimum lot area – 27 dwelling units per acre), RPD-12,000-3.7U (Residential Planned Development – 12,000 square feet minimum lot area – 3.7 dwelling units per acre) and R-3 (Limited multiple residence) on the project site pursuant to Los Angeles County Code ("County Code") section 22.56.2060.
5. The Project Site is 11.21 gross acres in size and consists of four legal lots. The Project Site is comprised of separate parcels irregular in shape with flat and relatively level to gently sloping topography. The properties with parcel numbers 034, 069 and 062 are developed with landscaping, including ornamental vegetation, hardscape and community identification signs. Parcel 014 is developed with an apartment building, covered and uncovered parking, landscaping, and a community identification sign.
6. The Project Site is located in the Newhall Zoned District and is currently zoned RPD-5,000-27U, RPD-12,000-3.7U and R-3.
7. The Project Site is located within the H30 (UR5 – Urban Residential), H5 (UR2 – Urban Residential) and H18 (UR4 – Urban Residential) land use categories of the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan (OVOV) Land Use Policy Map.
8. Surrounding Zoning within a 500-foot radius includes:

North: RPD-20,000-2.8U (Residential Planned Development, 20,000 square foot Minimum Required Lot Area, 2.8 dwelling units per acre), RPD-12,000-3.7U (Residential Planned Development Zone, 12,000 square foot Minimum Required Lot Area, 3.7 dwelling units per acre) and R-3(Limited Multiple Residence Zone)  
South: C-2-DP (Neighborhood Business Development Program Zone)  
East: O-S (Open Space)  
West: O-S (Open Space), RPD-5,000-27U (Residential Planned Development Zone, 5,000 square foot Minimum Required Lot Area, 27 dwelling units per acre), RPD-20,000-2.8U (Residential Planned Development, 20,000 square foot Minimum Required Lot Area, 2.8 dwelling units per acre)

9. Surrounding land uses within a 500-foot radius include:

North: Single family residences  
South: Commercial uses  
East: Undeveloped  
West: Multi-family residences

10. Ordinance No. 99-0034Z was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on May 18, 1999 and changed the zoning to the current RPD-20,000-2.8U, RPD-12,000-3.7U and O-S zones in association with the changing regulations for the execution of the General Plan, relating to Castaic Canyon District No. 100 and Newhall Zoned District No. 118
11. The site plan for the Project depicts the Project site with a new 1,250 square foot structure measuring approximately 40 feet by 37 feet, in southern California mission style. The structure is divided into two main areas: (1) a pond maintenance area measuring 494.83 square feet and (2) an attached porch, breezeway area measuring approximately 765 square feet in size with a bell tower. Also included are three separate monument community identification signs proposed to be 16 feet in height.
12. The Project Site is accessible via Copper Hill to the south. Access to the Project Site will be via an entrance/exit on Avenida Rancho Tesoro Drive. A second access to the Project Site will be via an entrance/exit on Tesoro Del Valle Drive.
13. On November 4, 2014, prior to the Hearing Officer's public hearing on the Project, the permittee submitted to staff an updated status on the health of the tree in a supplemental oak tree report page. The burden of proof statement was also updated to reflect the health of the affected trees.
14. The County Fire Department ("Fire Department") does not object to approval of the Project because the Project will be required to meet standards at the building permit process for all proposed structures.
15. Prior to the Hearing Officer's public hearing on the Project, Regional Planning staff determined that the Project qualified for a Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, categorical exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (Public

Resources Code section 21000, et. seq.) ("CEQA"), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures for the County, because the Project involves a minor private property alteration in the condition of land and vegetation which does not involve removal of healthy, mature scenic trees and consists of new gardening or landscaping including the replacement of existing conventional landscaping with water efficient or fire resistant and drought tolerant landscaping. The watering schedule for the oaks is being reviewed for fewer watering times to improve the health of the trees. All necessary public services and facilities are available and the surrounding area is not environmentally sensitive.

16. Pursuant to the provisions of sections 22.60.174 and 22.60.175 of the Zoning Code, the community was appropriately notified of the Project's public hearings by mail, newspaper, and property posting.
17. Staff received five letters of opposition regarding the project. Written testimony supported preserving the oaks and suggested redesign of the project.
18. At the public hearing held on May 5, 2015 before the Hearing Officer, the applicant's representative, John Evans, presented testimony in favor of the request and answered questions presented by the Hearing Officer. After a brief discussion that included the assertion that the burden of proof had not been met to justify removal, the Hearing Officer asked if the applicant was willing to redesign the project. After taking all testimony, the Hearing Officer continued the public hearing to June 16, 2015.
19. At the June 16, 2015 public hearing, staff gave a brief presentation to the Hearing Officer recommending approval of the project. The applicant Mr. John Evans gave testimony in favor of the project and availed himself to questions from the Hearing Officer. After a brief discussion regarding purpose of the Oak Tree Permit Ordinance, the Hearing Officer closed the public hearing and adopted the recommended changes by staff and agreed to by the applicant.
20. The Hearing Officer finds that the improvements to the community identification is compatible with the natural and manmade environment because the location for community identification is appropriate and of high quality design standard.
21. The Hearing Officer finds that the enhanced community identification is appropriately located in areas that are not environmentally sensitive or subject to severe natural hazards and in areas where essential services and facilities exist.
22. The Hearing Officer finds that the Project builds on the community's history and natural setting by promoting the beautification of streetscapes and gateways to the community.
23. The Hearing Officer finds that the improvements are compatible with the natural and manmade environment because the oak trees are preserved in place and the watering needs accommodated.

24. The Hearing Officer finds that freestanding community identification signs are permitted in the zone at or near the entrance to an unincorporated community pursuant to section 22.52.970 of the County of Los Angeles Zoning Code.
25. The Hearing Officer finds that pursuant to County Code section 22.52.970, the area of the community identification signs shall not exceed 192 square feet in total sign area, 16 feet in height and are architecturally related to the area in which they are located.
26. The Hearing Officer finds that pursuant to County Code Section 22.56.2140, a copy of the applicant's oak tree report as required by Section 22.56.2090 was sent to the County Forester to review the accuracy of the statements contained therein, and to inspect the project site. The County Forester concurred with the oak tree report submitted by the applicant, which was completed by a certified arborist, and supports the approval of the Oak Tree Permit, subject to conditions. Therefore, the proposed construction of the proposed improvements and the proposed encroachments into the protected zones of the subject seven oak trees will not result in soil erosion through the diversion or increased flow of surface waters which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.
27. The Hearing Officer finds that pursuant to County Code Section 22.56.2130, the community was properly notified of the public hearing by newspaper and mailings to the Newhall Zoned District and the oak tree courtesy lists. Additionally, the Project was noticed and case materials were available on Regional Planning's website and at libraries located in the vicinity of Santa Clarita Valley community. On March 30, 2015, a total of 486 Notices of Public Hearing were mailed to all listees as identified on the Newhall Zoned District and oak tree courtesy lists.
28. The location of the documents and other materials constituting the record of proceedings upon which the Hearing Officer's decision is based in this matter is at the Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, 13th Floor, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. The custodian of such documents and materials shall be the Section Head of the Land Divisions Section, Department of Regional Planning.

**BASED ON THE FOREGOING, THE HEARING OFFICER CONCLUDES:**

- A. That the proposed use with the attached conditions will be consistent with the adopted General Plan and the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan.
- B. That the proposed construction or proposed use will be accomplished without endangering the health of the trees subject to Part 16 of Chapter 22.56, on the subject property.
- C. That the encroachment into the protected zones of the oak trees proposed will not result in soil erosion through the diversion or increased flow of surface waters which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated.

- D. That the encroachment into the protected zones of the oak trees proposed is necessary to the extent that the cost of alternate development plans would be prohibitive.
- E. That the encroachment into the protected zones of the oak trees proposed will not be contrary to or be in substantial conflict with the intent and purpose of the oak tree permit procedure.

**THEREFORE, THE HEARING OFFICER:**

1. Finds that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to section 15304 of the State CEQA Guidelines (Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land categorical exemption); and
2. Approves Oak Tree Permit 201400017, subject to the attached conditions.

**ACTION DATE: June 16, 2015**

NP:sdj  
06/04/2015

c: Building and Safety

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
PROJECT NO. 92074-(5)  
OAK TREE PERMIT NO. 201400017**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The project is a request for an Oak Tree Permit to authorize encroachments into the protected zones of seven oak trees for the construction of monuments to be used as community identification signs, construction of a pond maintenance building for the existing water feature and colored concrete along Avenida Rancho Tesoro and Tesoro Del Valle within Tesoro del Valle Homeowner's Association area, subject to the following conditions of approval:

**GENERAL CONDITIONS**

1. Unless otherwise apparent from the context, the term "permittee" shall include the applicant, owner of the property, and any other person, corporation, or other entity making use of this grant.
2. This grant shall not be effective for any purpose until the permittee, and the owner of the subject property if other than the permittee, have filed at the office of the Los Angeles County ("County") Department of Regional Planning ("Regional Planning") their affidavit stating that they are aware of and agree to accept all of the conditions of this grant. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this Condition No. 2 and Condition Nos. 4, 5, and 8 shall be effective immediately upon the date of final approval of this grant by the County.
3. Unless otherwise apparent from the context, the term "date of final approval" shall mean the date the County's action becomes effective pursuant to Section 22.60.260 of the County Code.
4. The permittee shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the County, its agents, officers, and employees from any claim, action, or proceeding against the County or its agents, officers, or employees to attack, set aside, void, or annul this permit approval, which action is brought within the applicable time period of Government Code Section 65009 or any other applicable limitations period. The County shall promptly notify the permittee of any claim, action, or proceeding and the County shall reasonably cooperate in the defense. If the County fails to promptly notify the permittee of any claim, action, or proceeding, or if the County fails to cooperate reasonably in the defense, the permittee shall not thereafter be responsible to defend, indemnify, or hold harmless the County.
5. In the event that any claim, action, or proceeding as described above is filed against the County, the permittee shall within ten days of the filing make an initial deposit with Regional Planning in the amount of up to \$5,000.00, from which actual costs and expenses shall be billed and deducted for the purpose of defraying the costs or expenses involved in Regional Planning's cooperation in the defense,

including but not limited to, depositions, testimony, and other assistance provided to permittee or permittee's counsel.

If during the litigation process, actual costs or expenses incurred reach 80 percent of the amount on deposit, the permittee shall deposit additional funds sufficient to bring the balance up to the amount of \$5,000.00. There is no limit to the number of supplemental deposits that may be required prior to completion of the litigation.

At the sole discretion of the permittee, the amount of an initial or any supplemental deposit may exceed the minimum amounts defined herein. Additionally, the cost for collection and duplication of records and other related documents shall be paid by the permittee according to County Code Section 2.170.010.

6. If any material provision of this grant is held or declared to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the permit shall be void and the privileges granted hereunder shall lapse.
7. Upon any transfer or lease of the property during the term of this grant, the permittee, or the owner of the subject property if other than the permittee, shall promptly provide a copy of the grant and its conditions to the transferee or lessee of the subject property.
8. This grant shall expire unless used within two (2) years from the date of final approval of the grant. A single one-year time extension may be requested in writing and with the payment of the applicable fee prior to such expiration date.
9. The subject property shall be maintained and operated in full compliance with the conditions of this grant and any law, statute, ordinance, or other regulation applicable to any development or activity on the subject property. Failure of the permittee to cease any development or activity not in full compliance shall be a violation of these conditions.
10. If inspections are required to ensure compliance with the conditions of this grant, or if any inspection discloses that the subject property is being used in violation of any one of the conditions of this grant, the permittee shall be financially responsible and shall reimburse Regional Planning for all additional enforcement efforts necessary to bring the subject property into compliance. The amount charged for additional inspections shall be \$200.00 per inspection, or the current recovery cost at the time any additional inspections are required, whichever is greater.
11. Notice is hereby given that any person violating a provision of this grant is guilty of a misdemeanor. Notice is further given that the Regional Planning Commission ("Commission") or a Hearing Officer may, after conducting a public hearing, revoke or modify this grant, if the Commission or Hearing Officer finds that these conditions have been violated or that this grant has been exercised so as to be detrimental to the public's health or safety or so as to be a nuisance, or as otherwise authorized pursuant to Chapter 22.56, Part 13 of the County Code.

12. All development pursuant to this grant must be kept in full compliance with the County Fire Code to the satisfaction of said department.
13. All development pursuant to this grant shall conform with the requirements of the County Department of Public Works to the satisfaction of said department.
14. All development pursuant to this grant shall comply with the requirements of Title 22 of the County Code and of the specific zoning of the subject property, unless specifically modified by this grant, as set forth in these conditions, including the approved Exhibit "A," or a revised Exhibit "A" approved by the Director of Regional Planning ("Director").
15. The permittee shall maintain the subject property in a neat and orderly fashion. The permittee shall maintain free of litter all areas of the premises over which the permittee has control.
16. All structures, walls and fences open to public view shall remain free of graffiti or other extraneous markings, drawings, or signage that was not approved by Regional Planning. These shall include any of the above that do not directly relate to the business being operated on the premises or that do not provide pertinent information about said premises. The only exceptions shall be seasonal decorations or signage provided under the auspices of a civic or non-profit organization.

In the event of graffiti or other extraneous markings occurring, the permittee shall remove or cover said markings, drawings, or signage within 24 hours of such occurrence, weather permitting. Paint utilized in covering such markings shall be of a color that matches, as closely as possible, the color of the adjacent surfaces.

**PERMIT SPECIFIC CONDITIONS – OAK TREE PERMIT**

17. This permit shall not be effective until a revised exhibit 'A' is approved for the community identification signs and pond maintenance building, demonstrating the need for the encroachment into the protected zones of oak trees 2, 4, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17.
18. The permittee shall comply with all conditions and requirements contained in the County of Los Angeles Forester and Fire Warden, Forestry Division, letter dated April 2, 2015 (attached hereto), to the satisfaction of said Division, except as otherwise required by said Division.

Attachments:

Forester and Fire Warden Department Letter dated April 2, 2015  
Oak Trees: Care and Maintenance Guide



Please complete and return to:  
Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street, 13th Floor  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**AFFIDAVIT OF ACCEPTANCE**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

}ss

**REGARDING: PROJECT NO. 92074  
ROAK NO. 201400017  
TESORO DEL VALLE DRIVE AND AVENIDA RANCHO TESORO  
(APN's 2810-119-014, 3244-177-034, 3244-159-069 AND 3244-159-062)**

I/We the undersigned state:

I am/We are the permittee of the above-mentioned permits and/or owner of the real property described above and on Exhibit "A", attached hereto. I am/We are aware of, and accept, all the stated Conditions of Approval for the above-mentioned permit(s).

Executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_

I/We declare under the penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

*Complete both Applicant and Owner sections, even if the same.*

*Signatures must be acknowledged by a Notary Public. Affix seal or appropriate acknowledgements.*

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## AFFIDAVIT OF ACCEPTANCE INSTRUCTIONS

**Please read carefully.** Failure to follow these instructions may result in the delay of your approved site plan and building permits.

After the termination of the appeal period (14 days after the action date), proceed with the following instructions if you have not been notified that an appeal has been received.

1. Sign the "Affidavit of Acceptance" form in the presence of a notary and have the notary attach an acknowledgement. Both the applicant and owner lines must be signed on the form, even if they are the same person.
2. Make an appointment with the assigned case planner to submit the following items:
  - Original "Affidavit of Acceptance" form (with wet signature).
  - Three copies of the site plan. **Plans must be folded** to fit into an 8 ½" X 14" folder.
3. Submit the aforementioned items **in person (do not mail)**. At your final appointment, you will receive a copy of the approved site plan, and approved plans will be routed to the Department of Public Works, Building and Safety, as applicable.

For questions or for additional information, please contact the planner assigned to your case. Our office hours are Monday through Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. We are closed on Fridays.



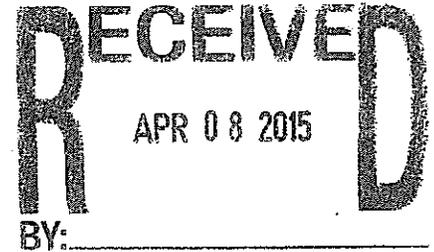
# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

1320 NORTH EASTERN AVENUE  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90063-3294

DARYL L. OSBY  
FIRE CHIEF  
FORESTER & FIRE WARDEN

April 2, 2015



Steven D. Jones, Planning Assistant  
County of Los Angeles  
Department of Regional Planning  
320 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Jones:

**INITIAL STUDY, "TESORO," PROJECT NO. 92074, CASE NO. ROAKT201400017, PROPOSES TO AUTHORIZE THE REMOVAL OF TWO OAK TREES AND THE ENCROACHMENT INTO THE PROTECTED ZONE OF SIX OTHER OAKS TREES IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PROPOSED COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION PROJECT, TESORO DEL VALLE DRIVE AND AVENIDA RANCHO TESORO DRIVE ALONG COPPER HILL DRIVE, VALENCIA (FFER 201500046)**

The Initial Study has been reviewed by the Planning Division, Land Development Unit, Forestry Division, and Health Hazardous Materials Division of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department. The following are their comments:

**PLANNING DIVISION:**

- 1. Section 15, Public Services, Fire Protection, should be corrected to state that there are currently four fire stations and one under development within five miles of the project site.

**LAND DEVELOPMENT UNIT:**

- 1. The development of this project must comply with all applicable code and ordinance requirements for construction, access, water mains, fire flows, and fire hydrants.

SERVING THE UNINCORPORATED AREAS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY AND THE CITIES OF:

AGOURA HILLS	CALABASAS	DIAMOND BAR	HIDDEN HILLS	LA MIRADA	MALIBU	POMONA	SIGNAL HILL
ARTESIA	CARSON	DUARTE	HUNTINGTON PARK	LA PUENTE	MAYWOOD	RANCHO PALOS VERDES	SOUTH EL MONTE
AZUSA	CERRITOS	EL MONTE	INDUSTRY	LAKEWOOD	NORWALK	ROLLING HILLS	SOUTH GATE
BALDWIN PARK	CLAREMONT	GARDENA	INGLEWOOD	LANCASTER	PALMDALE	ROLLING HILLS ESTATES	TEMPLE CITY
BELL	COMMERCE	GLENDORA	IRVINDALE	LAWNDALE	PALOS VERDES ESTATES	ROSEMEAD	WALNUT
BELL GARDENS	COVINA	HAWAIIAN GARDENS	LA CANADA FLINTRIDGE	LOMITA	PARAMOUNT	SAN DIMAS	WEST HOLLYWOOD
BELLFLOWER	CUDAHY	HAWTHORNE	LA HABRA	LYNWOOD	PICO RIVERA	SANTA CLARITA	WESTLAKE VILLAG
BRADBURY							WHITTIER

Steven D. Jones, Planning Assistant  
April 2, 2015  
Page 2

2. Specific fire and life safety requirements for the proposed building will be addressed when architectural plans are submitted to the Fire Department for review and approval prior to building permit issuance.
3. The Fire Prevention Division's Land Development Unit appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Initial Study for this project. Should any questions arise regarding the above comments, please contact Juan Padilla at (323) 890-4243 or at [Juan.Padilla@fire.lacounty.gov](mailto:Juan.Padilla@fire.lacounty.gov).

**FORESTRY DIVISION – OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS:**

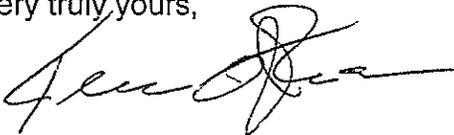
1. The statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Forestry Division include erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification for Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones or Fire Zone 4, archeological and cultural resources, and the County Oak Tree Ordinance.
2. The areas germane to the statutory responsibilities of the County of Los Angeles Fire Department's Forestry Division have been addressed.

**HEALTH HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DIVISION:**

1. The Health Hazardous Materials Division (HHMD) has no objection to the proposed project.

If you have any additional questions, please contact this office at (323) 890-4330.

Very truly yours,



KEVIN T. JOHNSON, ACTING CHIEF, FORESTRY DIVISION  
PREVENTION SERVICES BUREAU

KTJ:ad



## OAK TREES: Care and Maintenance

This Oak Tree Care and Maintenance Guide offers basic information and practical guidelines aimed at the preservation and continued health and survival of oak trees in the residential landscape.

Increasing pressure for development is changing the oak woodland of Los Angeles County. Heritage oaks which once survived in open rolling hills are now being preserved or replanted and incorporated into the community.

How do we protect these trees during the planning and development process, and ensure their survival once they are in the home garden?

### The Oak Tree

Oak Trees in the residential landscape often suffer decline and early death due to conditions that are easily preventable. Damage can often take years to become evident, and by the time the trees show obvious signs of disease it is usually too late to help.

Improper watering, especially during the hot summer months, and disturbance to critical root areas are most often the causes. This booklet will provide guidelines on where these critical areas lie and ways to avoid disturbing them, as well as information on long-term care and maintenance of both natural and planted oaks. Lists of additional resources for more information and demonstration areas to visit are also included.

## The Oak Tree Ordinance

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance has been established to recognize oak trees as significant historical, aesthetic, and ecological resources. The goal of the ordinance is to create favorable conditions for the preservation and propagation of this unique and threatened plant heritage. By making this part of the development process, healthy oak trees will be preserved and maintained.

The Los Angeles County Oak Tree Ordinance applies to all unincorporated areas of the County. Individual cities may have their own ordinances, and their requirements may be different.

### Permit Requirements:

Under the Los Angeles County Ordinance, a person shall not cut, destroy, remove, relocate, inflict damage, or encroach into the *protected zone* (see text) of any ordinance sized tree of the oak tree genus without first obtaining a permit.

Damage includes but is not limited to :

- Burning
- Application of toxic substances
- Pruning or cutting
- Trenching
- Excavating
- Paving
- Operation of machinery or equipment
- Changing the natural grade

Chapter 22.56.2050: Oak Tree Permit Regulations, Los Angeles County, Adopted: August 20, 1982. Amended: September 13, 1988.

For more information about the County Oak Tree Ordinance, visit the Forestry Division's website at:

[http://lacofd.org/Forestry\\_folder/otordin.htm](http://lacofd.org/Forestry_folder/otordin.htm)

Or contact:

Department of Regional Planning  
320 W. Temple Street, 13th floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012-3284  
(213) 974-6411  
TDD: (213) 617-2292  
<http://planning.co.la.ca.us>

## Types of oaks commonly found in Los Angeles County:

Many kinds of oak trees are native to Los Angeles County. A few of the more common ones are shown below, but *all* oak trees are covered by the Oak Tree Ordinance.

Older oaks which have thrived under the natural rainfall patterns of dry summers and wet winters often can't handle the extra water of a garden setting. These trees must be treated with special care if they are to survive.

Those oaks that have been planted into the landscape or sprouted naturally tend to be more tolerant of watered landscapes. These vigorous young trees may grow 1½ to 4 feet a year in height under good conditions. Once established these trees would benefit from the same special care outlined in this guide.



### Valley Oak QUERCUS LOBATA

LARGE DECIDUOUS TREE 60'-75' HIGH, BROADLY SPREADING 50'-80' WIDE.

LEAVES: DEEP GREEN, 5"-4" LONG; PAPER-LIKE TEXTURE WITH DEEP ROUNDED LOBES ON THE LEAF EDGE.

TENDS TO FAVOR VALLEY BOTTOMS; FOR THIS REASON THE VALLEY OAK HAS DISAPPEARED FROM THE LANDSCAPE MORE RAPIDLY, IMPACTED SEVERELY BY AGRICULTURE AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT.



### Coast Live Oak QUERCUS AGRIFOLIA

LARGE EVERGREEN TREE WITH A BROAD, ROUND SHAPE AND LARGE LIMBS. 30'-70' HIGH, 35'-80' WIDE.

LEAVES: GLOSSY GREEN, 1"-3" LONG; SPINY, ROUNDED, AND HOLLY-LIKE; BUT DISTINCTLY CUPPED OR CURLED UNDER AT THE EDGES.



### Interior Live Oak QUERCUS WIGLIZENII

EVERGREEN TREE 30'-75' HIGH OR A SHRUB 8'-10' HIGH IN CHAPARRAL AREAS. HAS A FULL, DENSE ROUNDED SHAPE, NOT BROAD OR WITH LARGE LIMBS LIKE A COAST LIVE OAK. THEY TEND TO GROW IN CLUMPS RATHER THAN AS A SINGLE TREE.

LEAVES: DARK GREEN, 1"-4" LONG. EDGES EITHER SMOOTH OR SPINY, BUT ALWAYS FLAT— NOT CURLED UNDER.

### OTHER COMMON OAKS:

CALIFORNIA BLACK OAK: QUERCUS KELLOGGI  
CANYON LIVE OAK: QUERCUS CHRYSOLEPIS  
ENGLMANN OAK: QUERCUS ENGLMANNII

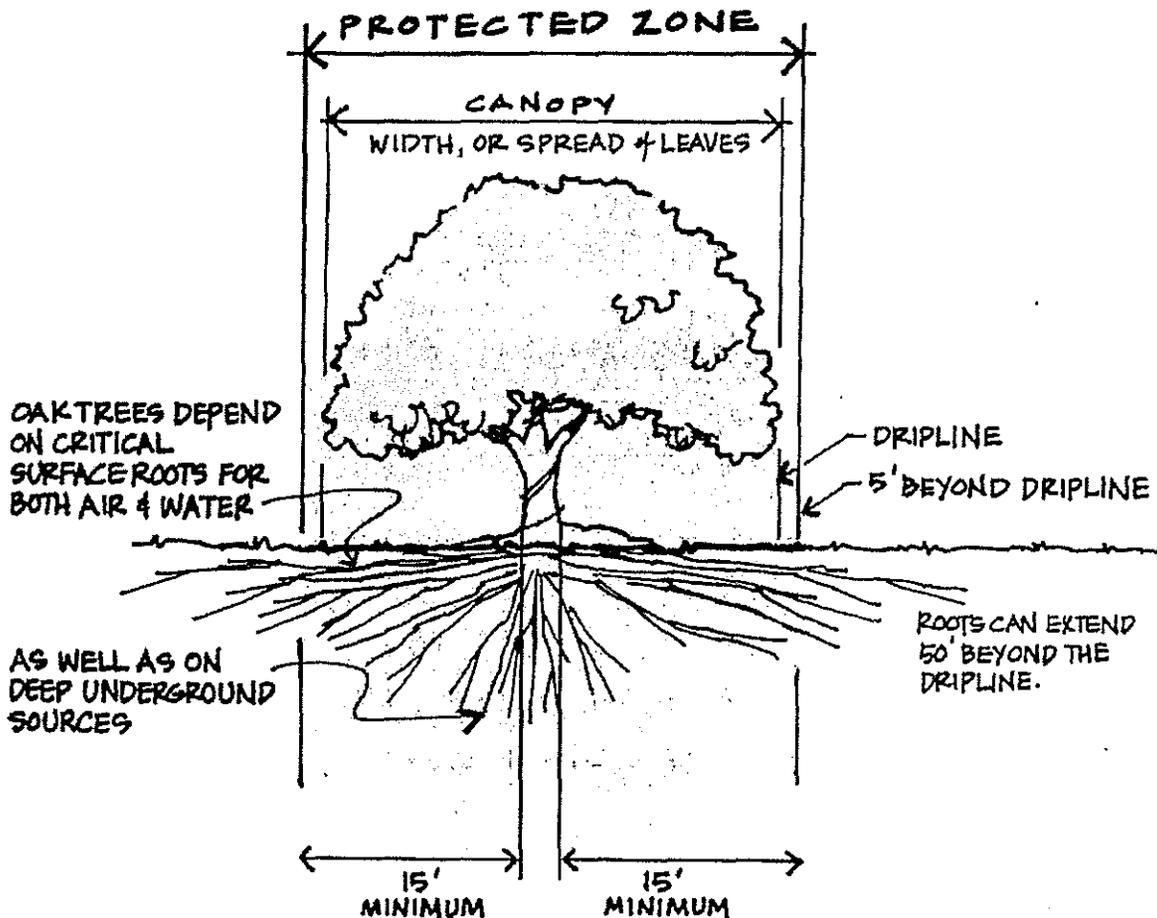
# THE PROTECTED ZONE

The *protected zone* defines the area most critical to the health and continued survival of an oak tree. Oaks are easily damaged and very sensitive to disturbances that occur to the tree or in the surrounding environment.

The root system is extensive but surprisingly shallow, sometimes radiating out as much as 50 feet beyond the spread of the tree leaves, or canopy. The ground area at the outside edge of the canopy, referred to as the *dripline*, is especially important: the tree obtains most of its surface water and nutrients here, and conducts an important exchange of air and other gases.

The protected zone is defined in the Oak Tree Ordinance as follows:

"The Protected Zone shall mean that area within the dripline of an oak tree and extending there from to a point at least 5 feet outside the dripline or 15 feet from the trunk, whichever distance is greater."



# CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY WITHIN THE PROTECTED ZONE

## Changes in Grade

Any change in the level of soil around an oak tree can have a negative impact. The most critical area lies within 6' to 10' of the trunk: no soil should be added or scraped away. Water should drain away from this area and not be allowed to pond so that soil remains wet at the base.

Retaining walls designed to hold back soil above or below an existing tree should be avoided if at all possible, especially within the protected zone. These types of structures cause critical areas at the dripline to be buried, or require that major roots be severed. Water trapped at the base of the tree could lead to root rot or other impacts, and to the decline and premature death of a highly valued landscape tree.

Construction activities outside the protected zone can have damaging impacts on existing trees. Underground water sources can be cut off due to falling water tables, or drainage may be disrupted.

## Trenching

Digging of trenches in the root zone should be avoided. Roots may be cut or severely damaged, and the tree can be killed.

If trenches must be placed within the protected zone, utilities can be placed in a conduit, which has been bored through the soil, reducing damage to the roots. Insist that as many utilities as allowed be placed in a single trench, instead of the common practice of digging a separate trench for each individual line.

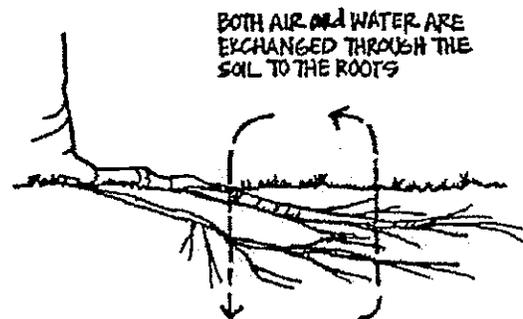
Trenching can also be accomplished using hand tools or small hand held power equipment to avoid cutting roots. Any roots exposed during this work should be covered with wet burlap and kept moist until the soil can be replaced.

## Soil Compaction and Paving

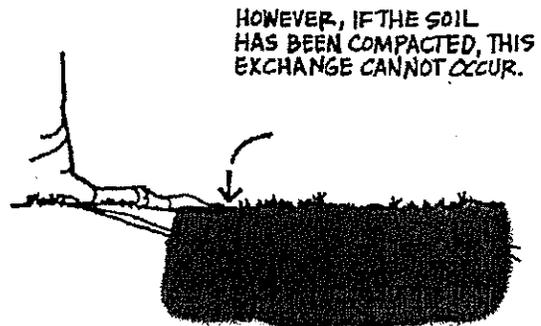
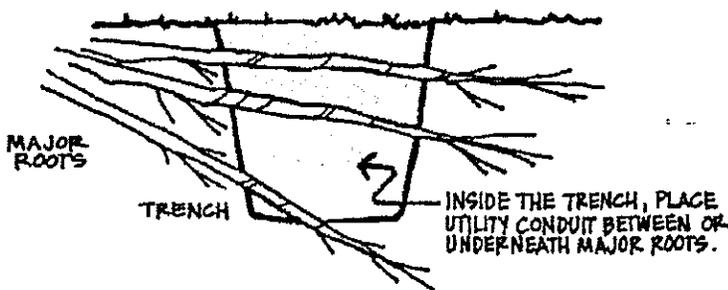
The roots depend upon an important exchange of both water and air through the soil within the protected zone. Any kind of activity that compacts the soil in this area blocks this exchange and can have serious long-term negative effects on the tree.

If paving material must be used, some recommended surfaces include brick paving with sand joints, or ground coverings such as wood chips (note the advantages of natural materials for providing nutrients under *mulching*).

## SOIL COMPACTION



## TRENCHING



# MAINTENANCE

## Watering

The key is prevention – do not over water. Improper watering is often overlooked as the cause of tree death because it can take years for the damage to show. Once the tree shows obvious signs of decline, it is often too late to correct the problem.

The seasonal weather pattern for this region is one of dry summers and winter rain. Oak trees are naturally drought tolerant and adapted to this cycle. If the tree is vigorous and thriving it should not require any additional water.

If the natural source of surface or underground water has been altered, some supplemental water may be necessary, but proceed with caution. The goal of any watering schedule for oak trees should be to supplement natural rainfall and it should occur only when the tree would normally receive moisture. This might be in the winter, if rains are unusually late, or in spring if rainfall has been below normal levels.

Over watering, especially during the summer months, causes a number of problems which can lead to decline and eventual death of the tree. It creates ideal conditions for attacks of Oak Root Fungus by allowing the fungus to breed all year. In addition, both evergreen and deciduous oaks grow vigorously in the spring and naturally go dormant in the summer. Extra water only encourages new tip growth which is subject to mildew. Oaks need this period of rest.

Newly planted oaks may need supplemental watering during their first few summers. After they become established water should be applied according to the previous guidelines.

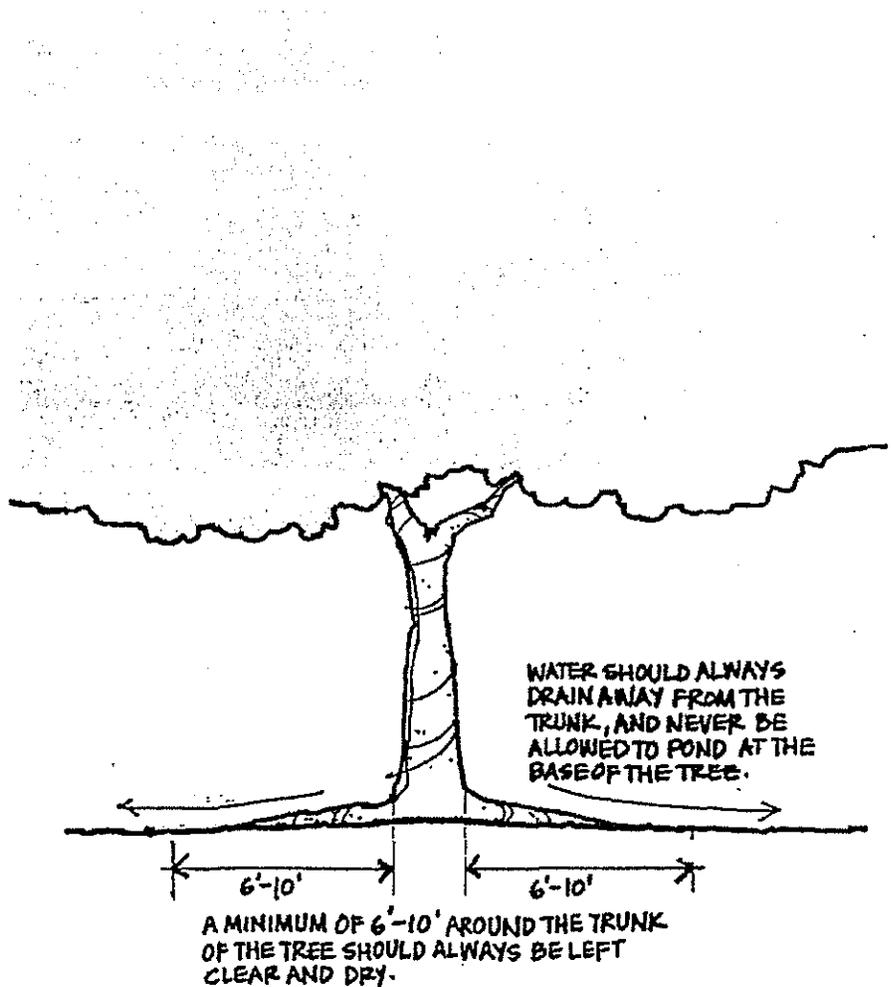
## Pruning

For oak trees the periodic removal of dead wood during periods of tree dormancy should be the only pruning needed. Any cutting of green wood opens scars that could allow the entry of organisms or disease.

Before pruning obtain the advice of a certified arborist or other professional and consult the local city or county where the tree is located to find out what regulations apply. Pruning of both live and dead wood can sometimes require a permit.

## Mulching

Leaf litter from the tree is the best mulch and should be allowed to remain on the ground within the protected zone. Crushed walnut shells or wood chips can be used, but the oak leaves that drop naturally provide the tree with a source of nutrients. Avoid the use of packaged or commercial oak leaf mulch which could contain Oak Root Fungus. Redwood chips should not be used due to certain chemicals present in the wood.



## Disease and Pests

Trees that are stressed, especially because of improper watering practices, are prone to certain diseases and attacks by pests.

The most damaging of these diseases is the Oak Root Fungus *Armillaria mellea*. Occurring naturally in the soil, the fungus thrives under wet conditions and dies back in the summer when soils dry out. This is why summer watering of oaks can be a deadly practice. As noted in the watering guidelines, wet soil in the summer allows the fungus to grow all year. As the population grows, their natural food sources are depleted and they begin feeding on oak tree roots. The fungus does not require an open wound in the tree to gain entry.

Indications of the fungus include:

- die back of branches or tips.
- honey colored fungus at or near the root crown.
- white fan-like fungus between wood and bark.
- the presence of black, shoestring-like growths in the soil.

Once the tree begins to show obvious signs of infection treatment is generally ineffective. The best treatment is to *avoid* the conditions that lead to Oak Root Fungus infections.

Pit Scale, Oak Moth, and other pests: any significant changes in leaf color, branch die back, presence of black sooty materials on leaves or other changes should be noted. Seek the advice of a professional forester, arborist, farm advisor or other expert before the application of any pesticides on an oak tree.

## Planting Underneath Oaks

The natural leaf litter is by far the best ground cover within the protected zone. If plants must be placed, the following guidelines should be followed:

There should be no planting within a minimum 6 to 10 feet of the trunk.

Avoid plants that require any supplemental water once established.

Choose plants suited for "dry shade." Those listed in the box below offer some good choices. To see some examples of how these plants have been used under oaks refer to the Additional Resources section on the following page.

### PLANTS TO CONSIDER:

Plant Name	Description
<i>Arctostaphylos densiflora</i> 'Howard McMinn' Manzanita	3' high, 6' wide. Toughest of available forms. Whitish-pink flowers.
<i>Arctostaphylos edmundsii</i> Little Sur Manzanita	1-2' high, 4-5' wide. Tolerant of full shade.
<i>Arctostaphylos hookeri</i> Monterey Carpet Manzanita	1-2' high, spreading to 12' wide by rooting branches. White to pink flowers.
<i>Ceanothus griseus horizontalis</i> Carmel Creeper	Less than 2 1/2' tall, low & creeping. Clusters of small blue flowers.
<i>Heuchera spp.</i> Coral Bells	2-4' mound. Flowers on an upright stem 2-3" high and spotted with red or pink.
<i>Mahonia aquifolium compacta</i> Oregon Grape	2-4' high, spreading by underground roots. Bright yellow flower clusters.
<i>Ribes viburnifolium</i> Evergreen or Catalina Currant	2-3' high, spreading to 12' wide. Flowers pink to red in small clusters.

### NOTES:

Before deciding on plants, check a source such as the Sunset Western Garden Book to determine which plants will grow in your area.

When choosing shade tolerant plants, consider that the ground under the south side of the tree will get more sunlight while the northern side will tend to remain more deeply shaded.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES and Places to Visit

## Public Agencies

County of Los Angeles Fire Department  
Prevention Bureau, Forestry Division  
5823 Rickenbacker Road, Rm #123  
Commerce, CA 90040-3027  
(323) 890-4330  
<http://lacofd.org/forestry.htm>

University of California  
Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program  
163 Mulford Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720-3114  
<http://danr.ucop.edu/ihrmp>

## Private Organizations

The Theodore Payne Foundation  
10459 Tuxford Street  
Sun Valley, CA 91352-2126  
(818) 768-1802  
[www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org)

California Native Plant Society  
1722 J Street, Suite 17  
Sacramento, CA 95814-3033  
(916) 447-2677  
[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

The California Oak Foundation  
1212 Broadway, Suite 810  
Oakland, CA 94612-1810  
(510) 763-0282  
[www.californiaoaks.org](http://www.californiaoaks.org)

## Arboretums and Botanic Gardens

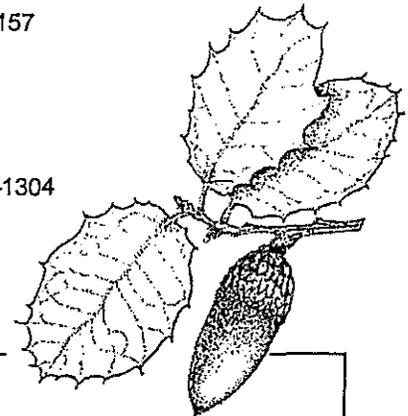
Los Angeles County Arboreta and Botanic Gardens  
301 N. Baldwin Ave.  
Arcadia, CA 91007-2697  
(626) 821-3222  
[www.arboretum.org](http://www.arboretum.org)

Los Angeles County South Coast Botanic Garden  
26300 Crenshaw Blvd.  
Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA.90274-2515  
(310) 544-6815  
[www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org](http://www.southcoastbotanicgarden.org)

Los Angeles County Descanso Gardens  
1418 Descanso Drive  
La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91011-3102  
(818) 949-4200  
[www.descansogardens.org](http://www.descansogardens.org)

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden  
1500 North College  
Claremont, CA 91711-3157  
(909) 625-8767  
[www.rsabq.org](http://www.rsabq.org)

The Lummis Home  
200 E. Avenue 43  
Los Angeles, CA 90031-1304  
(213) 222-0546



## Publications

*Compatible Plants Under and Around Oaks.* Bruce W. Hagen... [et al]. The California Oak Foundation. 2000.

*Growing California Native Plants.* Marjorie G. Schmidt, Univ. California Press. 1981.

*Illustrated Guide to the Oaks of the Southern Californian Floristic Province.* Fred M. Roberts. FM Roberts Publications. 1996.

*Living Among the Oaks: A Management Guide for Landowners.* University of California Integrated Range Management Program. 1995.

*Oaks of California.* Bruce M. Pavlik...[et al]. Cachuma Press & the California Oak Foundation. 1995.

*Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium on Oak Woodlands: Oaks in California's Changing Landscape.* GTR PSW-GTR-184. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2001.  
Available from the University of California Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program.

*Regenerating Rangeland Oaks in California.* University of California Integrated Range Management Program. 2001.



## County of Los Angeles Fire Department Forestry Division

### County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

Gloria Molina, First District  
Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Second District  
Zev Yaroslavsky, Third District  
Don Knabe, Fourth District  
Michael D. Antonovich, Fifth District

### County of Los Angeles Fire Department

P. Michael Freeman, Fire Chief

Brush Clearance Unit  
605 N. Angeleno Avenue  
Azusa, CA 91702-2904  
(626) 969-2375

Camp 17  
6555 Stephens Ranch Road  
La Verne, CA 91750-1144  
(909) 593-7147

Environmental Review Unit  
12605 Osborne Street  
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129  
(818) 890-5719

Fire Plan/Interpretive Unit  
12605 Osborne Street  
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129  
(818) 890-5783

Fuel Modification Unit  
605 N. Angeleno Avenue  
Azusa, CA 91702-2904  
(626) 969-5205

Henninger Flats Forestry Unit  
2260 Pinecrest Drive  
Altadena, CA 91001-2123  
(626) 794-0675

Lake Hughes Forestry Unit  
42150 N. Lake Hughes Road  
Lake Hughes, CA 93532-9706  
(661) 724-1810

Malibu Forestry Unit  
942 N. Las Virgenes Road  
Calabasas, CA 91302-2137  
(818) 222-1108

San Dimas Forestry Unit  
1910 N. Sycamore Canyon Road  
San Dimas, CA 91773-1220  
(909) 599-4615

Saugus Forestry Unit  
28760 N. Bouquet Canyon Road  
Saugus, CA 91390-1220  
(661) 296-8558

Vegetation Management Unit  
12605 Osborne Street  
Pacoima, CA 91331-2129  
(818) 890-5720

# CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY WITHIN THE PROTECTED ZONE

## Changes in Grade

Any change in the level of soil around an oak tree can have a negative impact. The most critical area lies within 6' to 10' of the trunk: no soil should be added or scraped away. Water should drain away from this area and not be allowed to pond so that soil remains wet at the base.

Retaining walls designed to hold back soil above or below an existing tree should be avoided if at all possible, especially within the protected zone. These types of structures cause critical areas at the dripline to be buried, or require that major roots be severed. Water trapped at the base of the tree could lead to root rot or other impacts, and to the decline and premature death of a highly valued landscape tree.

Construction activities outside the protected zone can have damaging impacts on existing trees. Underground water sources can be cut off due to falling water tables, or drainage may be disrupted.

## Trenching

Digging of trenches in the root zone should be avoided. Roots may be cut or severely damaged, and the tree can be killed.

If trenches must be placed within the protected zone, utilities can be placed in a conduit, which has been bored through the soil, reducing damage to the roots. Insist that as many utilities as allowed be placed in a single trench, instead of the common practice of digging a separate trench for each individual line.

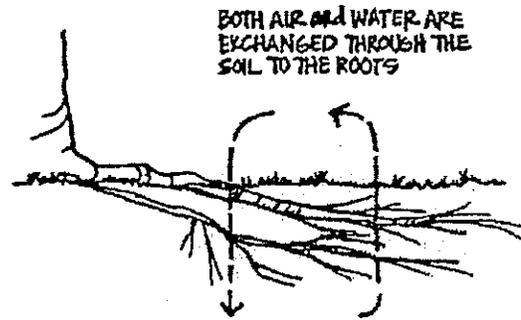
Trenching can also be accomplished using hand tools or small hand held power equipment to avoid cutting roots. Any roots exposed during this work should be covered with wet burlap and kept moist until the soil can be replaced.

## Soil Compaction and Paving

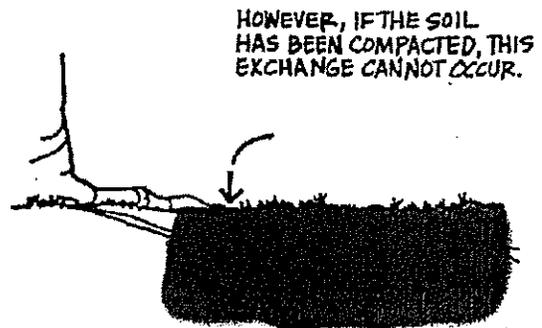
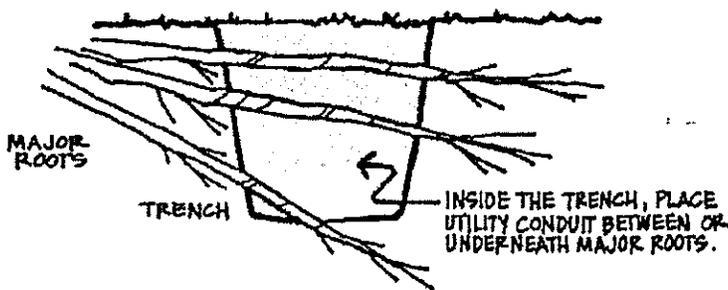
The roots depend upon an important exchange of both water and air through the soil within the protected zone. Any kind of activity that compacts the soil in this area blocks this exchange and can have serious long-term negative effects on the tree.

If paving material must be used, some recommended surfaces include brick paving with sand joints, or ground coverings such as wood chips (note the advantages of natural materials for providing nutrients under *mulching*).

## SOIL COMPACTION



## TRENCHING



# THE PROTECTED ZONE

The *protected zone* defines the area most critical to the health and continued survival of an oak tree. Oaks are easily damaged and very sensitive to disturbances that occur to the tree or in the surrounding environment.

The root system is extensive but surprisingly shallow, sometimes radiating out as much as 50 feet beyond the spread of the tree leaves, or canopy. The ground area at the outside edge of the canopy, referred to as the *dripline*, is especially important: the tree obtains most of its surface water and nutrients here, and conducts an important exchange of air and other gases.

The protected zone is defined in the Oak Tree Ordinance as follows:

"The Protected Zone shall mean that area within the dripline of an oak tree and extending there from to a point at least 5 feet outside the dripline or 15 feet from the trunk, whichever distance is greater."

