

HEROES WORK AT ST. JOSEPH HEALTH

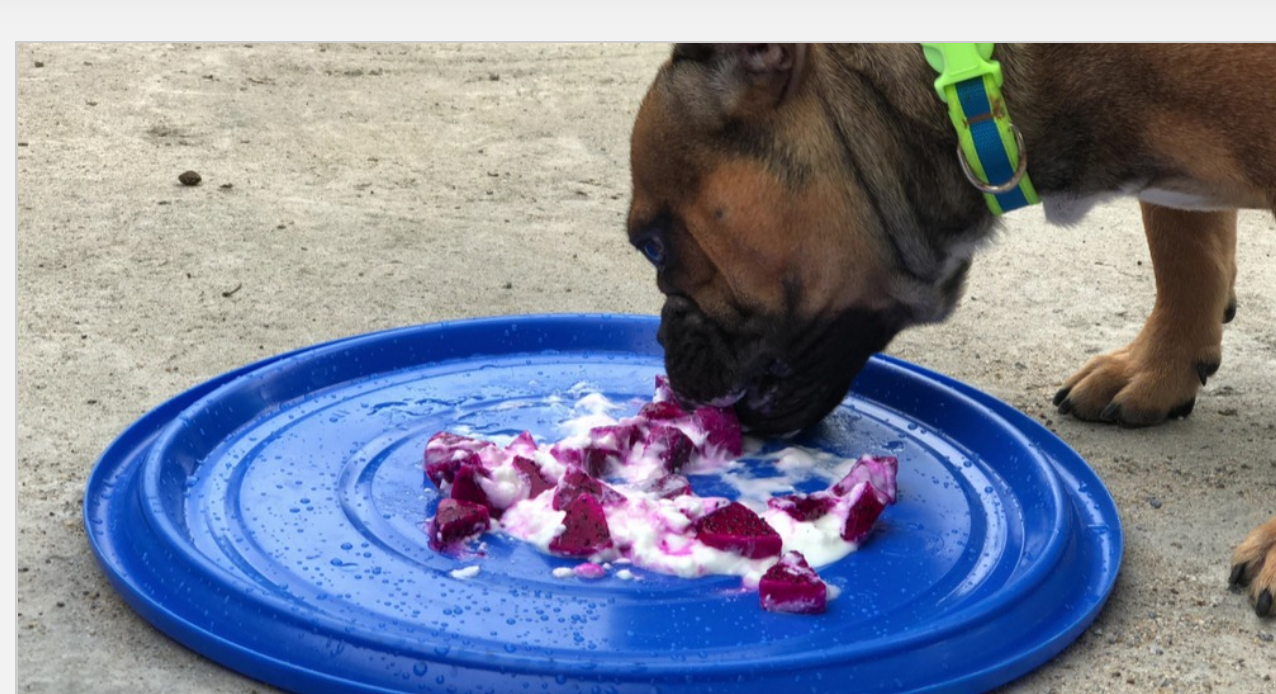
LEARN MORE

St. Joseph Health

Queen of the Valley - Redwood Memorial - St. Joseph
Santa Rosa Memorial - Petaluma Valley
MEDICAL GROUP | HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

Register News Obituaries Opinion Sports Wine Lifestyles COVID-19 Buy & Sell

Log In Become a Member



DR. MARTY
If Your Dog Eats Grass (Do This Every Day)



EDITOR'S PICK

Recreation

Napa fostering volunteer groups to keep city parks clean, weed-free

Howard Yune Sep 16, 2019

Subscribe for less than \$2.50/wk!



Volunteers with the nonprofit group Friends of Westwood Hills Park have organized work parties since the fall of 2018 to help maintain the wooded preserve and trail area in west Napa, in particular by removing invasive and fire-prone French broom to make room for native vegetation and tree seedlings.

Submitted photo



A team of volunteers has helped tend to one of Napa's larger parks for the past year, and the city is hoping to see similar groups step up on behalf of its other recreational spaces.

Since the fall of 2018, Westwood Hills Park has been the scene of work parties where residents have organized to remove invasive and flammable plants from the heavily wooded preserve in west Napa. Such efforts by the nonprofit group known as Friends of Westwood Hills Park are inspiring the Parks and Recreation department to seek out volunteers to pitch in at other open spaces around the city.

"We've had interest at parks like Alston and Lake Park; now we're waiting for somebody from the community to step up," said David Youdell, parks supervisor for the city. "The city now has 55 parks and our staff is quite small. I oversee about 33 parks and I have two full-time staff members, including (for) Westwood Hills. The Friends provide supplemental effort and additional support to things above and beyond normal maintenance."

At Westwood Hills, volunteers' early efforts have focused on rolling back the spread of French broom, a fast-spreading plant that out-competes native plants and tree seedlings while increasing the wildfire threat in woodlands. Since the creation of the Friends group, as many as 74 participants at a time have worked to remove the shrub from Westwood Hills' sloping terrain, often braving muddy soils and poison oak to do so, group member Kevin Hansen has said.

"We have a very formidable challenge, but that's not the same as impossible," Hansen, a member of the city's volunteer parks commission, said during a tour of the Napa parks system in July.

When Hansen floated the idea of a regular volunteer effort on Westwood Hills Park's behalf, the nascent group soon found partners within the city and elsewhere. "I asked a question and expressed an interest, and it was heard by many people who had thought the same thing," the Napa resident and retired engineer recalled Monday.

A steering committee formed with members of the city parks department as well as Napa County's Open Space and Resource Conservation districts, as well as representatives of the nearby Carolyn Parr Nature Center and Connolly Ranch.

The committee, along with a liaison from the AmeriCorps public service program, help guide volunteers' projects, which take place on the third and fourth Saturdays of the month during the rainy season from about October to April. (Work stops during the summer months to avoid disturbing park grounds and spreading the seeds of invasive plants.)

Future goals for the Westwood Hills volunteer team include creating a new map of the park's trails and installing English-Spanish trail signs. In addition, the park has gained other improvements in conjunction with the Friends, including a pollination garden created by a local Girl Scouts troop and a latrine enclosure built by local Boy Scouts, according to Hansen.

To publicize the volunteer work in west Napa, the Friends have launched a Facebook page, distributed brochures and organized speaking engagements in the city, steps Hansen hopes will create a template for others to follow in sprucing up Fuller Park Kennedy Park or other venues.

"This is an exciting community project, and what we've done the last 12 months is just a model for something much greater," he said.

Friends of Westwood Hills Park

Facebook page: <http://bit.ly/2kP6y90>

For more information, contact the city of Napa at 707-257-9960 or parksvolunteer@cityofnapa.org.

Tags [Local-government](#) [Napanewsnow](#) [Westwood Hills Park](#)
[City Of Napa Parks And Recreation Department](#) [Public Parks](#) [Kevin Hansen](#)
[Friends Of Westwood Hills Park](#) [Volunteering](#) [Invasive Plants](#) [French Broom](#)

Get local news delivered to your inbox!

Subscribe to our Daily Headlines newsletter.

Email Address Sign up!

* I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and privacy policy.



Howard Yune

Public Safety Reporter

Howard Yune covers public safety for the Napa Valley Register. He has been a reporter and photographer for the Register since 2011, and previously wrote for the Marysville Appeal-Democrat, Anaheim Bulletin and Coos Bay (Oregon) World.



Follow Howard Yune

Related to this story

LOCAL NEWS

Tour of Napa city parks explores what's new, and what's to come

Jul 18, 2019

From a Browns Valley hiking preserve to an Old Town softball haven to a freshly renovated senior activity center, Napa's parks and recreation...



LOCAL NEWS

Napa's Skyline Park class, tour equips volunteers to battle invasive plants

Feb 10, 2019

The varieties of plants, shrubs and trees carpeting Skyline Wilderness Park and Napa County's open spaces are numerous - but not all are welcome.



LOCAL NEWS

Injured hiker criticizes maintenance at Westwood Hills Park; Napa says upgrades are coming

Aug 15, 2019

Injured hiker wants better maintenance at Westwood Hills Park. City says upgrades in the works.



LOCAL NEWS

Helicopter rescues fallen hiker with injured leg from Napa's Skyline Park

Aug 8, 2019

A hiker with a fractured foot was rescued via helicopter on Wednesday from Skyline Wilderness Park.



Napa Valley Register



Sites & Partners

[Napa Valley Register](#)
[American Canyon Eagle](#)
[St. Helena Star](#)
[The Weekly Callistogan](#)
[Inside Napa Valley](#)
[Distinctive Properties](#)
[Napa Wine Taste](#)

Services

[Virtual Room](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Subscribe](#)
[Customer Services](#)
[Media Kit](#)
[Online Features](#)
[Work here](#)