

It's a Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood- FHVA-Sponsored Fall Cleanups

Rusty Goetz

First things first, I want to give a really big THANK YOU! to all the Four Hills Village residents who routinely pick up trash on their walks throughout the neighborhood and the Four Hills -Manzano Open Space. Secondly, here is another big thank you to all of you who help out your neighbors by hauling in their trash cans if they are older or have difficulty getting around, to you who protect your neighbor's packages left on front door steps, and to so many of you who are just being really nice helpful people. This neighborhood depends on volunteer efforts to keep it beautiful and inviting. The following is a brief discussion of the Fall volunteer cleanup efforts, organized and supported by the Four Hills Village Association (FHVA) that improved both our Four Hills Village (FHV) neighborhood and the surrounding parks and Open Spaces (and we tried to be environmentally conscious too!).

FHV-sponsored free paper shredding event on Saturday, Sept. 11, from 9-noon.

This annual event was open to all FHV residents and our neighbors. The AA Mobile Shredder truck was parked at the end of my driveway at 802 Martingale Ln. Folks from 45 households showed up. All but eight were FHVA members. Many stayed to visit and watch their records be destroyed on site. By the end of the morning, we estimated that we had packed and shredded fifteen 75-gallon bins. That's roughly 1,125 gallons of shredded and recycled paper that did not go into the landfill. The cost to FHVA was \$695.79. Good job all!

FHVA sponsored the Fall Neighborhood Cleanup on Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021 from 9-noon.

CABQ and Waste Management scheduled a Fall Neighborhood Cleanup across Albuquerque on Saturday, Sept 25. FHVA registered to clean Four Hills Rd from the Four Hills Rd/Tijeras Canyon bridge up to the Stagecoach "Y" and the "berm trail" plus both the La Cabra and Stagecoach entrances of the Manzano-Four Hills Open Space.

In a new effort to improve our neighborhood, we also linked up with the CABQ Open Space Division to clean out a major tumble weed infestation in the entrance areas of our Open Space. They sent out a couple of really good hands, Zac Darden and Illianna Hammond, to help us organize a weed pulling effort on that Saturday. Nine folks from Four Hills Village and Volterra (Ellen Lipman, Gary Peters, Jennifer Lopez, David Peters, David Melito, Rob Grilly, Mathew Allen, Jacqueline Cormier, and Rusty Goetz) helped remove and bag up tumbleweeds, goat heads, and trash at the entrances and along the connecting berm trail in the Manzano-Four Hills Open Space. The team collected approximately forty-five 55-gallon bags of weeds which Waste Management had picked up by 2:00 that afternoon.

A second team of five from Four Hills Village, headed up by Steve Brugge, worked to cleanup Four Hills Road. Ann Harris Davidson, weeded and cleaned the Stagecoach Rd "Y" down to the Winterwood Way intersection. Steve and Janice Duis cleaned from the south side of the Four Hills Rd bridge up to Winterwood Way intersection. Francisco Alvarez and a partner, cleaned from the north side of the bridge up the north side of Four Hills Rd. They collected an array of trash and weeds including a shopping cart and lumber. City Waste Management also collected the trash from 2 sites along Four Hills Rd by 2 PM that day.

In addition to cleaning and weeding, Ann Harris Davidson also gave a bag of beneficial indigenous wild plant seeds that she had collected to Illianna Hammond to be planted in the Open Space.

We try to hold these cleanups twice a year in FHV. Next one will be in the Spring. We have always had fun at these events and the work of these volunteers is really valuable to all of us and our neighborhood. Thank you to all of them!



Removal of an old abandoned campsite from the Open Space just east of Hideaway Ln., Saturday, Nov. 6, 2021 from 10-noon.

One of our new FHV residents, Roland Roybal, found a large (12X10 ft) wooden platform and campsite hidden in a dell behind large rocks high up on the western slope of the Open Space behind his house on Hideaway Ln. He reported it to me, and asked how to get it removed. We again partnered with the Open Space management team and scheduled a joint effort to remove the platform and clean up the area.

Roland gave us permission to hike up to the site from his backyard. That saved us about a half mile hike in/out from the Open Space side. Saturday morning, a team of four from the Open Space Division, John Keliaa (Parks Program Specialist) and his staff of Zach Darden, Dillon Cowie, and Kyle Bality joined up with a volunteer team of four from FHV; Steve Brugge, Ann Harris Davidson, David Melito, and myself. We came equipped with crowbars, power drills, heavy-duty trash bags, and fortunately, Steve brought his portable circular saw. The platform turned out to be very well built from 2X4 lumber and large plywood sheets that were screwed together. Steve and his saw were critical in breaking it down in to portable pieces. The team worked to dismantled the platform and remove the really nasty screws from

the wood. We also cleaned up a campfire ring and picked up cans, sheetrock pieces, and other trash. In the course of 2 hours, we all made several trips up and down the steep trail-less slope, carrying out armloads of wood and trash. The hauled-out debris completely filled the bed of one of the City's Open Space trucks.



Other miscellaneous help we have recently received from the Open Space Division.

On July 18, 2021 I reported and provided photographic documentation of severe erosion and gully development on the main Manzano-Four Hills Open Space trails following the heavy rains of late summer. By mid-September the Open Space staff had re-graded, filled in, and repaired most of the main trails.

On September 19, I emailed the information to the Open Space Division that several FHV residents had reported seeing campfires at night in the Tijeras Canyon east of the Four Hills Rd bridge. Open Space management responded by calling in the Open Space Police to take care of removing the campsites.

The Open Space Division, like most city agencies, has been shorthanded throughout the Covid pandemic. Even so, they have been very responsive to our requests for help in maintaining our local Manzano-Four Hills Open Space. It is important to remember that their responsibilities have grown in that same period of time as the city has acquired, and is still acquiring, a great deal of new land for Open Space development along the bottom of Tijeras Canyon, from the Singing Arrow Community Center to the west side of the Village of Tijeras. These acquisitions are to protect the permanent water supplies in the canyon and to preserve one of the most significant wildlife migration corridors in New Mexico. Every one of the Open Space folks I have worked with have been both very helpful and very appreciative of the efforts the folks in Four Hills Village makes to support and clean the Manzano-Four Hills Open Space.

How you can help our neighborhood continue to grow in beauty

Volunteer! Not only are our cleanup events important to the maintenance of FHV, but they are also fun, social, and educational. Even if you are unable to participate in one of our bigger cleanup efforts you can help out all of us in FHV by checking your property frontage for trash, especially after Monday's trash pickups and after storms. Bring your trash bins in off the street as soon as possible once they are emptied. That will make your yard look neater and give the rest of us fewer traffic and walking hazards. Check to see that you have no invasive weeds, like tumbleweeds or goat heads, growing in your yard. These can grow very large and spread very quickly. Finally, and importantly, please arrange to have any dead trees in yard taken down and removed. Not only are these trees unsightly, but they also put you and the neighborhood at risk for fire. The dead trees (particularly the dead pine trees) can ignite into very hot flames within seconds (11-12 seconds- US Forest Service data) from a single spark. In addition, dead trees are very brittle and they put you at risk for expensive repairs because, during our frequent high winds, there is a significant risk of major limbs breaking and/or the whole tree falling over onto your house, car, powerline, or fence.

Again, thank you, thank you, thank you to all the volunteers and kind neighbors who help make Four Hills Village a nice place to live!

Rusty
Open Space and Parks Director for FHVA