

LORI CAGWIN R.I.A. #3103  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



22 January 2024

Sebastopol Planning Department  
[nmahungu@cityofsebastopol.net](mailto:nmahungu@cityofsebastopol.net)  
[jjay@cityofsebastopol.net](mailto:jjay@cityofsebastopol.net)

**RE: NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO REMOVE TREE**  
6700 Sebastopol Avenue, Sebastopol

**REQUEST TO RETAIN: 35" DBH ARAUCARIA BIDWILLII – False Monkey Puzzle, Bunya-Bunya**

I am a practicing Landscape Architect having served Sonoma and Napa Counties for the last 35 years. I served as the Sebastopol Design Review Board's Landscape Architect from 1993 thru 1997, being a resident here since 1981. My son still lives in Sebastopol and sent me the notice to request removal of this historic, iconic tree welcoming us into Sebastopol. I had to act to show my support to save this tree.

I taught UC Berkeley Extension students about this tree, back in the 80s where there is one in Golden Gate Park. This strange prehistoric tree with its unique shape and foliage, harkens back to the Jurassic age of dinosaurs. It is native to Queensland, Australia and is revered by the Aborigines for its life giving sustenance and is historically known to bring tribes together peacefully while in its presence.

For us Americans, The Araucaria bidwillii was brought to California in the early 1800s as an exotic in the Victorian age of Botany. Luther Burbank made his home and Gold Ridge Experimental Farm here. He graced his home and the Petaluma Carnegie Library with this tree. There is conjecture that he brought this tree to Sebastopol as well in 1885. In 1961, the Petaluma Heritage Tree Ordinance was passed to save this tree and other old Heritage trees.

We do not find many of these Bunya-Bunya trees anymore; mainly Botanical Gardens, Old Estates, Veteran's Homes, Universities... This tree is most likely 140 years old and speaks of history and bears witness to the struggles of man and nature. This tree is a living fossil from the Jurassic age, one that survived the ice age, and dinosaurs, and there are not many old ones like Sebastopol's Bunya-Bunya any more. I can name a handful in all my years in this profession visiting sites and gardens.

I read back thru the history of this same Sebastopol tree and 10 years ago, when Barlow came into existence, there was a successful resident fight to keep this tree because it was beloved and irreplaceable in our lifetime, and 6 generations beyond. The sidewalk was narrowed. Today, it appears that the large edible cones are harvested, limbs thinned, dead branches with leaves removed to mitigate safety issues. This methodology should continue.

The New Hotel Sebastopol is designed to have mesh cladding for buildings and a kinetic sculpture for the parking structure. Could we not design a similar structure below the branches to cradle the Bunya-Bunya's leaves and cones before they fall, as an additional mitigation measure?

Sebastopol is known for stewardship, sustainability, love of nature and our place in nature, Not Man Apart. We must find a way to save this historic living landmark having welcomed us for over 140 years. Please save this tree for its residents, visitors and children. It is a testament to our global community, past and present, and our fragile natural world.

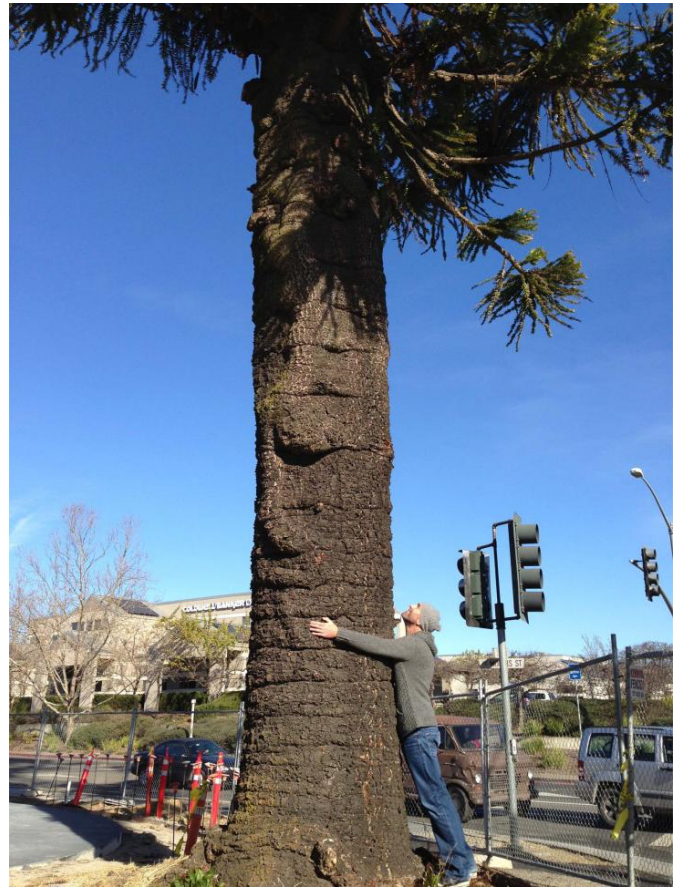
Sincerely,

Lori Cagwin

January 22, 2024  
Sebastopol California



January 16, 2013  
Sebastopol, California



**A PRAYER FOR BUNYA-BUNYA  
in 2013, Re-transcribed by Magick**

*I have stood amongst you for generations,  
So many sweet bird songs have been sung in my branches,  
I am home to hundreds of species,  
that no one is speaking for.*

*Squirrels chatter in my arms,  
I feel the winds of change in my branches  
I bend and sway so I may keep growing,  
So can you!*

*I can live 500 years...  
That's many generations for you, my human sisters and brothers,  
Do you not know that you cannot breath  
If I do not live?  
I am witness  
to so many lumber trucks  
carrying the corpses of my kin,  
and yet I know  
In your hearts  
you care about me.  
You don't want  
to sacrifice me to industry.*

*What puzzles me  
Is that you make laws  
that do not abide by the intrinsic laws of nature  
and then feel compelled to uphold them.  
Some of these laws say you  
own me, how can that be?*

*One of your Supreme Court justices, William O Douglass,  
declared in a court decision,  
That Trees have Standing,  
have the right to exist-  
our autonomy rooted  
in the rights of all species to exist.  
The earth is not a resource but source, itself.*

*I like your song, "just like a tree standing by the water  
I shall not be moved" ...*

*I am an immigrant, my family is from Australia,  
I am not an invader, you brought me here,  
Maybe to deliver a message.  
The people of Sebastopol have felt divided  
again and again over the use of land.*

*The aboriginal people honored me as sacred,  
I fed them and they gathered around me to declare  
an end to all feuds.  
I can help you heal.*

*Let go of your hubris, become humble  
and really human;  
the roots of all those words are the same;  
they come from hummus, the earth itself,  
All of creation is calling you home.*

*Circle me, let the music of the one song  
break down your animosity,  
let the drums of life  
find resonance in your hearts.  
All of us, you and I, are  
one family.*

*Use your gift of consciousness wisely,  
Every day you must choose between right and wrong,  
it is not so hard, love will always guide you...*

*I know you can do it-  
When you do are so beautiful, creative,  
Celebrating life...  
Let your children, and your children's children,  
be greeted by me-  
they will tell the story of your finest hour;  
When you were no longer puzzled.  
by greed and power  
I am standing tall among you, let me be!*

***speaking for the Bunya, Bunya***