Creekside neighbors tell county to get to the root of the problem

By Amy Sylvestri

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The Breslin family is suffering from a case of deja vu.

Three weeks ago, an 80-foot eucalyptus fell across San Leandro Creek and landed in the backyard of their Cary Drive home. Then last week, another 80-foot eucalyptus tree fell across San Leandro Creek and landed in their backyard.

Alameda County is responsible for the trees on the north side of the creek, where these fallen trees stood. The Breslin home is on the south side, where the trees landed.

In both cases, Tony Breslin said he called the county, advised them that a tree was leaning and looked likely to fall. He said they sent out an arborist who agreed the trees needed to be cut, but both times the tree fell before the county came out to cut them.

“It’s frustrating and it’s incredible,” said Breslin. “They don’t have a plan. There is a third tree that is leaning now. They’ll just wait for it to fall when they should be doing something.”

The trees that fell damaged the Breslin's shingles, gutter, barbecue, and heater, but a tree hasn't done any damage to the house – yet.

"These were 80-foot trees, but there are 100-foot trees out there that could go," Breslin said.

In 2010, Alameda County announced planned to cut down around 60 trees along San Leandro Creek, which were in danger of falling, and replace them with smaller native plants. But there was quite a bit of public opposition and the number was reduced to just 17 trees getting the chop after a series of public meetings.

Breslin said that he and his neighbors "on the front line" of Cary Drive were actually in favor of the county's plan to remove more hazardous trees, but they were ignored in favor of people who didn't live in the tree hazard area, Breslin said.

"I fully supported the eucalyptus abatement," Breslin said.

His wife Patty Breslin agreed, as she began the clean up of their backyard.

“People at the meetings were saying, ‘No one wants the trees chopped down.’ We were like, wait a minute, we do,” said Patty Breslin.

Alameda County Public Works hadn’t returned calls for comment by Wednesday afternoon.

The trees on the south side of the creek are the responsibility of the property owner and the county tells them when they need to be removed. Tony Breslin said that he’s had two trees cut down on his side of the creek at a cost of $2,000.

“Those trees on my property have been chopped on my dime, but we are being given the run-around,” Tony Breslin said.

CAPTION: The stumps are left from the trees the Breslin family has paid to chop down on the county’s orders, but two trees from the county property on the other side of the creek

have fallen so far this month, damaging their yard.

PHOTO BY AMY SYLVESTRI