other proactive approaches. The Stewardship Committee also provides educational experiences for members to learn about our local ecology and restoration practices.

**Public Policy Committee:** The Public Policy Committee identifies land use and environmental policies, laws, regulations, and standards, and learns how they apply to the Mark West Watershed. It monitors policy amendments and changes that have the potential to promote and/or frustrate the FMWW Mission and recommends to the membership — when appropriate — FMWW’s participation in the public processes.

**Emergency Preparedness Committee:**

The Committee works to create a communication structure for the community (e.g. automated phone “broadcasting”, phone trees, etc.) for emergencies (e.g. wildfires, earthquakes, landslides, etc.). The Committee also works to improve communications between the community and emergency responders. In addition, the committee may explore ways to help community members better prepare for emergencies (e.g. how to prepare “safe space” for fire protection, how to prepare for long periods of time without electricity, etc.).

**History Committee:** While scientific history of the Mark West Watershed is valuable, social history is equally treasured. Our social history, caught in the memories of our neighbors, gives us the balance of what and how the Mark West Watershed has become what it is.

**Contact Us**

Friends of the Mark West Watershed
6985 Saint Helena Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404
Tel: 707-538-5307 • Fax: 707-595-5322
info@markwestwatershed.org
markwestwatershed.org
The Mark West Watershed, A High-Priority Preservation Area

Mark West Creek runs through one of the few remaining pristine native areas left in northeast Sonoma County. This land is covered by oak, madrone, redwood and fir forests. The creek, nestled in the bottom of the canyon, is one of a few tributaries of the Russian River that still supports a healthy population of endangered steelhead trout and is spawning habitat for coho salmon.

Mark West Creek has been identified as a high-priority stream for preservation and restoration by several state, federal and local agencies. The significant aquatic resources reflected by the high water quality, significant in-stream and riparian habitat, and endangered species occurrence in the area make the upper Mark West Watershed extremely regionally significant for conservation and protection.

Friends To The Rescue

Friends of Mark West Watershed (FMWW) was formed in 2003 in response to a major development proposal on Saddle Mountain adjacent to Saint Helena Road. FMWW joined the Audubon Society to voice our concerns about the 30-year-old environmental impact report (EIR).

Working together with Sonoma County Open Space and the landowners, the 1,200 acre Saddle Mountain property will remain a “forever wild” nature preserve.

Today’s Goals

FMWW attempts to preserve — from ridge top to ridge top — the beautiful natural environment we live in. In addition to keeping a watchful eye on the Saddle Mountain preserve, we (and our watershed partners) organize an annual, free, ecology-based educational event called the Hike & Hoot. Together with our friends at the Alpine Club, we do an annual road and creek clean-up, as well as the ongoing collection of historical information from our Valley.

FMWW Achievements & Milestones

FMWW has ongoing partnership projects in the watershed, including:

- With the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District and the Department of Fish and Game, aiding in the community participation of a $600,000 private road sediment reduction project involving more than 70 different land owners. RCD and FMWW received Environmental Achievement Awards from Congressman Mike Thompson for the project.
- With the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, established and operate the Saddle Mountain “trail-watchers” volunteers program. Trail watchers regularly hike the mountain, report what they see and work closely with Open Space as interim stewards of this valuable resource.
- With the Rincon Valley Fire Department, hosted Urban/Wildlands Interface Fire Response training drills for more than 50 engine companies on private properties in the watershed.
- In partnership with Rincon Valley Fire Dept. and Alpine Club, FMWW developed an Emergency Preparedness Committee, using an automated phone “broadcasting” system to alert participants during emergencies such as wildfires, landslides, earthquakes, etc.
- Cohosted a UC Extension Forest Stewardship Workshop.
- For nearly a decade, we cleaned up the creek and roads — with help from the Alpine Club and Sonoma County Public Works. This event includes the on-going eradication of invasive species, such as scotch broom, reducing fire hazard, aiding in the re-establishment of native species, and improving the riparian corridors.
- With the Sotoyome RCD, and trained Creek Keepers, established and maintained upper Mark West Creek water monitoring programs.
- With its Campaign Committee, raised and donated $5,500 to the Measure F (Open Space funding) campaign. Volunteers walked precincts and manned the telephone bank in support of reauthorizing the Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District for another 20 years.
- We host the annual ‘Hike & Hoot’ event where naturalists, geologists and birders share their knowledge in hands-on hiking and exploration of the watershed.

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Participate In Your Watershed!

1) Visit markwestwatershed.org
Find out about upcoming watershed events. You’ll also find documents of watershed interest, including coho restoration projects, Sotoyome RCD documents regarding the Mark West Watershed, the Saddle Mountain Management Plan Progress Report, and more!

2) Join the online conversation
Receive emails regarding watershed preservation and FMWW issues. Sign up for our FMWW Listserv at markwestwatershed.org

3) Come to a FMWW meeting
We meet quarterly, typically on Thursday evenings at 6PM. Visit markwestwatershed.org for the upcoming agenda, or email us at info@markwestwatershed.org or call Harriet at 707-538-5307.

4) Join a FMWW Committee
- Stewardship Committee: The charge of the Stewardship Committee is in collaboration with resource agencies and other organizations, to promote and empower the restoration and sustainable stewardship of the Mark West Watershed. Examples include the Sotoyome RCD sediment reduction and stream restoration projects, resource management planning, water quality and fish and aquatic ecology monitoring, best management practices promotion, invasive species control, and other proactive approaches. The Stewardship Committee also provides educational experiences for members to learn about our local ecology and restoration practices.
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