



Friends of the Mark West Watershed

SEPTEMBER 2005 NEWSLETTER

Vol 1, No.2

Serving the Mark West Watershed

We are a watershed community dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring the Mark West Creek and its watershed as a natural and community resource.

3rd Annual Harvest Moon Dinner Dance and Auction

When: Saturday, October 22, 2005
Where: Alpine Hall 5380 St. Helena Rd. Santa Rosa, CA
Program: 5:00-6:30 Socialize
6:30-7:30 Dinner by a la Heart Catering
7:30-8:00 Speaker Don McEnhill-Friends of the Russian River
8:00-10:00 Dancing to Elliot Finesse and the Artlaws
(same great band as last year!)
Reservations Required : \$35/per person, \$375 for a table of 8

Use cut-out form on back to order tickets. Seating is limited to 100 and we sell out every year!

Preserve The Mark West Watershed and Learn More About One of the Most Important Tributaries to the Russian River!

We are holding a unique fund raiser at the historic Alpine Hall on Saturday, October 22th at 5 p.m. Limited to 100 people, it will be a catered dinner, dance, silent auction and short informative program. If you missed it in past years, here's your chance! We sold out both years and everyone had a grand time!

Whether you are a resident of this area or simply concerned and would like to help preserve and enhance the Mark West Creek and its watershed, this is your chance to do your part! We are a grassroots effort and need your support!

All will enjoy a fine dinner, silent auction and music at a beautiful location near Mark West Creek. Your generous donations are welcome. If you include your e-mail address with your reservation form we will keep you updated on our efforts and projects.

Steering Committee Members

Richard Baril 538-2673

Pat Gray 539-2825

Ray Krauss 539-4330

Grif Okie 537-9001

Jeff Phillips and Sherry Soleski 537-8956

Kate Wilson 537-7030

Become a Steering Committee Member- call one of us today to see how to volunteer!

Did you know?

The first known people to live along the Mark West Creek were the Southern tribe of the Pomo Indian Nation, who called the creek "Potiquiyome."

FROM THE FRIENDS OF THE MARK WEST WATERSHED

The Mark West Watershed basin is comprised of about 40 square miles, of which the St. Helena Road area represents about 7 square miles. We live upstream and downstream from neighbors who use and enjoy the watershed for many different reasons: drinking water for some, agriculture and livestock for others, diverse plant and wildlife, and for all the pleasure of watching and living near the water's edge. We share a relationship to the creeks and the watershed basin that is common to us all. Understanding that relationship is the first step in preserving it.

To that end, the FMWW have been holding General Meetings at Alpine Hall on the first Monday of each month from 7-9 p.m. The purpose is to both educate neighbors on watershed issues and to hold our group's business meeting. We would love to see more people attend these meetings! The next meeting is Monday 10/3 at 7 p.m.

Past Guest Speakers have included Brock Dolman of the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, Rue Furth of the Planning Commission, Kerry Williams of Sotoyome RCD and John Green of Pacific Watershed Associates discussing the Fish and Game Road Grant, Sean White from the Sonoma County Water Agency discussing coho and steelhead fish issues, and Rick Coates of Forests Unlimited on forest conversions.

PAST PROJECTS-2005

- Water testing and monitoring
- Creek Clean Up with 30 volunteers
- Scotch Broom Eradication and Clean Up
- Hike and Hoot- A day of hiking and owl watching with a geologist, ecologist, hydrologist, an entomologist
- Watershed Day @ Salmon Creek School
- Various presentations at County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission in response to building and development plans in the watershed.
- Grant Applications: Fish and Game Grant pending
- Road Improvement Grant work with Sotoyome and Fish and Game
- Education and Outreach Events/Meetings
- Movie Night Games, Kids, Champagne and popcorn!
- Assisted neighbors in clean up and sediment containment
- Joined the Sonoma County Water Coalition (SCWC)
- Networking with other agencies (Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, SCWC, Sotoyome RCD, Sierra Club, Forests Unlimited, Friends of Knight Valley)

WELL MONITORING - GOT WATER?

We need residents who will let us monitor their wells for historical data and to track the water table in our recharge area. There have been reports of wells drying up throughout the county, and more information is needed. The Mark West Creek is experiencing an overdraft and it's levels have been dropping over the past 3 years. If you are willing to be trained on how to monitor your well, call Kate at 537-7030 or email skysaddle@earthlink.net

CREEKKEEPERS ACADEMY

The River Keeper's Watershed Academy's series of six Creekkeeper training sessions took place at the Environmental Center in Santa Rosa. Creekkeepers work cooperatively with public agencies and other organizations and complement other creek and river monitoring efforts going on in our extensive watershed. Both Richard Baril and Kate Wilson completed the Creekkeepers training, and are happy to report that the Upper Mark West Creek and it's tributaries are their territory.

The Creekkeepers will assist Don McEnhill in his monumental task of protecting and preserving the health of the Russian River and all of its watershed. The Mark West Creek is a very important tributary of the Russian River, providing good clean water to the river and much of Sonoma County, plus it is one of the few remaining active spawning streams for endangered steelhead and coho salmon in the Russian River watershed.

Richard Baril: "The Creekkeeper program, put together and taught by Don McEnhill and director Sharon Marchetti, was very educational and comprehensive. Biologists Brock Dolman and Laurel Marcus talked of river dynamics and the science of riparian habitat, plus conditions to look for, healthy and not, within the waterway and throughout the watershed. Representatives of local and state agencies also gave generously of their time, sharing their experience and knowledge in ways we can help protect our waterways. I was impressed with the dedication and commitment of all these folks, including the Creekkeeper volunteers, willing to give of their time and effort to work toward a common goal of protecting and preserving our vital natural resources. As a M.W. Creekkeeper, I look forward to working with any and all folks in our watershed. If you have any ideas on ways to improve and protect the health of our watershed, or any questions or concerns I would be delighted to hear from you."

Kate Wilson: "I am particularly interested in documenting the watershed and creating a historic record and profile of the creek over time. Any old photos or stories that folks can share are welcome. I am also looking for video interviews for a film documentary on this area. Stories of spawning fish 50 years ago, other wildlife or interesting comments are welcome!"

There will also be a new Creekkeeper Academy held next year for any folks who would like to join in this effort. Riverkeeper programs begin and end with citizen action. While a full-time Keeper is at the core of the project, it's citizen action that leverages our efforts to the scale necessary. Call Richard at 538-2673 or Kate at 537-7030 for info.





MARK WEST WATERSHED ROAD UPGRADE PROJECT

By Ray Krauss

The California Department of Fish and Game has granted nearly \$600,000 to the Sotyome Resource Conservation District to work with local landowners to upgrade our private roads in the upper Mark West Watershed. The work is designed to reduce the erosion of dirt and soil into the creek where it covers clean gravels that salmon and steelhead need for spawning.

Upgrades are proposed for Cleland, Mattei, Tarwater, Lone Pine, and Monan's Rill roads. Specific road improvements have been recommended by Pacific Watershed Associates based on surveys conducted by their engineers last year. Road upgrades include upsizing culverts to carry larger storm flows and improving road drainage. Construction is scheduled to begin next spring.

In the meantime, we need to organize our road owners to work with the RCD to get the job done. We're looking for "road captains" for each road to help coordinate the needed paperwork and to keep everyone informed about what's happening when. More about that in future newsletters and on the FMWW list-serve and website.

We will need to help the RCD in two ways. First, each effected owner needs to sign an "access agreement" to allow the agreed upon work to be done on his or her land. And second, we need to come up with our local 10% match for the grant funds. Our matching can be volunteer work as well as cash and donations. We're off to a good start in that department. Bill Williams, head of operations for BoDean Company, the owners and operators of Mark West Quarry, have agreed to donate a discount on road rock accounting to \$10,000!

So stay tuned on the list-serve and website and let's make this project a real benefit to our Watershed.

MOVIE NIGHT AT ALPINE HALL!

By Jeff Phillips

In a continuing effort to draw our community together, expand our membership base and have fun, The Friends of the Mark West Watershed has introduced the Friday Night Movie series. Once a month, the Alpine Hall transforms to the splendor of a movie palace. Themes and suggestions gladly considered, surf, dance, cowboy, or comedy- over time they could all cross our screen.

Viewers can visit the snack bar where they have their choice of beverages including sodas, water, beer and wine. For the munchies we have organic popcorn from Comet Corn with your choice of many Amazing Flavors or varying items for your sweet tooth.

While a fundraising event, Movie Night night is also intended to be inclusive; there is no set admission or refreshment fee and no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Suggested donation for admission and snacks range from \$1.00 to \$3.00. The proceeds from this event are intended to fund special projects within the watershed and generosity is always appreciated.

Next Movie Night-September 30 7p.m.

(Thanks to Jeff and Sherry for this fun-raiser!)

WATER MONITORING

We monitor the Mark West Creek monthly at 5515 St. Helena Road, (Okie's House) usually at 11:00 on the last Friday of each month. The testing takes about 30 minutes for two people. Other sites would be valuable, but we need more help to accomplish this. The test equipment has to be picked up and delivered back to Sebastopol, so the time involved is a factor—HINT: we need our own equipment!!

- Conductivity is a measure of electron flow through water and should be in the 150 to 500 range; ours is about 280. GOOD
- Dissolved Oxygen should be above 6 mg/l; ours is averaging 10 mg/l. GOOD
- pH (strength of Hydrogen) should range 6.6 to 8.5; ours is 8.0. GOOD
- Water Temperature should be less than 20 C, ours is 15 to 18 C. GOOD
- Turbidity(suspended particles) should be under 10, ours is cleaner. GOOD
- Flow: Our flow is in its late year trickle, down from 22 cubic feet per second in May, to 11 in June, 0.55 in July and now 0.25 cubic feet per second in August. MARGINAL
- The Steelhead spawning in the early Spring was not as successful as usual due to property owner carelessness upstream—huge sedimentation amounts!! The hatch and remaining fingerlings were less numerous than normal. VERY DISTURBING

Grif Okie 537-9001 (Help is needed.)

ANIMAL SIGHTINGS

- Cougar and 2 cubs - Spring 2005
- Spotted Owl - August 2005
- Glow worms - Mid Summer 2005
- Peregrine Falcons - Summer 2005
- Coho Salmon fry - Summer 2005
- Steelhead spawning - Feb/Mar 2005
- Steelhead fry- Summer 2005

What have you seen? Call 537-7030 or email your sightings to skysaddle@earthlink.net

SAVE THESE DATES!!!

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|----------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| General Meeting | Oct 3rd | 7 p.m. |
| Russian Riverfest Celebration | September 18 | |
| at Burke's Canoes in Forestville | | 4-8 p.m. |
| Movie Night | Friday, Sept. 30 | 7 p.m. |
| Harvest Moon Dinner | Sat. October 22 | 5 p.m. |

Friends of the Mark West Watershed
5515 St. Helena Rd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please join the FMWW today! Membership includes a biannual newsletter and logo sticker. Plus, you are supporting our environmental efforts!

Enclosed is \$ _____ (\$10/yr. per family)

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

HARVEST MOON DINNER TICKETS

Individual Ticket

___ \$35 per ticket

of tickets _____

Method of Payment:

___ Check ___ Mastercard

___ Visa ___ American Express

Sponsorship

___ \$100 (2 tickets)

of tickets _____

Credit Card No. _____

Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

___ \$375 (Table of 8)

of tables _____

___ Sorry, we cannot attend

but would like to contribute \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please RSVP no later than October 1st!

Return this form and payment to: (See bottom for checks)

FMWW 5515 St. Helena Rd.

Santa Rosa, CA 95404

___ Volunteer for other efforts, please call me

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

For More Information: Phone (707) 538-2673 Fax (707) 537-1069 Email: Skysaddle@earthlink.net

All Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please make checks payable to our fiscal sponsor:

FRIENDS OF THE RUSSIAN RIVER

Federal Tax ID # 68-0321117