



# *Friends of the Mark West Watershed*

## October 2006 NEWSLETTER

Vol 1, No.3

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.*

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### 4th Annual Harvest Moon Dinner Dance and Auction

When: Saturday, October 21, 2006  
Where: Alpine Hall 5380 St. Helena Rd. Santa Rosa, CA  
Program: 5:00-6:30 Socialize w/John Rothfield and the Cajun Classics  
6:30-7:30 Dinner by a la Heart Catering by Sherry Soleski  
7:30-8:00 Award Ceremony  
8:00-10:00 Dancing to the Heartbeats w/ Katherine Stevens  
(same great band as last year!)

Reservations Required : \$40/per person

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

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Friends of the Mark West Watershed is celebrating and honoring the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District at their 4th Annual Harvest Moon Dinner & Dance on Saturday, October 21, 2006 from 5:00 to 11:00 at Alpine Hall, 5380 St. Helena Road, Santa Rosa.

In addition to sponsorships, FMWW has committed \$4000 to support the reauthorization of the Open Space quarter cent sales tax. Please bring a donation made out to "Measure F" to help support this cause! Great dinner, great wine, auction, raffle and great music by the "Heartbeats." This event sells out every year! Purchase tickets by email with your visa card by calling Pat Gray (707) 539-2825 or E-mail graybird@vom.com, or by using the form included. Please join us at this great event and community effort to preserve open space, clean water and agriculture in Sonoma County.

#### *Dinner Committee*

*Pat Gray, Grif Okie, Richard Baril, Dolores Barrett, Ray Krauss, Sherry Soleski, Jeff Phillips, Katherine Stevens, Harriet Buckwater, Bill Blake, Paul Marking, Penny Sirota*

#### **Saddle Mountain Finally Protected!**

The escrow has finally closed on most of Saddle Mountain, assuring it's protection as open space forever!!!!!!!!!!

Open Space District officials said the property offers wide vistas of the Santa Rosa plain and contains creeks that drain into Mark West and Santa Rosa creeks, including a key stream for coho salmon. Officials said development of a hiking trail, which might link the property to nearby Hood Mountain and Sugarloaf Ridge parks, will be a priority.

In the meantime, The Open Space folks have asked interested neighbors to help monitor the property by hiking, biking, or riding their horses on established roads and trails. We are still working with Open Space to figure out access points and parking. In the near future LandPaths will be holding training sessions for Trail Watchers. Please call Cyrie Okie at 537-9001 to add your name to the list of Trail Watchers for Saddle Mountain.

#### **FMWW Executive Committee Members**

Chair: Pat Gray 539-2825  
Vice Chair: Richard Baril 538-2673  
Treasurer: Grif Okie 537-9001

## A Message from Pat Gray, FMWW Chair

Dear Fellow Watershed Stewards,

We are being called on to help pass a measure on the November ballot to continue funding for Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District. FMWW has been asked and agreed to serve as the East County Regional Committee in support of the measure. This is a natural advocacy role for FMWW in that we are celebrating the acquisition of Saddle Mountain by the Open Space District at our dinner dance in October, essentially preserving the land in perpetuity as wild and scenic. That being said, the work of preserving open space and clean water in the watershed is never done.

Since its establishment in 1990, the Sonoma County Open Space District has preserved over 68,000 acres of scenic vistas, working farms, riparian areas, natural resources and wildlife habitat. To continue the protection of open space, agriculture and clean water in Sonoma County, the District needs our support to pass the ballot measure that will extend the existing 1/4-cent sales tax that funds the District, without raising taxes.

When measure A & C passed in 1990 it only required a majority of the vote to pass. The measure passed by 55%. Now there is a two-thirds 'Super Majority' rule which means it will require 66% of the vote to pass this time. There is active opposition to extending the Open Space tax. Passing the measure will take a concerted effort and boundless commitment from the greater community of conservation and preservation advocates.

The Open Space District campaign to extend the tax is 100% dependent on private fundraising and volunteer efforts. On August 17, the general membership agreed by consensus to donate an initial amount of \$4000 to Measure F. We will meet again to discuss further contribution on October 19th at Alpine Hall, 6:00 pm. FMWW is committed to making the most of what we have to offer by helping to get out the vote, volunteering to walk precincts and phone bank. You will have an opportunity to sign up to help at the dinner dance or you can call me or Ray Krauss to volunteer.

Consistent with our efforts to preserve maintain and protect the Mark West watershed we continue to monitor the creek and the fish population; we are developing a fire and disaster plan and also have initiated a project to gather oral and written history of our watershed and the people who live here.

I am grateful to be part of this watershed community and for the opportunity to serve. Please feel free to contact me regarding the Open Space ballot measure, to volunteer or discuss other issues of concern. Thank you for your commitment to preserving this watershed.

Pat Gray  
Chair, FMWW (707) 539-2825

## Road and Creek clean-up coming in mid-April

Look for our annual road and creek cleanup in mid-April (date not set). Over the past several years, we have removed a mind-boggling amount of trash from the watershed—roads and creeks. Tires by the dozen, computers, batteries, appliances, mattresses, chairs, full paint cans and other toxic waste have been hauled to the dumpsters.

We continue our efforts to eradicate Scotch broom, a particularly invasive plant that displaces native flora and presents a fire hazard along the roads. We have purchased special pullers to wrestle this plant out of the ground, and will be working on this eradication on a "soft-ground" day in the Spring. Come help.

A huge thanks to Waste Management and Sonoma County Public Works for donating their time and equipment. And many, many thanks to the thirty volunteers who participated in the clean-up days.

### Watershed health and sightings

Water monitoring continues on a monthly basis for the past three years. Although the critical factors of water quality (temperature, ph, dissolved oxygen, conductivity, and turbidity) remain in the healthy range, the water quantity continues to decline in these late summer months, despite a heavier-than-normal Spring of rainfall. Increased irrigation and home development are likely contributing to the low flows in the creeks. There are some Steelhead fingerlings in the mainstream and tributaries, but not nearly as many as five years ago. Water conservation and sediment control are always needed.

The riparian flora has come back surprisingly well after the floods last year. The Western azalea was prolific and the scarlet monkeyflower made a good show, as did the rest of the abundant wildflowers of our watershed.

There were many raptor sightings, including a bald eagle by Katherine Stevens. Fox and mountain lions were spotted near Monan's Rill and Sam at the Alpine Hall reported an otter family scampering up Alpine Creek.

(Both reports by Richard Baril)



### FMWW Recent and Current Projects:

- Establishing Saddle Mountain Trail Watchers.
- Preparing for Emergencies and Fire Preparedness Task Force
- Creating a historical record of the our watershed and its community.
- Signage Project- Installing road signs marking the Mark West creek and watershed boundaries.
- Upper MW Creek Restoration and preservation-preserving Mark West Creek and Watershed.

## Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies

Wild Fire, Earthquake, Land Slide, Flood, Long-Term Power Outage...

It's not a question of "IF," it's a question of WHEN!

Can we work together to better survive the future emergencies we are certain to face in our watershed?  
Join your neighbors in planning ahead now for the emergency challenges we all know are coming.

Friends of the Mark West Watershed invite you to join our COPE committee and to help organize and prepare for wild fire hazard: earthquake damage, loss of access and the other special hazards we share living in this wild and special place. Everyone welcome!

Some ideas discussed so far:

- Communications. How do we warn each other and keep in touch when the power is out and the phone system is down?
- Special Skills. Do we know who in the watershed has EMT and medical and other special skills?
- Emergency Escape. Does everyone have a second route of escape?
- Fire Fighting Assets. Do we and our Fire Officials know watershed water sources, seasonal roads for fire fighting access, and local availability of heavy equipment?
- Organization. Can we set up a system of local road or neighborhood groups that can respond together when the need comes?

*Interested?*

- Contact Mark West Watershed COPE Chairs, Grif Okie: 537-9001, okiewood@aol.com or Katherine Stevens: 538-3324, klstevens@earthlink.net.
- Check out <http://www.markwestwatershed.org/> for more information.
- Download the City of Santa Rosa's COPE Guide from:  
[http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/City\\_Hall/Emergency%20Preparedness/copeguide\\_english.pdf](http://ci.santa-rosa.ca.us/City_Hall/Emergency%20Preparedness/copeguide_english.pdf)
- Join the FMWW email list-serve at <http://www.markwestwatershed.org/>.
- Bring your ideas and attend FMWW general meetings the third Thursday evening of each month from 6 to 8 PM and our COPE Committee meetings (to be announced).

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### Jean's Story of Alpine Hall

Coming from Marin in 1988, looking for a new residence in the country with great trees, my own well, and a quiet environment, I checked real estate agents multiple listings. What caught my eye was: "Two big rooms on one acre." I came here at once and knew immediately that it was right for me. Dealing with Don Tubbs, the seller's agent, a Porter Creek fireman, he told me to phone Miriam and Payson Clark. They were among the Alpine Club founders who built the hall in 1948. They met me here, giving me some history plus some copies of Miriam's community newsletter, "The Alpine Yodel." They lived just up the road. Payson worked for PG & E for years- a giant of a man, he easily carried off wearing a bear claw necklace. This couple personally ran the voting polls for the neighborhood in the Hall for decades. They approved of me, so I was allowed to purchase the place. The Clark's were the great aunt and uncle of Matthew Wilson. They gave Jim Doerksen a big box of archival material about the Alpine Clubhouse. Barbara Yeates helped me organize it when the county challenged my right to hold meetings, parties and weddings here. We were able to establish for the county that those privileges were "grandfathered in" hence legal. Anyone interested in seeing these archives should contact me at (707) 538-4235.

**Alpine Hall is available to rent** for meetings, seminars and celebrations. If you would like a brochure or sample contract, call Jean Maggrett at the number above.

### A Benefit for Shining Star Kids

3485 Porter Creek Rd, Santa Rosa

Wine Country Chef Challenge

Saturday, November 11th, 2006

11:00am - 4:00pm

\$ 125.00 per person

SL Cellars, 9380 Sonoma Highway, Kenwood, CA

Contact Information Tracy at 707-508-9366

Celebrity Guest Judges...Fine Art...Gourmet Grazing...Live Auction

Art exhibits by George Sumner, Sumner Studios Of Sausalito and Shiloh McCloud

[www.shiningstarkids.org](http://www.shiningstarkids.org)

Water Conservation on our own creek is one of the main areas that the Foster Children will be learning about, besides Organic Gardening, Horsemanship, Nature Photography, Hiking, Aviation, Theater, Dance, Tennis, Swimming and Cooking from scratch.

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**Next General meeting at Alpine Hall** on October 19,

6:00 - 9:00 p.m. Food and Drink provided.

There will be movie night starting in November: watch for signs!

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

\_\_\_ \$40 per ticket      # of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Payment:

\_\_\_ Check

\_\_\_ Visa

Sponsorship for Measure F (make check to Measure F)

\_\_\_ \$250 (2 tickets)      # of tickets \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card No. \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ \$800(Table of 6)      # of tables \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Sorry, we cannot attend

but would like to contribute      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***Please RSVP no later than October 15th!***

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) 539-2825

Email: graybird@vom.com

***Make Checks out of Friends of the Mark West Watershed***