



Friends of the Mark West Watershed

SEPTEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER

Vol 1, No.4

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.

5th Annual Harvest Moon Dinner Dance and Auction

When: Saturday, October 27, 2007
Where: Mark West Lodge
2520 Mark West Springs Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404
707.528.9378 www.markwestlodge.com

Program: 5:00-6:30 Cocktail reception and live entertainment outdoors.
No host bar.
6:30-9:00 a la Heart Catered Buffet Dinner with wine
Live Auction, Silent Auction and Raffle
9:00-11:00 Dancing to Five A.M., stroll in the hummingbird gardens, sit
by the fire or toast in the luxury bar.

Reservations Required \$40/per person, Sponsorship \$150
(2 tickets and program mention)

Use cut-out form on back to order tickets.

*Auction: Golf - Sports - Birding Guides - Dinners, Lunches and Overnight Stays - Children's Gifts
Extraordinary wine and champagne - Books - Art - Hiking and water adventures - Theatre tickets and much more*

Message From the President

This year marks a new milestone for FMWW, in more ways than one. In July Congressman Mike Thomsson gave his first Congressional award for environmental achievement to FMWW recognizing our partnership with the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District and the Department of Fish and Game, in a \$600,000 private road sediment reduction project involving more than 70 different land owners. FMWW provided liason and homeowner support for the project.

This year also marks our outreach from our upper watershed to the mid watershed neighbors. No matter our efforts in the upper watershed, if the Coho and Steelhead can't get upstream then we are not doing everything we can to repopulate the Mark West Creek with Coho and enrich the Steelhead population. We were fortunate to find great partners at the Mark West Lodge. Many thanks to Jack and Aquarius for donating the beautiful lodge, kitchen and bar receipts to advance our outreach efforts. Included here are two great articles (announcing Forestry Stewardship Workshop by Penny Sirota & Planning! by Ray Krauss) about other important partnerships being launched. Creating and expanding partnerships to protect and preserve the MW watershed is how we can best serve our mission and to that end this is a banner year for FMWW!

FMWW 2007 Achievements and Milestones

The FMWW is active in the watershed community with ongoing partnership projects in 2007 that include:

- With the Sotoyome Resource Conservation District and the Department of Fish and Game, 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.
- On September 29, 2007 FMWW, Jim & Betty Doreksen and Monan's Rill Institute will host UC Extension Forest Stewardship Workshop at MR community hub.

- With Sonoma County Public Works and Waste Management Company, conducted our annual creek cleanup event.
- 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 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 all won!
- In partnership with Monan's Rill, we hosted the annual 'Hike & Hoot' event where naturalists, geologists and birders shared their knowledge in hands on hiking and exploration of the watershed. Monan's Rill Association is an intentional community of eleven families that also donate their community hall for the Hike and Hoot event.
- With watershed community volunteers and our own professional equipment, we hosted an annual event to eradicate invasive species such as scotch broom on private and public land which serves to improve and preserve the riparian corridors and aids in replanting native species.
- FMWW is available to residents for assistance in watershed restoration preservation projects. Over the last five years in response to requests for assistance, watershed volunteers have assisted in large animal relocation away from the waterways, constructed manure holding pens, improved drainage systems, installed waddles and hay bales to prevent erosion and run off into the creek. FMWW regularly advises residents as to best management practices in the application of 'fish friendly farming.'
- Friends of the Mark West Watershed is fiscally sponsored by the World Stewardship Institute (www.ecostewards.org), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization as of this year. WSI's mission is to cultivate environmental stewardship within individuals and organizations. Contribution to FMWW are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. WSI Federal Tax ID # 77-0422218. Thank you WSI for your confidence in us and support.
- In partnership with Rincon Valley Fire Dept. and Alpine Club, FMWW has begun development of a community emergency and communication plan. Volunteers are collecting vital statistics from local residents and organizing rescue information and a network database.

If you are interested in participating in any of these projects please log on to our web page at markwestwatershed.org for contact information or email graybird@vom.com.

Income Report 2001 – 2007

Through September 2007, FMWW has raised \$35,282 in actual contributions and received an estimated \$43,850 of in-kind contributions from the greater community. Thank you to each who have contributed in any way. You made a difference!

Many thanks to Jack, Ali and Aquarius at Mark West Lodge for contributing way beyond what was reasonable to the success of dinner dance and the viability of the Mark West Watershed, ridge top to ridge top.

Upper Mark West Watershed Nominated as a Priority Conservation Area

In August the Upper Mark West Watershed was nominated by Sotoyome Resource Conservation District, in partnership with Friends of the Mark West Watershed, Dept. of Fish and Game, Sonoma County Water Agency and Monan's Rill Institute to be designated a priority conservation area by the Association of Bay Area Governments.

Protection of the Mark West Watershed and its fishery is an objective of the full compliment of resource protection and regulatory agencies including, in addition to the Department of Fish and Game and NOAA, Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Water Agency, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (TMDL's), NFWS (endangered species), Army Corp of Engineers (wetlands), writes Sotoyome RCD's Kara Heckert.

Our organized community efforts were recognized in support of the application: "The demonstrated high quality natural resources and extensive community engagement of the upper Mark West Creek watershed makes it an ideal area to bring together a wide array of agency, organization and jurisdictional interests" according to RCD analysis.

The application underscores that the 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.

Designation of the 20,000 acres in the Upper MW watershed by the FOCUS program of the Association of Bay Area Governments as a priority conservation area is sure to attract further protection, conservation and investment in preservation of the Upper Mark West Watershed. You can read the entire application online at markwestwatershed.org. and learn more about the FOCUS program.

Upcoming Events in the Mark West Watershed:

Sept 29	Forestry Stewardship Workshop
Oct. 27	Harvest Moon Dinner Dance
Coming this Spring :	
April TBA	Watershed Clean-up Weekend
April TBA	Hike and Hoot

Interested in being more involved in FMWW? General Meetings held the 3rd Thursday of each month Feb – Oct. 6:00–8:30. Bring a small dish to share with your neighbors!

Interested in hiking Saddle Mountain? Please inquire about guides who can take you and a small group to see the newly acquired open space lands by emailing: info@landpaths.org

Forest Stewardship Workshop

September 29, 2007 8:00 am – 5:00 pm Monan's Rill
\$10.00 registration fee includes lunch. Deadline is Sept 21
Make checks payable to: UC Regents
Mail to: UCCE, Forestry
Atten: Sherry Cooper
1851 Hartnell Ave. Redding, CA 96002
530-224-4902 slcooper@nature.berkeley.edu

What are the most important issues affecting our watershed? This fall, a number of experts will be on hand to help local landowners learn about important forestry stewardship issues affecting our watershed. The morning hours of this first workshop will be dedicated to discussions about Forest Ecology and threats to our local ecosystems. The afternoon will be used for field excursions to view completed stewardship projects.

Topics will include:

- * Preparation for Wildfire
- * Sudden Oak Death
- * Erosion Prevention

Presenters include:

Fred Euphrat – Forest, Soil and Water Inc
David Lewis - Watersheds and Fisheries- U. C, Extension
Steven Swain – U. C. Cooperative Extension
Careleon Safford – Sonoma County Office of Emergency Services and Fire Safe Sonoma

Creek Report

The beautiful upper Mark West Creek and some of its tributaries are still supporting populations of migratory steelhead. Spawning steelies have been witnessed in the upper reaches of the Mark West Watershed last winter and even once in mid-April.

However, as of mid-July according to some long-time creek-side residents, the creek flow levels are the lowest witnessed in decades. Also the lower stretches of M. W. Creek, particularly where it joins the Laguna de Santa Rosa, are choked with aquatic plants robbing dissolved oxygen from the streams. Plus high levels of nutrients from effluent discharge and fertilizer runoff is evident. To address these concerns and improve the health of this watershed, the FMWW is expanding its effort to include concerned neighbors downstream.

Working toward these goals, FMWW has officially partnered-up with the Laguna Foundation to help each other in developing and implementing restoration and conservation plans. FMWW is also working with Dept. of Fish and Game, RCD and the Sonoma County Water Agency to collect data and assess the watershed's health as regard to steelhead and coho habitat.

Last fall, before the rains, an official "fish count" was done in the main stream of M. W. Creek and an active tributary, Weeks Creek, led by Ca. Dept. of Fish and Game with the help of Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission. Dozens of 1, 2 and 3 year young steelhead were revealed and documented, along with other aquatic life. Plus water conditions and other riparian habitat were monitored and mapped, resulting in a favorable report.

The So. Co. Water Agency has loaned FMWW five "hobo temps" [digital thermometers that read and record stream temperatures around the clock]. In early summer they were placed in the upper M.W Cr., plus two active tributaries, Weeks and Alpine

Creeks. Before the winter rains, they will be removed and data down loaded. FMWW is also collecting data with monthly in-stream water monitoring thanks to Grif Okie and CCWI.

Although this was a low rainfall year, health of the watershed is evident by the return of many spectacular wild flowers [native orchids-- spotted coral root and calypso bulbosa--leopard lily, scarlet monkey flower, Ca. Indian pinks, sidalcea], plus flowering dogwood and western azalea creekside. Many reported wild life sightings of raptors, owls, red-breasted sapsucker, downy woodpecker and fox. Mountain lion sightings were reported by Sherry Soleski, Janis Jordan and Richard Baril. However, some watershed residents [coyote and otter] sightings are down. This is some of the good and bad news as we learn more about the wildlife community of which we are all a part. With stream flows so low, one of the best things we can do right now as good stewards, whether on well water, springs or public or community water systems, is to practice stringent water conservation. We must continue to be aware of our impact upon the wildlife community and indeed this planet of which we are a part and hopefully educate each other toward good stewardship of this critical habitat area and important natural resource. Call me with any concerns or ideas. Richard 538-2673

Planning! Planning! Planning!

Friends of the Mark West Watershed will be preparing two plans beginning this fall. The first is a Strategic Plan for our future activities. The second is a Mark West Watershed Restoration and Stewardship Plan. Everyone is encouraged to participate.

The Sotoyome RCD will be taking the lead on the Restoration and Stewardship Plan. The RSP will bring together the science and direct the technical work we will need to accomplish our goals. The Monan's Rill Institute will be assisting with our strategic plan. Between the two, we should have a good road map for our future activities. Check the web site and subscribe to the FMWW email list for future information on the plans.

Strategic Plan includes:

- Who are we, FMWW (Landowners, residents, supporters, other organizations)?
- What do we want to accomplish (Vision, mission, etc.)?
- Whom can we find who shares our interests (RCD, F&G, private supporters, etc.)?
- How do we fund our activities?

Restoration and Stewardship Plan includes:

- Identify and describe the Mark West Watershed in geographic terms and at a scale appropriate to support "parcel" scale stewardship planning.
- Inventory and collect available environmental data.
- Identify additional data needed for stewardship planning
- Document the History of the Mark West Watershed (Who lived here, when, how did they live, and how did they change the watershed)?
- Recommend reasonable stewardship goals for the community.
- Develop monitoring/feedback loop.

Attention Quilters and Wanna Be Quilters!!!

Back in the 1950's and before, the members of the Watershed district which included the Alpine Improvement Club used to have "Quilting Bee's" and bazaars. If you would like to participate in making a block for a quilt that will be auctioned off at the Harvest Moon Dinner Dance 2008. Please contact Janis at 538-2537 or Dolores at 538-2673.

Friends of the Mark West Watershed
6985 St. Helena Rd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Friends of the Mark West Watershed
Patricia Gray, President
Harriet Buckwalter, Vice President
Willaim 'Bill' Blake, Treasurer
Dinner Committee:
Pat Gray, Chair
Sherry Soleski, a la Heart Catering, Co-Chair
Harriet Buckwalter, Team leader
Richard Baril, Team Leader
Bill Blake, Team Leader
Penny Sirota, Josh Tracy, Katherine Stevens,
Janis Jordon, Dolores Barrett, Paul Marking,
Jean Magrette, Megan Dehn, Jeff Phillips,
Scott Sirota

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 DANCE

Individual Ticket
___ \$40 per ticket # of tickets _____ Sponsorship _____ \$150 (2 tickets) # of tickets _____

___ Sorry, we cannot attend
but would like to contribute \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Please RSVP no later than October 10th!
Return this form and payment to: (See bottom for checks)
FMWW 6985 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 Fax (707) 539-5612 Email: graybird@vom.com
***All Donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Please make checks payable to "WSI/FMWW"
Federal Tax ID # 77-0422218***