Hydrogeology Study of the Upper Mark West Watershed …or “Why should I care about Coho in our stream?”

Here is the dream…a landscape full of water song, fresh flowing water in all our streams. Water steadily seeps into the cracks and crevices recharging springs and wells. Cool, deep pools shelter Coho and Steelhead throughout the heat of summer. Each year, our water wells rise, confirming our water security. Sounds great, doesn’t it?

Water is life. In that regard, Coho are like our canaries. Their survival is not merely a wildlife lover’s attachment to the past; these fish are living indicators of our own water security in this watershed, where we are all dipping our straws into a same common resource.

We know our watershed is under increasing pressure. New neighbors can bring new water use demands. Climate change models for our area predict an increasing water deficit in a hotter, drier landscape. Atmospheric rivers, when they arrive, deliver large amounts of water in fewer events. If we are going to flourish on this land, we will need to respond to these signals and adapt.

Here are some tips for the outside of your home:

1. Install a fire-resistant roof.
2. Enclose the underside of eaves, balconies and above ground decks exterior windows.
3. Clear flammable vegetation at least 10 feet from roads and street, especially at night.
4. Cut back overhanging tree branches above access roads; 15’.
5. Hire a qualified professional to do the job.

If you are interested in participating please contact Matt O’Connor directly at coastrangeceo@sonic.net or cell phone: 707-953-8681 (leave message or send text if no answer).

Resources for Fire Prevention Strategies

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has an excellent Homeowners Checklist that can help you make your home fire-safe inside and outside. You can download it at www.fire.ca.gov/communications/downloads/fact_sheets/Checklist.pdf.

Another good resource from CalFire is Hardening Your Home www.readyforwildfire.org/Hardening-Your-Home/. And check out the book The Fire Smart Home Handbook by Clydes Soles. Here are some tips for the outside of your home:

- Design and Construction:
  1. Use ignition-resistant construction for roofs/roof assemblies, gutters, vents (e.g., intumescent screens), decks, exterior walls and exterior windows.
  2. Enclose the underside of eaves, balconies and above ground decks with fire resistant materials.
  3. Show your 100 feet Defensible Space on a plot plan.
  4. Consider installing roof sprinklers (some debate on this?)
  5. Hire a qualified electrician to perform electrical updates and repairs to avoid fire-starting short circuits and dangerous wiring.

Access:

1. Make sure that your street name sign is easily visible from the street, especially at night.
2. Address numbers should be at least 3 inches tall in reflective numbers. Signs should be made from metal or other fire resistant materials.
3. Identify at least two exit routes from your neighborhood.
4. Clear drivable landscaping at least 10 feet from roads and five feet from driveways.
5. Cut back overhanging tree branches above access roads; 15’ clearance is optimal.

Roof:

1. Install a fire-resistant roof.
2. Remove leaves and needles from your roof and gutters. You might need to do this a few times a year. (continues on back page)