



PRESIDENT'S LETTER

After a mild winter and shortened rainy season, we look forward nevertheless to the summer's warmth. Some things never change as far as enjoying the beautiful environment of our river and mountain setting. One thing that will change is the composition of our Board of Trustees with the loss of Joe Taylor and my not standing for re-election as President at the General Membership Meeting on July 6th.

Both Joe and I have strong feelings about maintaining a separation between the Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District and our Fitch Mountain Association. When two of our Trustees also serve on the Del Rio Board, it is difficult to keep a conflict of interest from entering discussions and the decisions our Trustees are responsible for making. As a result, Joe submitted his resignation from the Fitch Mountain Association Board of Trustees effective last March and I will be leaving as President and Trustee when my term is up at the end of June of this year.

This will leave vacancies at President, Vice-President and Treasurer as well as three additional trustee positions being available. Those with an interest in serving in any of these capacities are encouraged to contact me or any of the Trustees, preferably before the July meeting.

It has been a privilege and honor to work with the Association and, in the process, to meet so many of you over the past four years. What's important now is for you to elect a board that is independent, not encumbered by conflicting allegiances, one composed of individuals who recognize the complexities

of the issues and who will put the interests of our mountain community and its environment first, above personal preferences. I will see you on July 6th.

Kate Barrett

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Treasurer's Report

Checking: \$243.54 Savings: \$2392.84

SERVING YOUR COMMUNITY

It is election time for the association, an instance when we call on neighbors to become part of the leadership of the community living on Fitch Mountain.

Your association endeavors to keep you abreast of the issues affecting our area and is the recognized voice of our collective neighbors to the many state and local agencies that we collaborate with in representing your wishes.

Terms of office are reasonable, two years for officers and six for trustees. (However, Joe Taylor's trustee position has three remaining years.) Meetings of officers and trustees are quarterly unless the President calls a special meeting for something urgent. General membership meetings are held twice a year.

Qualifications for office are not demanding. The most important element is a willingness to serve. Living locally is helpful but not necessary. Presently we have a trustee who commutes for meetings from the Bay Area and others have done so in the past.

One of the best descriptions of the goal of education is:

"The ability to think straight, some knowledge of the past, some vision of the future, some skill to do useful service, some urge to fit that service into the well-being of the community—these are the most vital things education must try to produce."

Virginia Crocheron Gildersleeve
(1877–1965), U.S. educator

In my opinion the above is an excellent outline of just what it takes to serve your community.

Donita Proctor

Hurry Up & Wait

We have been hearing about the state mandated Assembly Bill 885 regarding septic systems for a few years now. The new regulations will have a big impact on our less than perfect systems here on Fitch Mountain. If you call the county, as a concerned citizen, trying to get a jump on the upcoming regulations, you will get as many divergent answers as people that you talk to. The county is right now in the process of re-designing its web site to make information more accessible; the trouble is there still is no concrete information. It is all subject to individual county interpretation and implementation. Here is what we know for sure, sort of:

The county, in a cost cutting measure, has merged 8 districts into 6, providing less people to oversee septic system regulation over a greater area. The person recently assigned to our area is Elsa Frick, who previously worked in Sonoma Valley.

May 8th was the end of the comment period for the draft EIR regarding septic systems.

July 1st to Sept. 15th is the period for draft comment responses.

Sept. 15th to October 30th is another public comment period.

January 2009 - the rules (?) become effective.

July 1, 2009 - is the projected time for implementation. (A person I interviewed who works closely with the county doubts that the county will be doing any implementation until 2010.)

How is an upgrade triggered? What will it entail? These are questions we can't answer yet. Go online with Sonoma County and read for yourself this very important legislation that could change our lives in ways we don't expect.

<http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/index.htm>

Penelope La Montagne



MOSQUITO BIRTH CONTROL

When you look into their life cycle and anatomy, mosquitoes are quite fascinating, but I'd rather study the annoying creatures on the internet than up close and personal—wouldn't you? Some ways to cut into their population are prevention, protection, and extermination.

Mosquito eggs are laid in even small amounts of still water. So empty out all those buckets (even upended ones), plates under flower pots, tarps, etc., after a rain (hah!) or watering. If a rain barrel or other container can't be emptied, a thin layer of oil on top may suffocate the larva after the eggs hatch.

Female mosquitoes bite warm-blooded animals (like us!) to get certain proteins they need to develop eggs, so covering up or using repellent short-circuits the reproduction cycle in a small way. (If they drink their fill, they can lay eggs every third night.)

The best bet for long-term eradication is ruthless mosquitocide. There are propane-powered trap-and-suck-up devices out there, but their cost is in the \$100s. I've ordered two much less-expensive, seduce-and-slaughter packets that have received very high ratings from Amazon customers. Supposedly you can achieve a significant reduction in the mommy mosquito population in 4-6 weeks. So ask me about the "Spring Star Mosquito Trap" at our meeting!

Ellen Silge

Conflict of Interest

Effective last March I resigned as a trustee and officer of the Fitch Mountain Association.

Although I have enjoyed serving the community and am pleased that the Association has been effectively dealing with matters important to local residents, there is one issue, namely the presence of the Del Rio Recreation & Park District on the mountain, that presents an ongoing challenge that needs constant and vigilant attention. However, the composition of the FMA board of trustees, now with two of four members also serving on the Del Rio board, inhibits objectivity when discussing issues related either directly or indirectly to the District and/or in formulating effective action. The free flow of reliable and forthcoming information, essential for any board to deal effectively with important issues, has been compromised. For me personally, the situation became untenable—the conflict of interest irreconcilable.

With the Del Rio District being a public, governmental agency, all of its actions should be available and open to public scrutiny. Considering the impact of the District on this community and the small size of the FMA board, I feel it is counterproductive to have fellow trustees serving on both boards. I hope that members of the Fitch Mountain Association will take this under consideration when selecting trustees and that any future board will find a more effective means of dealing with the District, its representatives and its numerous ramifications for the people, the riparian community and the quality of life on Fitch Mountain.

Joe Taylor

THE SKY ISN'T FALLING, BUT MAYBE THE OCCASIONAL OAK TREE

On May 28th, I toured Fitch Mountain Road with Lisa Bell, Sudden Oak Death (SOD) Coordinator for the U. C. Davis Extension, and Sheila Menzies, neighbor and fellow friend of our forest. As our keynote speaker on Sunday, July 6th at the Villa Chanticleer Annex, Bell will address the threat of SOD to our neighborhood.

We made frequent stops to check for telltale signs of the fungus in coast live oak, toyon, and bay laurel and sample leaves were taken from Sheila's and my property to be sent in for testing.

Our coast live oak is the most prevalent tree on the mountain that is susceptible to this pathogen.

Here are some excerpts from an article last October in the *Press Democrat*:

“Since sudden oak death, or SOD, was first spotted a decade ago, it has spread rapidly, affecting 60,000 acres in Sonoma County in the past two years alone. Sonoma is by far the hardest hit of the 14 counties now under state quarantine in California, with more than twice the affected acres as the next hardest hit – Monterey County, according to Lisa Bell, the sudden oak death program coordinator for U. C. Davis's Office of Cooperative Education.

“SOD is brought on by the pathogen *phytophthora ramorum*, which thrives in cool, wet climates. So California's coastal evergreen forests and tanoak/redwood forests within the fog belt seem to provide the ideal conditions for it to proliferate.

“Experts recommend that property owners with affected trees remove as many dead and diseased trees as possible and either cut them up for firewood, burn them or chip them – being careful to keep the chips on the property to reduce the chance of spreading the pathogen.

“*P. ramorum* needs a host to reproduce, and the most significant host in California is the bay laurel, which is ubiquitous in the woodlands of California. The closer bays are to oaks, the more likely the oaks will be affected. Other plants also serve as hosts such as rhododendrons, camellias and oleander.”

Lisa Bell will be available for questions following her presentation. We urge you to attend to learn how to recognize and deal with this imminent threat to our forest.

Kate Barrett

Fire Safe Sonoma's Sudden Oak Death Fuels Mitigation Project

Fire Safe Sonoma's Fuels Mitigation Project is intended to help homeowners create defensible space by removing vegetative fuel hazards caused or exacerbated by tree mortality due to Sudden Oak Death. This program is made possible by funding provided by a National Fire Plan grant from the Bureau of Land Management through the California Fire Safe Council. We deeply appreciate BLM's support of fire safety efforts in our county.

Who can apply for funds?

Individuals, homeowners associations and informal groups of homeowners working together can apply for funds to help pay for fire fuel removal. The overall focus of this program is on the 100' defensible space radius and important access roads, so make sure your project focuses on those areas (read more on defensible space below).

Your neighborhood group can be an entire neighborhood or non-contiguous homes within the same area. Ideally, we'd like to have whole neighborhoods involved because a bunch of fire safe homes all in a row are exponentially better than single safe homes, but, we do understand that not everyone may want to participate. Show them how it's done and catch them next time!

If there are individuals whose homes already meet fire safe standards, but who want to pitch in to help on the project, include their names and addresses in the application, but note by their address in the application that their property does not need work.

Grant awards will vary from project to project, but the maximum award will be \$2,000 for individual applicants and \$4000 for neighborhoods.

Projects will be ranked by Fire Safe Sonoma's selection committee according to the following criteria:

Overall criteria:

1. Projects that will reduce fuel conditions in areas of high risk for extreme wildfire behavior that are exacerbated by Sudden Oak Death tree mortality.
2. Projects that take place in areas that have a high number of SOD dead trees.
3. Fuel reduction projects that have an impact on fire risk at the neighborhood scale.
4. Neighborhood projects that show solid commitments from as many participants as possible.
5. Projects that help those who are elderly, disabled and low-income take care of dead trees on their property.

This information comes from:
www.firesafesonoma.org



Alexander Valley Discharge Site Abandoned

The *Healdsburg Tribune* reported on May 29, 2008 that the Santa Rosa Wastewater plan had abandoned the discharge site (D-4) from the EIR four days before the May 20th close of comment on the EIR. This is attributed to protest from Alexander Valley Association, Dry Creek Valley Association, West-side Association to Save Agriculture and the Russian Riverkeeper.

Citing a fatal flaw in the plan that would contaminate the City of Healdsburg's well fields, the spokesperson for Clean Water Coalition of Northern Sonoma County said everyone is elated!

The Fitch Mountain Association contributes to the Russian Riverkeeper organization to help in these efforts to protect the river. We would like to say thank you to all members who took the time to write their concerns and comments on the EIR to the City of Santa Rosa. We also thank Don McEnhill for his tireless efforts in alerting the association about the plans and in fighting for an uncontaminated river. Don McEnhill's parents have long been members of the association.

The entire battle is not won. The plan still contains provision (studies) to dump the wastewater into the river at the remaining sites at the Highway 101 freeway in Healdsburg and Steelhead Beach in Forestville.



Del Rio Dam Update

Getting right to the point, there will not be a dam this summer. However, lifeguards will be on duty from 12:00 noon until 7:00 p.m., seven days a week, as they were last year.

What about the future? The president of the Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District (DRWRPD) has held discussions with a representative from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and the district's environmental engineer. In February the three of them met at the beach. The discussion held at that time concerned the type (s) of mitigation DRWRPD would have to perform in order to satisfy the DFG's concerns. For example, for every willow which may be covered with water when the dam is in, a willow would have to be planted above the summer water level. It is anticipated that a revised California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) report addressing these issues will be completed by mid to late summer. The goal is to begin construction on the dam next spring, assuming the concerns of the regulatory agencies are met in a timely fashion.

Al Pucci



Officers and Trustees

Kate Barrett, President:
431-8613: email, drymesakb@comcast.net

Ellen Silge: Secretary

Penelope La Montagne: Trustee

Donita Proctor: Trustee

Alfred Pucci: Trustee



Riding the Rail on Fitch Mountain

We all know that Fitch Mountain Road becomes a racetrack every weekday morning between 7:45 and 8:15 and, here on the north side at least, we know why. About a month ago, on Monday the 21st of April, I had a doctor's appointment in Santa Rosa and backed out of our driveway just about exactly 8 a.m. heading toward the Villa. I saw her comin' behind me the minute I was on the road, and she was comin' fast in her white pickup, her small child belted in (I hope) beside her. With a rise in the road ahead I pulled over toward the middle of the road to keep her from passing, and she snuggled up to within a foot of my back bumper and, of course, HONKED to show me what she had to offer. The rise gradually came and went and there was clear sailing down the stretch toward Redwood Drive and beyond. Playing road police I continued to hug the center rail, prohibiting her from crossing the double solid line and passing, and she sat on her horn just inches away until we were well up the hill. I was going 25 but slowed whenever she came up and hugged my tail. Eventually she subsided, realizing there was no point in dealing with this "jerk" in front of her. She turned off to the right half way down Powell.

Considering that we have no Highway Patrol surveillance on the mountain, it occurred to me that there might be others as crazy as I am who'd be willing to drive the road at 25 in either direction during this critical 30-minute period each morning for the expressed purpose of keeping others driving at the posted speed. Thanks in advance. I'll see you out there.

Joe Taylor

Officer & Trustee Nominations

Fitch Mountain Association

President / Vice President / Treasurer	
President:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vice President:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treasurer	<input type="checkbox"/>

Trustee / 3 positions open	
Penelope La Montagne, incumbent (6 year term)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trustee (6 year term):	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alfred Pucci, incumbent (6 year term)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trustee (6 year term):	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trustee (3 year term):	<input type="checkbox"/>

Instructions: For each of the **three officer positions** write in the name of one nominee and check the appropriate box. There are **three trustee positions** available. To nominate one or both of the two trustee incumbents check the appropriate box. To nominate others write in your nominee in one or more of the three spaces provided and then check the appropriate box.

Please mail this form with your membership check to: Fitch Mountain Association, P. O. Box 1233, Healdsburg, CA 95448, or bring to the July 2008 meeting. Nominations will be taken from the floor.

FITCH MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 1233
HEALDSBURG, CA 95448
WWW.FITCHMOUNTAIN.ORG

and Randy Collins
Healdsburg Fire Department Chief

Guest Speakers: Lisa Bell
Sudden Oak Death Program Coordinator, U. C. Davis

Officer and Trustee Elections

Join us on July 06, 2008, 11a.m. at the Villa Chanticleer Annex!

Mail check with your nominations to:
Fitch Mountain Association
P.O. Box 1233
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Donations are tax deductible.
California 501(c) # C0930278

July 2008 - June 2009	Time to join or rejoin FMA!	Dues \$10 per voting member
Name(s)		
Address		
Phone		
Email		
		Amount enclosed: