



President's Message: June 2010

Hello Fitch Mountain! The sun is shining as I write this and I have high hopes that it will continue to warm our water-logged hearts!

May was filled with contrasting events for our citizens. There was a Del Rio Beach party that resulted in the CHP and Sheriff (including Henry 1) to mobilize along with a loose, presumably armed felon who shut down access to our beloved mountain for over four hours. There are folks (myself included) who will carry the vision of armed SWAT team members in their memories for some time to come.

The positive events to report were our successful Ludwigia presentation by The River Keeper at Kate Barrett's wooded paradise and the successful Scotch Broom Removal work party that was sponsored by Fire Free Fitch.

We will be holding elections at our July 11th bbq/membership meeting. Open positions will be for Vice-President and Treasurer. I encourage folks to consider serving. The time commitment is not great and the rewards of contributing to your mountain community are many. Please contact me at ann-and-laura@comcast.net if you are interested in running. There will also be an opportunity to write in candidates at the meeting.

We will be having our annual membership meeting at the Villa Chanticleer Picnic/BBQ area on Sunday, July 11th from 1-3pm. The bbq/picnic was soooooo popular last year that we decided to do it again.

The Association will provide beef or veggie burgers along with beverages. If you can attend, please bring a dish to serve 10 people. Last name beginning with the letters A-F veggies or green salad, G-L fruit, fruit salad, or dessert, M-R pasta or casserole, and S-Z salsa/chips or nuts. **Please RSVP to me ann-and-laura@comcast.net by Thursday, July 8th. This is a no alcoholic beverages meeting!**

The past two years as President have passed quickly! I was asked to serve, I did. I was presented with an election challenge within the week of my election that resulted in a revamping of our election process. We have created a mission statement, adopted a slogan, established a blast e-mail system, surveyed membership and acted on survey items, updated our web site, and continue to evolve to meet the needs of our mountain community. I look forward to continuing to help our Association!

Laura E. Rodriguez
President

Financial Report

Checking: \$1530.83

Savings: \$848.10

Volunteers clear road on Fitch mountain

Community cleanup is a first for the privately owned mountain top

By Lynda Hopkins: Staff Writer

Published: Wednesday, May 26, 2010 3:28 PM PDT

On Saturday morning, more than twenty volunteers gathered on the upper reaches of Fitch Mountain to sweep the area of broom.

It was the first time that the privately owned mountain top has been opened to the community for fire safety measures. Volunteers cleared an overgrown fire road, pulling out broom plants so that a fire engine could get to the top of the mountain in case of emergency. Some of the broom pulled by volunteers was nearly fifteen feet tall.

“Broom is particularly bad because it’s very invasive. It will replace native plants, smother trees, climb signposts and cover them up. It’s particularly rampant along roads on the mountain because when there is a road there’s cleared area so there’s sunshine,” Laura Tietz, the founder of Fire Free Fitch, explained. And thanks to the unusually wet May weather, the timing of the broom removal was perfect.

“One reason we’re doing this strong effort to remove broom this year is because of all the rain. It has made the soil much softer, so we can actually pull broom out, roots and all,” Tietz explained. While Fire Free Fitch—which is running a broom abatement program focusing on education and removal—served as the instigator for the project, the effort was a true collaboration between four local organizations. Those organizations included Fire Free Fitch, Cal Fire, Fire Safe Sonoma, and the Rotary Club of Healdsburg.

Fire Free Fitch advertised and coordinated the effort. Fire Safe Sonoma provided the use of a wood chipper, and Cal Fire’s battalion chief Kim Thompson led Saturday’s effort on the ground. The Rotary Club of Healdsburg provided funding for event insurance, which enabled community members to participate in the broom removal.

Residents of Fitch Mountain came out, they said, to improve and protect their native landscape. “This is our playground,” said Fitch Mountain resident Scott Schadlich, who wielded a weed wrencher to help loosen the largest broom plants prior to pulling.

Not every volunteer was a Fitch Mountain resident; some were just fans. “I just hike it,” said Lily Tomkovic. “We’ve always noticed how much broom there is. I used to think it was beautiful, but then I learned it can be dangerous. I saw the signs posted on the mountain about the removal and called Laura to see if I could help.”

Battalion Chief Kim Thompson was impressed with the number of community members who came out to volunteer on a Saturday morning.

“It’s fantastic in the sense that it does bring the community out, and it does give us access for trucks,” Thompson said.



Thompson also saw the gathering as an educational opportunity. “I’ve been doing a lot of talking to the people who did come out, discussing the fire season and things they can do at their own homes,” he added. “The rains have allowed the vegetation to grow higher and thicker than normal. The good part is that we’re not getting the fires that we were getting this time last year, so it gives us all a little more time to prepare.”

Caerleon Safford of Fire Safe Sonoma noted that her organization provides wood chippers for independent homeowners who are clearing defensible space and fire roads. “We really like to do neighborhood projects too,” Safford said. “Ten houses in a row making defensible space are far more effective than 10 single houses putting in defensible space separately. The more everybody works together, the better.” As Tietz put it, “You’re only as safe as your neighbors, and your neighbors are only safe if you are.”

And fire engine access to the top of Fitch Mountain will not only make Fitch Mountain residents safer—it will make Healdsburg residents safer, too. Tietz noted, “The fire chief has called it the single most potentially dangerous fire hazard for the city of Healdsburg—a fire that starts on the mountain and goes downhill.”

“These are essential fire roads,” Ed Wilson, the landowners’ attorney said. “That’s why the owners have them in here. They’re overgrown, and there are more still to do, but this is our pilot project.” **Wilson added, “I’ll give Laura the full accolades for pulling everyone together to get this done.”** While broom abatement is Fire Free Fitch’s current focus, the non-profit organization also offers code-approved reflective road signs to any member of Sonoma County at the below-cost price of \$10 per sign. Emergency responders often have trouble locating addresses, especially in rural areas at night. For more information, e-mail firefreefitch@yahoo.com.

**The reporter neglected to mention FMA as participating.*

Member Communications



A non-profit organization serving the residents of Fitch Mountain, Huddsberg, Co.

[Home](#) [About](#) [News](#) [Calendar](#) [Minutes](#) [FireSafety](#) [FAQ](#) [Contact](#)

Fitch Mountain Association
Contacts

Welcome

This site is for members of the Fitch Mountain Association and others who are interested in the activities of the association. Here you will find the history through posted minutes and newsletters and meeting announcements. Joining the association, which is for anyone living on the mountain, can be accomplished by downloading the dues application and sending it to the address listed under the contact page.

Fitch Mountain

Lodwigia Removal Training May 1, 2010
Membership Meeting July 11, 2010
1:00 p.m. Villa Chauncleer Picnic area
Map to Villa Chauncleer
June 2009 newsletter
February 2010 newsletter
[Use GoodSearch to help raise funds for FMA.](#)

www.fitchmountain.org

We encourage you to bookmark our site and to check in frequently. We recently added copies of former blast list items, links, and calendar dates of local events/trainings. Here you will find notices and past minutes. If there are items we have overlooked that you think SHOULD be posted, send a note to: donitaproc@comcast.net .

Help us earn money with your searches

We recently sent you information about earning money for the association by using the GoodSearch engine. Go to goodsearch.com and type in **Fitch Mountain Association** as the charity you search for. Then search as you would on Google, and FMA gets a few cents for each cyber hunt. Those pennies can add up! We also encourage you to download the Goodsearch tool bar and use it when purchasing on the internet.



The association is endeavoring to make our communications with you easy and offers several options: phone contact, E-mail blast list and web site.

NEWSLETTER UPDATES

As you know, the last newsletter was our first effort to go Green. As always, it was posted on the web site. Distribution was by e-mail notification, using the blast list to tell you it was available for immediate download. In this election season we can take pride that we have not added to the tons of printed materials that will make their way to recycle.

Printed copies were hand delivered to mountain residents who have not given us their e-mail address or simply don't use e-mail. This delivery was done by neighborhood volunteers Donita Proctor, Ellen Silge and Sharon Barbee. There was an additional benefit, the opportunity to meet newcomers on the mountain and talk about the association. Postage costs were minimal, as very few letters required mailing. This effort garnered about 6 new memberships. If you are willing to take a pleasant walk and talk with your neighbors, please call: **431-8789**. Neighborhood volunteers will be asked to hand-deliver about 20 copies of the newsletter.

Citywatch calls (county Robo calls)

Recognizing that everyone hates spam and unwarranted e-mail, we are prudent in using the e-blast list. The list proved to be very effective on May 20th when law enforcement was trying to apprehend a known felon on the mountain.

The automatic calls to residents warning of a lock down were received by some, *but not all*. Your phone's caller I.D. will not indicate who the call is coming from! As the HFD Chief, Randy Collins, told us, **you must be willing to answer unidentified calls**.

We used the e-blast system about this incident and got very positive feedback from those who had NOT gotten the call.

Goodbye to a special friend of Fitch Mountain

As of July 1, 2010, Randy Collins, Healdsburg Fire Chief, will be retiring. We have invited him to our meeting to honor him for all the years of mentoring and service to our community and the association. Randy has faithfully attended our annual meetings since 1999. He was instrumental in getting our original Wildland Fire Mitigation grant in 2000. He worked hand in hand with Battalion Chief Kim Thompson, Cal Fire (then CDF), and Sonoma County Dept. of Emergency Service in countless planning meetings, coordination of fire inspections and creation of pamphlets for the special training meeting held at Villa Chanticleer. As the Chief, you would encounter him at all emergency calls on the mountain, day or night, rain, wind and fire. This past winter season alone has seen trees falling on houses, trees knocking down high-powered lines and fire on the mountain. He knows that a major fire on the mountain threatens his city as well as the people who live here on the mountain. His dedication goes beyond concern for Healdsburg, it is a genuine affection for mountain residents. When we invited him this year his humble reply was, "I will no longer be Chief, but will be there if you want me." All of us should take the time at the meeting to thank him personally for his service. We wish him well in whatever his future brings!



Officers and Trustees: Terms

Laura Rodriguez, <i>President</i>	2008-2010
Collin Joy, <i>Vice President</i>	2008-2010
Maryanne Murray <i>Treasurer</i>	2008-2010
Ellen Silge: <i>Secretary</i>	2008-2010
Kate Barrett: <i>Trustee</i>	2008-2014
Don McEnhill: <i>Trustee</i>	2008-2011
Donita Proctor: <i>Trustee</i>	2005-2011
Alfred Pucci: <i>Trustee</i>	2008-2014

Officer Election 2010

Voting for officers of the association is open to paid members only. Be sure to pick up your ballot at the sign-in table when you pay your dues. Nominations for open offices will be taken from the floor. It is most helpful to our secretary when you bring the dues slip from this newsletter already filled out. This expedites check-in and gets the meeting started promptly. Meeting agendas are provided at the sign-in table.



"My creed is that public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, that honor is to be earned, not bought."
Margaret Chase Smith quotes (American Senator, 1897-1995)



Parking spaces are more valuable than platinum

“No parking” signs were posted in the late 70’s at our request to the Board of Supervisors. They were expanded to Bailache Ave in 1984.

As pointed out in the past, our roads were developed just about the time of the creation of the Model T car. Some residents do not have adequate parking to accommodate guests. Add to the mix the many visitors seeking river access and you have the perpetual problem of a blocked road. This applies to the many hillside homes as well as those along the main road.

Holiday weekends and very hot days create roadblocks for emergency vehicles.

At the May 18, 2010, meeting of the Del Rio Woods Park and Recreation District, deputy sheriff Greg Quacchi reiterated that residents MUST call to report illegal parking before crowds are so big that problems present!

This meeting was encouraging as we learned that there are three cars assigned to Zone 2, which includes Fitch Mountain. The extra car is paid for by River Rock Casino. CALL: 565-2121.

Officers assigned to our area are:

Deputy Blinker	Mon-Thurs-7-5pm
Deputy Londo	Sunday
Quacchi and De Santis	Weekends

Despite this recommendation, Rose Marie Johnson called and received an indifferent response from the dispatcher. When she explained the cars were blocking access for emergency vehicles, he said, “That’s why we have bumpers.” Call often and persistently!

Ludwigia Removal Training

Kate Barrett hosted a removal training on this invasive species on May 1, 2010. Russian Riverkeeper, Don McEnhill, led the demonstration as a “trainer of trainers.”

Donal provided attendees with written material for the techniques best used for the eradication of this pest, which harbors mosquito growth and takes over native species.

If you missed the training here are suggested ways to handle it to ensure there is no spreading of the weeds.

Tips for Removing Ludwigia:

Get it before summer starts!

- Manually remove weeds before they flower (April or May). Keep removing resprouts before flowering (July –August are peak seeding months).
- Ensure that all parts of the plant are removed, as rapid growth can occur from small pieces of the plant.
- Ludwigia may make rich compost but be sure it is composted far away from the river so it cannot spread.
- DO NOT let pulled weeds (even small pieces) float downstream! Even small parts of the plant can float downstream and invade another beach. Even if the plants are dead you must remove them because dead plants will decay and de-oxygenate the water.
- DO NOT rake weeds into the river.
- Floating booms can contain aquatic weeds and enable easier and safer removal.
- Rapid response to new invasions is key to control.
 - Get new plants before they get big!

Remember:

Always do good without causing more harm: prevent downstream spread! When you see new Ludwigia plants, remove them promptly before they mature and seed!
Weeds are not invincible: commit to long-term vegetation management and be persistent and you will prevail as they have on Peconic Bay in NY!

You can get the entire document from the Riverkeeper site located: <http://www.russianriverkeeper.org/>

Gravel Mining

Many of us have received a notice of the June 17, 2010, public hearing on gravel mining of the river from the Russian River Properties Association. The Title is: **The Truth about gravel mining it is not all bad.**

We encourage you to visit the following page to see the effects of gravel mining on the river:
www.russianriverkeeper.org/gravelmining.html

Past History: We have come a long way

[The Palm Beach Post - Aug 2, 1978](#) [Browse this newspaper »](#)

Beach Lovers Anger Residents

HEALDSBURG, Calif. (AP) — Nude bathers have taken to making love on the banks of the Russian River, and county officials were hearing complaints yesterday from outraged residents who fear the posh resort area may become a giant open-air bedroom.

"It's like Sodom and Gomorrah in Sonoma County," said Alice Hinton, who has gathered 1,000 signatures on a petition calling for a ban on all nude bathing in the area. "We're ready to drop a bomb in the middle of all those nude bodies if we have to."

The County Board of Supervisors met yesterday to discuss the controversy, but a ban was not expected to be formally introduced until next week.

One of the incensed property owners is actor Fred MacMurray, whose business agent has complained to the Sheriff's Office.

The film star raises cattle on his 1,600-acre ranch — one of the nudists' favorite hangouts — but rarely comes to the ranch. But his agent, J.L. VanSickle, said, "Fred doesn't like trespassers and trespassing has risen to epidemic proportions this year."

District supervisor Will Johnson is among those calling for an ordinance that would prohibit nude bathing within the view of area residents. "I am not upset by nude bath-

ing as long as it's kept private," he said.

Ms. Hinton, who lives with her parents and her 7-year-old son, Anthony, in a fashionable home overlooking Fitch Mountain Beach 70 miles north of San Francisco, was among the first to object to the free-wheeling skinny-dippers.

"It's not just copulation," said Ms. Hinton's mother, Loanna. "We see oral sex, too. On Broadway in San Francisco you pay admission to see these things. That's your choice. But when I walk on my deck, I have to see it. I don't have a choice."

At first, Ms. Hinton used a megaphone to shout at the mostly homosexual crowd at Wohler Road Beach and the more conventional revelers at Fitch.

Then she called the sheriff's office, hoping deputies would arrest the nudists. But they said the only applicable state law on the books was too difficult to enforce.

"Under the law, we can't go out on Wohler Bridge and make a mass arrest of every Tom, Dick or Harry," Undersheriff John Hess said.

There are those in Sonoma County who don't mind the nudists.

"This ain't no threat to public morals," said Curly Fitchmer, 27, who peddles beer for can at Wohler Beach. "I've been coming here seven years and never been hassled."



Del Rio Dam Update

By: Al Pucci
Director of

Del Rio Woods Park and Recreation District

First I would like to address the issue of public safety on the Del Rio beach. As most of you are aware by now, there was an incident on the beach in May (before the official opening of the beach) that required the assistance of the Sheriff's Department and the CHP. Specifically, there were many high school students reportedly from two different high schools (estimates varied, but one report stated as many as one hundred) from Santa Rosa and Windsor. It was reported that there were many dogs off leash, much drinking, and at least two fights between the attendees. As a result of this the Del Rio Woods Recreation and Park District (DRWRPD) Board held a special public meeting where the Board discussed the situation with a deputy, one member from the general public, and the Supervising Lifeguard. The outcome of the meeting was to contract with the Sheriff's Department for one off-duty deputy to be present at the beach on the Memorial Day Weekend (the official opening of the beach) and to hire a gatekeeper to collect a \$5 fee for parking and to disseminate the rules that would be enforced on the beach. By all reports, the weekend went well.

The Board will hold another special public meeting the week of June 7th to pass a resolution prohibiting alcohol on the beach regardless of age.

Now for the dam, once again I must report that the dam will not be up this year. Since the last update it was determined that the District resubmit all of its biological studies to all involved agencies as there was some confusion as to whether all the regulatory agencies had all of the District's studies. This done, the agencies have requested yet some additional invertebrate studies. These must be done during the next couple of months, the time when the future dam would be in place, to obtain valid data to be used in determining whether there would be any adverse effects to the invertebrates. Once these studies are delivered to all the agencies it is the Board's hope that a definitive plan of action can be generated.

Summer Rain

Triple digit forecast
north of the bridge
we brace for heat,
compress against
convection oven day,
we, the baked goods.

Then a wormhole,
a change in the weather,
shadows dissolve
angles at midday
descend into grey
while each green thing
goes neon. Clouds shuttle
into every inch of sky,
temperamental air
knocks leaves around,
thunder drowns out thought.
Giant drops steam on cars,
on streets, lightning fogs the day.
Summer rain.

Earth opens, rain enters
in the union, musk so potent
that bees go mad for awhile.

A man and a woman leave work early
breathing mist of the coming fig
wild plum fallen, zucchini blossom
fennel pollen, bay laurel
each breath weaving them deeper
into the fabric of this place
that makes a marvel of
summer rain.

Penelope La Montagne

