

The Newsletter of the



June 2017

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President's Message

FMA membership is up, we are communicating better, we have a new committee, we are facing continuing challenges, and we need more money. End of President's Message.

Seriously, your community organization is looking pretty good.

Our membership is up 27%--to 116 paid-up members. That represents about 34% of our FM community (using the Water District figures of 339 metered homes as a rough estimate of the size of our community), so we continue to hope for more of you to support our activities.

In past newsletters we've promised better communication, and we now have: a good, constantly expanding website (thanks, Webmaster Chuck Eaton!); members attending our Trustees Meetings; our committees holding "open-to-the-community" meetings (Del Rio Woods Committee, for one); and more e-blasting of what we're saying and doing (e.g., agendas and summaries of our Trustees and Officers meetings). Attend our July 16th annual membership meeting and you'll see new "input channels"!

Since we are all about fostering our Fitch Mountain community (see the FMA Mission Statement, farther on), we now have a Fun & Appreciation Committee, so come to our mixers and other events to have fun, then join a committee and be appreciated!

As to the challenges, we succeeded with a big one. We were successful with the campaign that prevented the City of Healdsburg from allowing large events to overwhelm the summit of the future Fitch Mountain Preserve, thanks to an outpouring of support, and we significantly shaped the final vision of what that Preserve will look like. Congratulations to us, and thank you, Kate Symonds!

Other challenges remain. One is re-building Fitch Mountain Road's infamous "Slump" and, indeed, the entire 2.7-mile roadway (and thus continuing the interesting history that Donita Proctor outlines in this issue). And we're almost 5 years into the septic systems issue ... with another 5-10 to come? Finally, we're making significant progress in emergency preparedness and fire prevention, thanks to Priscilla Abercrombie and Ginger Hobart's cadre of COPE neighborhood captains who are tracking you down as I write.

Lastly, the money. Your FMA has a strict budget process in place (thanks, Al Pucci), and Treasurer Marty Silge provides the annual membership meeting with a financial report, so you can see "where it's all going." Although all of us are unpaid volunteers, of course we do have equipment, food, and rental expenses, plus materials for the COPE program, and "lots of little stuff that adds up." That's why we encourage everyone to sign up as a full member. We are very grateful to a few members who make extra donations, and we would appreciate it if more could do the same; that money could be unrestricted, or you can specify the committee to which you want your contribution to go (see membership form)—Emergency Preparedness, Fun & Appreciation, and FM Preserve would be especially grateful!

All your Trustees and Officers are fiercely dedicated to having an FMA that effectively serves our entire Fitch Mountain community, and we welcome your input, criticism, suggestions! We look forward to seeing you on July 16th at Villa Chanticleer!

Dave

Current FMA Leadership

Trustees:

Sylvia Seventy: 2011-2017; 433-2946

Pat Abercrombie: 2016-2017; patabercrombie@comcast.net, 473-8217

Al Pucci: 2014-2020; apucci@gmail.com, 433-0484

Ken Hite: 2016-2020; kenhite@comcast.net, (415) 516-2702

Officers:

Dave Henderson, President: 2016-2018; davehen@sonic.net, 433-1930

Barbara Recchia, Vice-President: 2016-2017; barbsrace@yahoo.com, 431-0360

Dana Eaton, Secretary: 2016-2018; dana@eatonstudios.com, 433-4630

Marty Silge, Treasurer: 2016-2018; martinsilge@yahoo.com, 431-0814

Upcoming Trustees and Officers Meetings

The T&O's are scheduled to meet August 13, October 8, and December 10. The usual meeting time is 10 am to noon; location varies. Any Fitch Mountain resident is welcome to attend these meetings. You may make brief comments at the beginning of the meeting, or during the meeting regarding a particular item on the agenda. Check with the President or Secretary several weeks ahead of time about the location and agenda.

Volunteer Leaders:

COPE Committee Co-Chairs Priscilla Abercrombie, pdanp@comcast.net, and
Ginger Hobart, ginger@sonic.net

Del Rio Woods Committee Chair Pat Abercrombie, patabercrombie@comcast.net

Fire Prevention Committee Chair Ken Hite, kenhite@comcast.net

Fitch Mountain Preserve Committee Chair Kate Symonds

Fitch Mountain Water District Committee Chair Donita Proctor, donitaproctor@gmail.com

Fun and Appreciation Committee Chair: Kathryn Henderson,
fmafunappreciationkathryn17@gmail.com

Road Safety Committee Chair Al Pucci, apucci@gmail.com

Road Vision Committee (Temporary) Chair Dave Henderson, davehen@sonic.net

The Septicians Wastewater Systems Committee (Temporary) Chair Dave Henderson

Newsletter Editor Ellen Silge, ellensilge@yahoo.com

Webmaster Chuck Eaton, webmaster@FitchMtn.org

**One Mountain, One River, One Community
Serving Fitch Mountain Since 1979**



The FMA is a voluntary neighborhood organization that welcomes all residents (including renters) and property owners of Fitch Mountain. Its mission is:

- To preserve and enhance the unique nature of our locale, and to promote the safety and well-being of its residents.
- To support and cooperate closely with public and other entities that impact our lifestyle and environment.
- To encourage a sense of community and shared pride in our Fitch Mountain environment.
- To disseminate relevant information to our members and serve as a forum for exchange of ideas.

A GLIMPSE BACK ...

at what your FMA has done since the last Membership Meeting

- Community meeting at Del Rio Woods beach with SC Regional Parks to preview proposed improvement plans.
- Meetings with TPW (Sonoma County Transportation & Public Works) regarding N. and S. Fitch Mountain Rd., including a 3-hour boots-on-the-asphalt walk to discuss problems that have to be confronted: The Slump, landslides, bad surface everywhere, drainage, etc. (ongoing!).
- Too many meetings to count (20?) between FMA, LandPaths, and the City of Healdsburg regarding the Management Plan for Fitch Mountain Preserve.
- January Fun & Bingo at the Villa Chanticleer: creative food, Fitch Mountain-style bingo, raffle, and lots of good, clean family fun.
- Letters, meetings with Supervisor Gore, Sheriff, CHP, and Regional Parks about our holiday -period traffic and parking woes; regular installation of two banners and three sandwich-board signs to solve same.
- “Second Saturday of the Month Stewardship Days” see a FM squad working in the FM Preserve preparing/protecting it for the community, pulling broom, digging water bars, repairing paths, and a lot more! Thanks Pat, Kate, Becky, Laura, and the rest.
- Designed and inaugurated a great new FMA website, which will revolutionize how the FMA provides up-to-the-moment, very much needed information about important topics—including a webcam that will give continuous visual coverage of the River (to come)!
- Many meetings with three fire departments—Healdsburg FD, CalFire, and Sonoma Co. Fire & Emergency Services—to cooperate with grant applications, fuel-abatement inspection programs, and launch of our own COPE program.
- August mixer at Del Rio Woods beach: relax, eat and drink, enjoy our friends and neighbors!
- “The Septicians,” together with representatives of other downriver septic-challenged communities, meet almost every month with State and County officials to figure “what’s going on” and to make sure they pay attention to our common problems.
- The Water District Advisory Committee channeled water-user advice to Supervisor Gore and the TPW regarding a range of issues, including rates, infrastructure, conservation, etc., and issued informational bulletins to the ~340 district water-users.
- Highly motivated (oh, yes!) COPE neighborhood captains spent hours tramping through their neighborhoods, introducing themselves, collecting information from residents (when they could locate the addresses), learning how to best organize and respond in an emergency.
- Took over Laura Tietz’s many fire education and prevention programs when she retired from Fire Free Fitch. Go to our website and see the great information. Do you have a reflective address sign? Why not?! Order one through the website. ***Thank you, Laura, for all you did!***

—D.H.

FMA Money and Membership

The FMA has \$6558 in its accounts (\$425 in checking and \$6133 in savings) as of 5/31/17.

We currently have 116 paid members representing 83 households, an increase of 25 memberships and 11 households from last year.



2017 Annual Meeting—the Logistics!



The Fitch Mountain Association's annual meeting will be held at the Villa Chanticleer's outdoor BBQ area on Sunday July 16 from 1:00-4:00.

Come early to pick up a meeting info packet, make a name tag, and renew/initiate your FMA membership. Why membership? Your financial support of \$20 per member is important in facilitating the FMA's activities, both issue-based and for fun and fellowship. Although all of us are unpaid volunteers, of course, we do have equipment, food, and rental expenses, plus materials for the COPE program, and "lots of little stuff that adds up." FMA is your voice for Mountain issues, too, and when we work with County and local officials on a wide range of issues, we want to be able to show that we represent a committed membership truly representative of our FM community. (Note that this is a meeting for FMA members [and guests], and you need to be a member to vote on any resolutions or elections.)

The get-together on July 16 will begin with a BBQ lunch. The Association will provide the plates, cups, and utensils, etc.; beverages; and burgers (beef or vegie). It is very important that you **RSVP to:**

fmafunkappreciationkathryn17@gmail.com

by Wed. July 3 with the number attending and your choices of **meat** or **veggie** burger so Kathryn can shop for enough supplies and food and drink!

Please **bring a picnic dish to share**, going by the following last name "assignments": A-F: Salsa or dip with chips; G-L: Veggies or fruit; M-R: Dessert; and S-Z: Salad (greens or pasta). Other than that, just show up and enjoy!

The business of the day will include announcements, updates on current issues, and elections. The offices of Vice-President and two Trustees are to be filled by election. (See below.) The agenda will also include interactive elements to help attendees get to know each other better and exchange information and ideas. There will be major presentations on COPE (see pg. 8) and on the improvement project for Del Rio Woods beach. You will also have plenty of time, as the closing segment of the meeting, to "say anything you want to any FMA committee!"

This important meeting is a chance to renew your Mountain friendships and make new ones, influence the course of activity of your Association over the coming year, and become more personally involved in issues of special importance to you.

2017 FMA Trustee and Officer Candidates

The Nominating Committee "e-blasted" the following candidate statements on June 4th.

Rebecca Goodsell, candidate for Vice-President: My name is Rebecca L Goodsell. I have lived at 2494 Riverview Drive for eleven years. I enjoy living on the Mountain and look forward to serving on the Fitch Mountain board

Donita Proctor, candidate for Trustee: My past experience with FMA includes two full terms (4 yrs) and two interim terms (2 years) as president, 6 years as trustee, 2 years as secretary. As a 45 year resident of the mountain, I have a background in active leadership in FMA and the former Del Rio Homeowners Association, and retain "institutional memory" which is valuable. My goal is to follow the stated Mission Statement of the association.

Pat Abercrombie, candidate for Trustee: Pat Abercrombie is running for the FMA Board of Trustees. I am currently serving out a Trustee seat vacated early. I have lived on Fitch Mountain with my wife Priscilla and our two dogs for 5 years. I care very much for the neighborhood I live in and like to take an active role in addressing the challenges that inevitably arise in any community, whether it be our roads, our water, our common areas like the Fitch Mountain Preserve and Del Rio Woods. I would be happy to stay involved.

Our FMA Historian Delves into Road Records

Current events on Fitch Mountain Road (FMR) stimulated a look back at the history of road slides and problems throughout its history. Winter 2017 was rough on North FMR, causing a duplicate of the 1998 slide in the area next to Donita Proctor Creek. Additionally, “*The slump*” (crack and damage) just below the intersection of Scenic Lane made the road dangerous for days.

For the purpose of this article we will count 1922 (95 years ago) as the time when two previous roads were united as FMR. Seeking more history of the road slides since its creation, I consulted CDNC and the *Healdsburg Tribune* and *Sotoyome Scimitar* articles, now archived on the <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/> site.

The road was not an official county road until the deeds from the Fitch Mountain Land Co. were filed with the county recorder in 1922. Once accepted as a county road, the Board of Supervisors moved to work on it. The Supervisors awarded a contract to Mr. J.M. Delucca of San Francisco to build the road for \$7,415 (\$107,925 in today’s dollars). The bid specified 2.6 miles of road and 11,000 cubic yards of material. Completion was expected by June 15, 1922.

By March of 1922, there were seven slides blocking the road. The status in April mentioned the right of way was not yet cleared and graders were working in the prune orchard (Redwood Drive) and part of the way through the timbered area on the north side of the Mountain, with two months remaining before the projected opening. Completion of the road was accomplished in November of 1924, when the newspaper noted some 200 machines (cars) passed over it.

The first incident I found mentioning “*The slump*” - “*a slide beyond the Villa*” came in February of 1925, and there was another slide at Camp Rose. In 1926, Thanksgiving brought 2.24 inches of rain in a day and created another slide near the rocky point on FMR as well as downed trees at the Del Rio Woods entrance.

Rocky Point is described as follows: “*As soon as you pass Rocky Point which guards the approach to the resort section, you cannot help but note the improvements.*” We can assume that area is just across from the caution light near Fitch Mt. Court. By 1930 other news stated that the county declared war on the danger spots of FMR. Work concentrated on widening the road at Stony Point. It is described

as “almost too narrow for passing and is sharply curved.” We have no address but assume it is what we have called “Deadman’s Curve” on the ascent from Camp Rose to near the intersection of Madrone Street. Then in March 1935 the road was widened and a dredger employed to reduce the curves near the old site of Fitch Mountain Tavern and to make it safer for summer traffic and delivery trucks from town. The road was closed for a few days as the size of the dredger did not allow for passing vehicles.

In February of 1936, two weeks of rain resulted in 12.37 inches of rainfall, causing problems. “Fitch Mountain slides have occurred, carrying trees and other debris onto the road, but maintenance crews have been keeping the road open.”

An article in May of 1936 mentions a group of State Emergency Relief Assistance workers who were working on the FMR realignment project. 1937 brought such heavy rain and flooding that Congress authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to study the feasibility of dams on the river. As late as 1940, WPA workmen under the auspices of Sonoma County were working on repairing winter storm damage on the road. In the ensuing years FMR was blocked multiple times by slides and large rocks that created a constant need for maintenance.

Gas lines were temporarily moved above ground in February of 1966 to prevent damage to the road and a nearby house due to earth movement.

The year 1969 brought greater problems, with the closure of FMR for four weeks while repairs were made to the original viaduct first installed in 1957 at the “Little Grand Canyon” near 1932 South FMR. The paper cited a Leland Stanford (not the Leland Stanford of California governor and Stanford University founder fame) as saying that seven houses had slipped into the river or had been so badly damaged they were torn down. An additional 120 feet of bridge was installed in 1970 at an estimated cost of \$15,000. This viaduct has been a continual challenge and suffered a collapsed lane in 1998. The 2009 Sonoma County Bridge report lists the bridge thusly: “Some structures, such as viaducts, have a low rating (‘6’ for South Fitch Mountain Road) which may be improved to a satisfactory-level rating without replacement, but with comprehensive rehabilitation.” The final section of the viaduct was installed in 2011.

—*Donita Proctor*

[See road work pictures on the next page.]



Left: Completion of the repair of the South Fitch Mountain Road viaduct in 2011. (Photo by Donita Proctor.)

Below: "The Slump" and "the 1998 Slide" in March 2017. (Photos by Ray Holley.)



Sign of the (Summer) Times— Parking along Fitch Mountain Road



Whether most of the credit goes to creative signing (*above*, Memorial Day weekend) or to responsive ticketing and towing on heat-wave days in June (probably the latter), it augurs well for safety and parking sanity on the Fourth of July. Thank you, CHP and County Sheriff deputies!

*For detailed Q & A's about whom to call with traffic and parking problems, go to our site:
<http://www.fitchmtn.org/roads.html>*

Neighbors Preparing to COPE with Emergencies

We hope you have all heard about COPE (Citizens Organized to Prepare for Emergencies) by now! The Fitch Mountain Association and the cities of Santa Rosa and Healdsburg have adopted this program to help our communities become better prepared to respond to emergency situations. Certainly the Lake County fires were a wake up call to all of us since we live in a very similar high-risk environment with poor emergency access and multiple barriers to evacuation.

We have divided Fitch Mountain into neighborhoods (thanks to your help at the last annual meeting) and fortunately a volunteer has come forward to serve as Neighborhood Captain from most neighborhoods. (**We still need a Captain for South Fitch Mountain--can you help?**) By now you should have received a letter from the FMA and information from your neighborhood captain. We are asking each household (renter and/or owner) to complete a Neighborhood Census Form so we can better help each other in case of an emergency. For example, the information collected includes: if there is a person with a disability in the household who will need help with evacuation, animals on site, location of the gas shut off valve in case no one is home during an emergency, etc. *Completing the form is totally voluntary and your captain will keep the information collected confidential (be sure to check the box).* Captains can also provide you with important information about emergency preparedness and answer questions. The FMA website [<http://FitchMtn.org>] has loads of information about reflective signs, chipping, defensible space, and more. Please join us in becoming better prepared to COPE with emergencies on Fitch Mountain!

—*Priscilla Abercrombie and Ginger Hobart*

NAME	NEIGHBORHOOD	EMAIL
Sharon Barbee	Upper Madrone	barbees@sonic.net
Susan Steinman	Del Rio	steinmanstudio@gmail.com
Joan Tosetti	Redwood Drive	jtosetti@apr.com
Rebecca Goodsell	Riverview	
Ann Boone	Del Rio	avboone@sonic.net
Carol Morrill	Lower Madrone	carolmorrill@comcast.net
Tracy Logan	Camp Rose	trloganimmordino@gmail.com
	South Fitch Mountain	
Priscilla Abercrombie	North Fitch Mountain	pdanp@comcast.net
Dana Eaton	Fitch Mountain Court	dana@Eatonstudios.com

The COPE Cadre



Advance of the Sludge: The Septic Saga Continues

We started reporting on the “cleanup of the ‘impaired’ Russian River” almost 5 years ago, from an October 2012 meeting at Monte Rio. That process is still chugging along, and it is now reaching one of its milestones. The State Water Quality Board (NCRWQCB) will shortly release its “TMDL Action Plan,” which will lay out the scientific evidence for pollution in the river and set standards for reducing the impairment, so that the river is safe for recreational use. They did this 2 years ago, and the study met with fierce criticism, so they’re trying again.

You have questions? We have answers! But since both the questions and the answers are too involved for this space, please go to the FMA website (www.FitchMtn.org) and click on Septic Systems on the Welcome page for 11 basic questions and their answers. We will update this Q&A on a regular basis and will e-blast you when we do.

The FMA Wastewater Systems Committee (aka The Septicians) meets regularly with the Water Board, the County PRD, and Supervisor Gore to ensure, first, that we are kept up to date on the process; second, that FM is being clearly heard as a stakeholder; and, third, that the financial situation and “challenging topography of the lots” of many of our property owners receive the fair attention they deserve. Believe me, your Septicians are being heard! Stay tuned.

—**Dave Henderson, Temporary Septicians Chair**

Road Safety

Let’s keep our roads safe for vehicles and pedestrians alike. There are still areas where a driver cannot keep the car tires on the edge of the road without hitting or rubbing against protruding branches. The same is true of pedestrians who try to walk on the edge of the road. As good neighbors we should agree this is unacceptable.

At this time, we ask you to walk with your feet on the true road’s edge (not where the composting vegetation rests) and trim back vegetation, ideally, a foot beyond the edge of the road as well as the encroaching vegetation within eight vertical feet above the road’s edge.

One Mountain, One River, One Community. This is the motto of the FMA. This is the motto that drives our volunteers. This is the motto by which we hope we all live.

—**Al Pucci, Chair – Road Safety Committee**

Fire Prevention on the Mountain

Fire inspections are underway as part of a 2-year pilot program authorized by the Board of Supervisors in 2016. The purpose of the inspections is to gather data on wildfire threats in the County and to bring as many property owners as possible into voluntary compliance. Cal Fire began inspections of occupied parcels in May and expected to be finished by mid-June. County Fire will not begin inspections until mid-June and hopes to be done by the end of the month. Under the protocols adopted by the County, a property that is not in compliance may be inspected up to three times, a minimum of 30 days apart. Under this schedule, inspections for this year will not be completed until the end of September.

—**Ken Hite, Fire Prevention Committee of One**

For more information on the above, Q&A’s on fire prevention, and practical info for making your home safe, click on FIRE PREVENTION on the website’s Welcome page or go directly to:

www.fitchmtn.org/fff.html

Dog Folk, Please Remember That Fitch Is a Mountain with Many Creatures

Out of respect, consideration, and safety concerns for all Fitch Mountain hikers and walkers, just a reminder that Sonoma County has a leash law as well as a pooper scooper law.

If your dog is walking off-leash, it puts your dog – as well as every other creature on the Mountain – in harm’s way. In the last few years we have had at least one dog killed by a big cat up on the Mountain, another ate rodent poison near the roadside and barely survived, and untold numbers of cats, chickens, deer, and other wild critters have been terrorized by dogs doing what comes naturally.

Please be a responsible dog owner by keeping your dog on a leash on roads and other public places as well as picking up and removing your dog’s poop immediately.

—**Barbara Recchia**



A Fun New Committee

The FMA has a new working group called the Fun and Appreciation Committee. Throughout the year we will be planning events to bring the residents of the mountain together through mixers, pot luck dinners, and of course our annual July "BBQ."

On Saturday, June 17 we hosted our first "mixer" of the summer. What's a mixer? A chance to get to know your neighbors in a casual atmosphere at beautiful Del Rio Woods, our own "community park." Few things are as pleasant as meeting known and new friends for a little casual talking, sipping, eating, and watching the River flow as the sunset glows. The FMA provides tablecloths, plates, cups, napkins, buckets of ice and non-alcoholic drinks. All you need to bring is a dish to share and a drink of your choice.

The Spring Mixer was enjoyed by 13 stalwart Mountaineers who braved the heat on the 17th. Redwood Drive, North and South FM roads, and Riverview were well represented. The group was almost equally split (13 doesn't divide well) between newbies (welcome, Bo and Mark!) and "old guard" (thanks for the memories, Joan and Paul!). Marty's celebrated chili was the star, but we enjoyed a wide array of other "hearty appetizers" as well as some interesting white wines (well-chilled). Since the heat kept a lot of swimmers at the beach, the parking lot was still crowded, so we decided to put off the next mixer until October. Stay tuned!

We have lots more fun planned for the upcoming months. The schedule of events so far is as follows:



- FMA Annual Meeting and BBQ, Sunday July 16th, 1-4 p.m..
- Volunteer Appreciation Dinner: Sunday, September 17th
- Del Rio Woods Mixer; a Saturday in October (TBA), 5 pm.
- Gut Busters Run: Sunday, November 5th.
- FMA Family Fun Night: Sunday January 28, 2018!

If you would like to help out with any of the activities or be on the committee please email Kathryn at fmafunappreciationkathryn17@gmail.com.



Some of those who "mixed" on June 17th

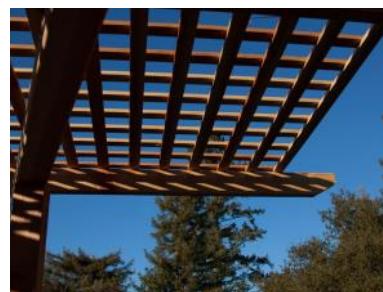
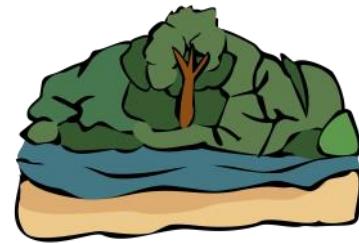


Such a Good Deal, for Parking and More!

Don't worry about feeding \$7 into the fee box when you park at Del Rio for an FMA mixer—Become a member of Sonoma County Regional Parks and you can park 365 days of the year at any of more than 50 regional parks, from river beaches to coastal campgrounds, for only \$69 (\$49 for Seniors). And you'll be contributing to our parks' well-being!



As the website (sonomacounty.ca.gov/Regional-Parks) says, "Play More, Pay Less!" In addition to unlimited day-use parking, a membership gives you one free night of camping, as well as discounts at many county businesses and events. Order your membership pass today and you should have it in time to park at Memorial Beach for the Healdsburg Water Carnival on July 15th!



**For details, archives, and updates
on everything FMA, don't forget**

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



Fitch Mountain Association
Membership Renewal and New Member Form 2017-2018

Name: _____

Home Address:

#	Street	City	State	ZIP
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Fitch Mountain Address (if different): _____

#	Street
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Email: _____ Phone (optional): _____

Type of Membership: Renewal New (or Lapsed)

Dues are \$20 per voting member.

[Membership is for one year—July 1 thru June 30 of following year.]

Number of memberships being paid: _____

Names of the members: _____

Members x \$20 each: \$ _____

I'd like to make an additional donation of: \$ _____

Donation is Unrestricted Restricted to _____ Committee

Thank you for your support!

[Donations are tax-deductible: CA 501(c)(3) Federal EIN 94-270278]

Total enclosed: \$ _____

What are your Fitch Mountain concerns? _____

Mail by July 6 to:

Fitch Mountain Association
P.O. Box 1233
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Or:

Bring with you to
the July 16 meeting.