

WATERSHED NEWS



Issue 10 Mill Valley

StreamKeepers protecting and restoring our watershed

Winter 2009

Mill Valley StreamKeepers

P.O. Box 2531
Mill Valley, CA 94942
415 388-4187

www.millvalleystreamkeepers.org

Meetings: 10:00 am

2nd Saturday

Sewerage Agency of
Southern Marin

Save the Date:

January 6, 2010

7:00-9:00 p.m.

A Salmon Slideshow!

By SPAWN, West Marin's

Salmon Protection and
Watershed Network

At the O'Hanlon Arts Center
616 Throckmorton Avenue



Park Terrace Park Earth Day Weekend 2009

Thank you volunteers

Raoul Wertz, Bob Kittredge, Kittredge children, Barbara Ford, Betsy Bikle

January 14, 2010

Rainwater Harvesting:
Cisterns, Rainbarrels, Green
Roofs, Saving Water and all
that!

Sierra Club Hosting
Talks followed by panel
discussion and Q&A period:
Brock Dolman, The Water
Institute, Occidental Arts &
Ecology Center

Josiah Cain, B.S., Davis,
Harvard Master of Design
Technology & Environment
Paola Bouley, SPAWN
naturalist and program director
Dan Carney, Marin Municipal
Water Dist. Conservation Dir.

6-7:00 pm Browse agencies,
contractors, organizations
involved in rainwater
harvesting

7-9:00 pm Program
Mill Valley Community Center

January 23, 2010

Saturday

1:00 pm Creekwalk to see
Coho and Steelhead!

Led by SPAWN naturalists
Meet at 6350 Sir Francis Drake
Blvd in San Geronimo, CA
Call 388-4187 or email to:
info@millvalleystreamkeepers.org
to reserve one of 25 spots.

The 40th Earth Day is April 22, 2010!

We'll do something for it
See you then!

Flooding: 2005 to 2009 - No silver bullet

The October 13th storm reminded us of the need to take precautions and preventative measures in case of flooding. We urge you to go to the city's website www.cityofmillvalley.org, and click on 'public works' for advice. You can also go the county's website www.mcstoppp.org. Since the big flood of 2005, more of us have been aware of state, county, and local efforts to address the problem of flooding with pragmatic, but environmentally sound practices. As we know now, those environmental approaches are the ones which will render the best long-term results. An example that many of the local hikers have seen is the "storm proofing" that MMWD is doing in collaboration with County Fish and Wildlife, and the state on Old Railroad Grade and Old Stage fire roads on Mt. Tam. Ten high priority creek crossings have been addressed, new culverts installed, 1000 feet of road outsloped, areas recontoured to slow down flows, and revegetation and erosion control measures taken. We know now that flooding issues, water conservation, preservation of ecosystems, are all part of basic watershed management and are inextricably linked to our quality of life and sustainability. The state of California has, despite budget problems, been able to continue efforts on these fronts through bond measures passed years ago, and has made clear that grants and projects must, of necessity, link all of these challenges into demonstrably viable solutions. When you see work in our watershed, don't be surprised to see "flood control, creek restoration, fish renewal" to be on the signs. In our city, Stetson Engineers prepared a creek modeling analysis, "Appraisal-Level Flood Study for Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio Creek". This report describes the causes of the 2005 flood and describes measures to reduce flooding. But what the report contains is in no respect a silver bullet.

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Watershed Management Plan

Recently the city manager communicated that the City Council had authorized and funded a program to study watershed processes and to develop a management plan. The watershed is all the land that sheds water into a particular waterbody – in this case the Arroyo Corte Madera del Presidio Stream and tributaries which flow down through Mill Valley into Richardson Bay. In addition, the watersheds of Tamalpais Valley and also Strawberry's Bel Aire Watershed with West and East Creek (Flood Zone 4) are part of the study. The point of the study is to develop a watershed plan for environmental health and to deal with flooding caused by urbanization. The Mill Valley StreamKeepers is excited to be part of the Technical Work Group participating in evaluating studies and helping to represent the local scene. *Betsy Bikle*

Annual Highlights

The City of Mill Valley has a new Planning Director, Mike Moore. Mike comes to us from Petaluma. First impressions of him are very positive. He is professional, listens well, and understands what is required of a Planning Director in a sophisticated, opinionated community.

Tamalpais Valley Service District's General Manager, Jon Elam, showed us around the environmental projects and habitat work in Tamalpais Valley including their green composting project.

The City of Mill Valley will soon be hiring a new City Manager. With current City Manager Anne Montgomery's announcement of her retirement the search is on for someone to fill this position which is directly hired by and responsible to the City Council.

SASM (Sewage Association of Southern Marin) continues to deal with fallout from water quality violations due to spills when the Plant's treatment capacity is overwhelmed. Because one source of excess volume is water that gets into the sewer system due to cracks in sewer lines and laterals, there is interest in helping homeowners with the cost of repairing/replacing private laterals that are failing. Both earth settlement and tree roots can create cracks. The City of Mill Valley, with its canyons, trees, and old (in many cases ceramic) laterals is a prime area of concern.

The Miller Avenue streetscape plan is in the stage of proposal review for selection of a design team. (I am Chair of the Design Advisory Committee appointed by the City.) In addition to balancing sidewalk, bike lane, roadway and median width along Miller, any design scheme will address drainage and flooding issues. However, as Joyce Britt points out in her piece, there will be no solution to periodic flooding during winter when high tides, pushing creeks upstream, coincide with extended periods of heavy rainfall.

An initial study by the Stetson Engineering firm, which specializes in creek hydraulics, conducted after the most recent flooding, identified several minor changes and several big-ticket items. An anticipated follow-up study looking at what might be termed the Miller Avenue watershed will likely not be ready until next year. This information, when available, will become data for the County's Watershed Management Plan for Southern Marin and Richardson's Bay.

Meanwhile two things are clear: 1) information is useful both as regards rainfall and tidal action (tide logs can be useful to landlubbers); 2) when heavy rains coincide with high tides, low-lying areas of Mill Valley are subject to localized or widespread flooding. *John Leonard*

Flooding: 2005 to 2009-No silver bullet continued

Compared to the cost of damage to property within the city, most preventative measures would carry too high a price tag. Stetson will present a final report, which will contain flood plain modeling, at the end of the year. Regardless, it is up to all of us, as part of a community, to do the things we can, now. Obviously we cannot undo the hardscaping from overdevelopment which has caused the fierce runoff from winter rain. But, we can obey the creek ordinance when we want to remodel, we can plant willows, rather than install rip-rock at creek's edge in our gardens; we can go "native" with vegetation whether we are in a riparian zone or not; we can participate in clean-up drives, and keep our dogs out of the creek. We can take our mountain bikes out of Miller Grove where the creek sides are eroding and silting into the stream. We can test our sewer pipes for breaks. We can make part of our lives, a sense of shared responsibility for the health of our watershed. Decades ago, people threw trash out of car windows, put every imaginable toxic material into landfills and rivers, and treated the earth as renewable and inexhaustible. Today such conduct is unthinkable. Let's approach our flooding and other watershed issues with that same resolve, and get in the habit of thinking about our creeks and headwaters first. *Joyce Britt*

Got Photos?

Do you have slides, photos of local fish (salmon and others), otters from Mill Valley including Tam Valley and Homestead Valley? Such pics can travel far and wide and speak a thousand words. The photos are ambassadors in themselves. We would love to use them. We cannot pay for them but will give credit. Send to our email address or call us!

Thank You!

MV StreamKeepers 2009 Donations

Anonymous
Harold Ball
Betsy & Dan Bikle
Patricia & Len Blumin
Joan G. Boessenecker
Liz & John Bolton
Jean Canepa
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Susan Steele
Meryl Sundove
Leslie & Ken Wachtel
Christina & Ken Waldeck
Douglas Wallace
Periann Wood & Doug Wilson
Ingrid H. Woods

Volunteer Possibilities:

Bothin Marsh, Jan. 9, Feb. 6
Save the Bay 510 452-9261
www.SaveSFbay.org

Terwilliger Marsh

Contact Dede Sabbag, 383-2492
Dede.Sabbag@sbcglobal.net

Please Support Mill Valley StreamKeepers

MVSK is a 100% volunteer non-profit organization working to protect and restore our watersheds. Your help is urgently needed as a volunteer and/or donor. Please return this form so that we might contact you.

Please include your address label.

I am enclosing a check made out to Mill Valley StreamKeepers in the amount of \$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$100 ___ Other \$ ___

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____