



Bennett Valley

VOICE

VOLUME 27, NUMBER 4

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)

JULY, 2004

Sonoma County Water Coalition – Yes or No?

Informal Comments from Jane Nielson, Ph.D., Geologist, Retired from U.S. Geological Survey

The purpose of the Sonoma County Water Coalition is to get as many County organizations as possible to sign on to the stated objectives – largely to get a requirement for county-wide groundwater management into the language of the draft Water Resources element of the proposed County General Plan Update. This will guide County policies for the next 20 years – to 2020. The organizations included in this Coalition are Sierra Club, O.W.L. (Open Space, Water Resource Protection and Land Use Foundation), SWIG (Sebastopol Water Information Group), Valley of the Moon Citizen's Association and the Russian River Low Flow Group.

The Coalition is hoping to protect the interests of people already living in Sonoma Co., who could lose their water supplies if the County proves to have too little water to support the population sizes that planned and projected future developments will bring.

Their concerns are that the cities that get their water from the Sonoma Co. Water Agency (SCWA) are planning for growth without knowing where the water to support new developments is coming from. As Steve Carle, one of the speakers at the BVHA Ground Water Forum on 4/21/04, has stated, even now the total promised SCWA deliveries are larger than SCWA'S total current allotment from the Russian River. SCWA is not going to be able to get larger allotments unless they can get more Eel River water pumped into the Russian River. A lawsuit is preventing them from transferring any more Eel River water, which will remain true for some time and maybe even forever.

SWCA is definitely planning to drill more wells countywide to make up their currently promised water deliveries and the cities of Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park are planning to reopen their wells and pump groundwater to their proposed build-outs.

This is all happening 5 years before we can possibly have the results of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) study of the Santa Rosa Plains, which will tell us how much groundwater Sonoma County's main populated areas can expect to use at various recharge rates. The USGS is also suppose to determine the effects of accelerated groundwater pumping on the Russian River and other creeks in the Santa Rosa Plains and Laguna de Santa Rosa. This study will probably not determine the effect of Santa Rosa groundwater pumping on the Bennett Valley Study Area but that is not for sure.

There is concern about the County's willingness to go ahead with these development plans before there is solid information about the groundwater supply. There is also concern about the plans for disposing of the additional wastewater that these plans for projected development will generate, because Santa Rosa is planning to dump a large amount on farmlands, which could get into the groundwater, as well as pumping at least 4 billion gallons of it back into the Russian River.

All of this is the motivation for trying to get County citizens allied through the Sonoma County Water Coalition to fight for groundwater management and recharge augmentation that will not threaten our future health.

Position Statement on Sonoma County Groundwater Issues—Sonoma County Water Coalition

Water is a shared finite public trust resource. Unregulated and unmanaged exploitation of groundwater, a vital resource, has led to a crisis in Sonoma Co. Well drillers drill ever deeper to find water. Increasingly residents in rural areas have lowered pump depths in their wells, replaced dry wells with new deeper wells, or, as last resort, depend on water deliveries by truck. Springs are drying up. Creeks and streams once teeming with life are now dry in the summer and fall. (Continued on Page Two)

Sonoma County Water Coalition (Con't)

Domestic well owners are affected, as are many endangered and threatened species that depend on water. Effective groundwater management should make it unnecessary for neighbors to continue competing to drill the deepest well.

The courts have held that cities and counties may regulate and manage groundwater for beneficial use at the local level. More than two-dozen California counties, including Napa County, have groundwater ordinances. Sonoma County's General Plan Update offers an opportunity to construct effective policy needed to respond to this crisis over the next 20 years.

The Sonoma County Water Coalition supports the following positions on groundwater, and recommends that they be incorporated into the Water Resource Element of the General Plan Update:

1.) Systematic and comprehensive groundwater basin studies by the U.S. Geological Survey, such as now underway and proposed, and collection of groundwater data by neighborhood associations under expert guidance, with full integration of local, state, and federal resources and consideration of all stakeholder interests, particularly including domestic well-owners in unincorporated areas.

2.) A countywide policy for sustainable groundwater management, which must include substantial and measurable demand reduction, based on evidence of groundwater overdraft. The management policy should consist of two primary elements:

a) Specific groundwater management plans for each of the major groundwater basins in the County including... Santa Rosa Valley, Sonoma Valley...

b) Administrative and legal support for residents of outlying water-scarce areas (such as Bennett Valley) to create locally elected and controlled groundwater management districts for administering correlative water rights by establishing programs to monitor, meter, conserve, and increase natural groundwater recharge...

3.) Land use policies that protect or enhance the historical recharge rates of State-identified natural groundwater recharge areas in the County. Acquisition and enhancement of designated or otherwise known groundwater recharge areas should be included in the mandate of Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District.

4.) Requirements for new development and construction, based on county-wide studies and local data collection, to halt loss of groundwater recharge capacity of aquifers caused by developments that increase impervious surfaces. Proactive measures are required to reduce negative impacts of impervious surfaces and encourage land use practices that increase natural groundwater recharge. These objectives must be incorporated in building codes administered by the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department.

5.) The prohibition of intentional underground injection of treated wastewater or other contaminants that may degrade aquifers within the county.

6.) ...discretionary regulation to address the cumulative impacts of new ...wells on existing water users and upon creeks in all areas of the County.

7.) Specific deadlines for studies to be commissioned, reports to be submitted and mitigation adopted in the "special study areas" proposed in the draft Water Resource Element.

8.) County intervention on behalf of residents in unincorporated areas experiencing adverse effects of municipal groundwater pumping.

9.) A resolution by the County to ultimately manage water resources for long-term sustainability within specific watersheds and local groundwater basins...

10.) Public education programs to provide all County residents with information regarding the finite nature of water resources and guidance for the sustainable use of that resource..."

The Sonoma County Grand Jury Recently Recommended That Sonoma County Adopt A Groundwater Management Plan. A Press Democrat Editorial Disagreed, As Follows:

"...Sonoma County has much to learn about the geology of groundwater, and it would be foolish to create a smothering bureaucracy that regulated well operations without regard to good science. Given our current level of knowledge, a Sonoma County grand jury recommendation for a countywide authority to manage groundwater may be, at best, premature and, at worst, impractical.

But it also would be foolish to step back into another century, ignoring a problem that is not going away. As water becomes more scarce – and therefore, more valuable – it is only common sense that we make sure that it is used wisely. If the selfish interests of a few deplete water resources, surface or groundwater, the well-being of the community and the region's economics future is placed at risk."

The Guest Speaker At Our May Meeting, Charlie Judson, Weeks Drilling & Pump Co., Stated That In His Opinion the County has been remiss for not actively pursuing studies to determine what is really going on with our water resources, but it is not too late to do so. As he put it, the County knows a lot more about grapes, milk and timber resources than it does about the Sonoma County groundwater resource. Water studies will be expensive, but they will have to be done and the sooner the better. Any groundwater management plans should follow the results of those studies, so we learn what we actually have before we start trying to regulate it.

Please let the BVHA Board of Directors know your opinion on this groundwater issue by the next meeting, July 21st, 2004, either by telephone, letter, e-mail or in person. What should be included in the Water Resource Element of the General Plan Update?

Laurel Marcus, Speaker at Next BVHA Board of Directors' Meeting, Wednesday, 7/21/04, 7:00 pm

Join us to hear Laurel Marcus, a biologist and a watershed conservationist, speaking about water conservation and other household concerns, such as *Reducing Chemical Use in Your House*, *Protecting Your Property From Erosion*, *Simple Steps to Take to Reduce Your Fire Risks*, *Conserving Energy*, and *Recycling Just About Everything*. In 1993, Laurel Marcus was one of only six recipients of the National Wetland Protection Award from the Environmental Protection Agency for her years of effort protecting natural resources. She has written "The House & Garden Audit", which is for sale.

About Bennett Valley – Did You Know?

The Bennett Valley Calendar committee has been gathering material for a special "Vintage Calendar." This process is similar to completing a jigsaw puzzle, as one memory or photo leads the calendar detectives on to another part of the puzzle. Our goal, the finished 2005 calendar, with its stories and photos, will be a celebration of our valley by remembering the past.

Oldest Home In Bennett Valley? Coleman Talbot arrived in 1851 and bought his homestead from James Bennett. His original house burned, and in 1896 he rebuilt his home at its present location, the corner of Grange and Bennett Valley Road. While the Talbots' have the oldest homestead existing in the Valley, it is not the oldest home. Alex Benjamin met Talbot on the trail coming west and settled in Bennett Valley soon after Mr. Talbot. His home is located on Grange Road across from the Grange Hall and is popularly called the "Beck House" after the notorious Beck Bros., known for their numerous exploits, who owned the property for many years. This house has the designation of being one of the Landmark Homes in Bennett Valley and its original siding and much of the interior remain unchanged from the 1880's. Another Landmark Home in the valley is the Massey House, the blue Queen Anne style cottage on Grange Road. This house was built in the 1890's and was the farmhouse for the 600-acre Whittaker dairy ranch. Its historic name is Tara. This home has been enlarged through an addition, but its unique style remains unchanged. The Thompson House, at the corner of Sonoma Mountain and Enterprise Roads, has also been designated as a Landmark Home. William Thompson settled the Redwood farm, known as the Thompson Ranch, in 1852. Mr. Thompson built his Victorian-style "big house" in 1885. The original farm-house from 1852 still exists close to the main house. Stacia (Thompson) Derickson continues to live in that home.* The Phyllis Bush House on Sonoma Mountain Road near Kirch's corner (Sonoma Mountain and Pressley Roads), with its glass door knobs and square nails, dates from pre-civil war

days and is commonly thought to be the oldest home in Bennett Valley. This home was recently featured in the Wine Country Living Magazine. The exterior and interior remains basically unchanged from its original form. These four vintage homes date from before 1900.

Cemeteries in Bennett Valley? There are two cemeteries located in Bennett Valley. The Thompson (Derickson) Ranch has a private cemetery for family members, and the other cemetery is the Bennett Valley Cemetery. Dating from 1878, the BV Cemetery is non-denominational and some of the first families of the valley and their descendents are buried there. This cemetery is located near the corner of Yulupa and Bennett Valley Road and has been designated as California Historical Marker #39. The cemetery has been maintained by the Bennett Valley Cemetery Association, which has been meeting annually since 1892; originally at the nearby one room Santa Rosa school, later renamed Bennett Valley School in 1942.

We will leave the story of the schools for the September VOICE. This is just a small sampling of the information in the vintage calendar, which will be available November 1st. We are continuing to collect vintage stories and photos. See the entry form below, showing the deadline of August 1st to submit photos. To order a calendar or ask questions, call Judy (544-0234) or Suzanne (542-1608).
*See Jan. 2004 VOICE, Glen Ellen Fire Station in BV

2005 CALENDAR PHOTO ENTRY FORM

Deadline: August 1st, 2004

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____ **# OF ENTRIES** _____

PLEASE IDENTIFY THE SUBJECT OF YOUR PHOTO WITH A NAME OR LOCATION OF THE BUILDING

- Please do not put your name on the back of the photographs.
- If you want your pictures mailed back to you, please include a SASE.

Mail this form with photos to: *Stephanie Zaborowski*
4184 Sonoma Mountain Rd.
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Jacobs Ranch Volunteer Patrol

The "Umbrella Tree" at the top of the Jacobs Ranch property on the northern flank of Sonoma Mountain

is one of many features that make the ranch an extraordinary place. The remarkable view from this tree provides glimpses of the fog creeping in off the coast, the towns of Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa, Mount St. Helena, and Bennett Peak. In order to protect this view and forever preserve a family gem, the children of Ruth and Bill Jacobs sold the property to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District (SCAPOS) in 2003. Together, SCAPOS and LandPaths (Land Partners Through Stewardship) are working to manage this property to enhance the natural resources, steward this protected property, and provide public access opportunities at the Jacobs Ranch. LandPaths is a small non-profit in Santa Rosa dedicated to fostering a love of the land in Sonoma County through public access, education, and stewardship. In June we kicked off the Jacobs Ranch Volunteer Patrol (JRVP). JRVP members regularly walk the property to monitor conditions at the Ranch, educate the public about opportunities to recreate and steward the property, and provide a human presence. More Volunteer Patrollers are needed! **If you would like to participate in the Jacobs Ranch Volunteer Patrol, please contact Jen at LandPaths (544-7284, or e-mail: watershed@landpaths.org).**

While the Jacobs Ranch is not currently open to the general public, LandPaths frequently hosts outings on the property. On Tuesday, September 28th, Landpaths and SCAPOS will be hosting an event, "Stories About This Place," focusing on Sonoma Mountain and Bennett Valley. This will be an evening of sharing and reflections and storytelling about our connection to the local landscape. Presenting will be a number of local residents who have deep connections with the Jacobs' family, Sonoma Mountain, and Bennett Valley. All of LandPaths outings are free and open to the public. If you are interested in attending the "Stories About This Place" event or participating as a presenter, please contact the LandPaths event line at 524-9318, or e-mail Jonathan at outings@landpaths.org.

VOICE By E-Mail

At this time, 158 households receive the VOICE by email, which saves \$350.76 in postage, let alone the printing. We are more than willing to send the VOICE by mail, but if you want to receive it electronically, please contact Bobbie Blair, 542-1608 or dreams7373@sbcglobal.net.

Upcoming BVHA Board Elections

Come one, come all! The time has rolled around once again for nominations for positions on the

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association (BVHA) Board of Directors. As of January, 2005, the Board is changing their meeting day from the third Wednesday to the third Tuesday of every other month (seven months a year), 7:00 pm at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. There are also special meetings, as needed. **Three directors are to be elected, and the term of office is three years.** The directors whose terms are expiring are Helen Bates, Jennifer Combs and Tim Murphy. Each of them may choose to run or not run for another term.

Qualifications for office (from the BVHA bylaws) are that each candidate (1) must be a voting member of BVHA and (2) must have a strong commitment to promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley. This second qualification must be evidenced by a statement of 250 words or less, to be included with each candidate's request for nomination. Members may declare their candidacy and submit their statements after July 1st. All requests for candidacy, with accompanying statements, must be in the hands of the Nominating Committee Chairman, Phil Temko, by 5 p.m., August 15, 2004. Candidates, please send notice of your candidacy together with accompanying statements to Phil Temko, 4780 Hidden Oaks Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95404, (707) 544-0234. BVHA members or others having questions concerning these procedures should also contact him.

For campaign purposes, such as sending out fliers, candidates may submit a written request to BVHA, including a statement about the intended use, for a list of names and addresses of those members entitled to vote in the election for directors. Telephone numbers cannot be used for this purpose.

Ballots, together with candidates' statements, instructions for voting, and return envelopes, will be mailed out to the membership with the September VOICE, to be mailed September 10th. Results of the election will be announced at the following meeting of the BVHA Board of Directors, on October 20th, 2004.

BVHA MEMBERSHIP

We want to welcome all our 2004 BVHA members. We were especially pleased with the memberships of those who hadn't joined before or for awhile. It is still not too late to join and support your association. Send \$15, made out to BVHA, to Blair/Dougherty, 7373 Bennett Valley Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95404.

Advisory Body to County Supervisors
The Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA) Bylaws state that *the voting*

members of this corporation shall be those persons who hold recorded title to real property located within the ...Bennett Valley Study Area ...and conditioned upon payment of ...annual dues (\$15 per year). It also states that "any single owner of one or more parcels or multiple owners of one or more parcels in Bennett Valley are entitled to one membership in the Bennett Valley Homeowners Association...(and) entitled to one (1) vote. There are approximately 900 parcels in Bennett Valley and BVHA has generally had less than 400 members each year since it was formed in 1970.

The Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association was formed with the specific and primary purposes of "promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley." **The Sonoma County Board of Supervisors reflected this in their Resolution #94-1042, passed on 7/12/94,** which stated the following:

"WHEREAS, the homeowners in Bennett Valley formed the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association in 1970 and since its formation, the BVHA has informally commented on proposed development projects within the Bennett Valley Study Area, ... and WHEREAS, one of the major goals of the Bennett Valley (Area) Plan is to retain and enhance Bennett Valley's existing rural character, and ...WHEREAS, this Board believes it is in the public interest to formally recognize BVHA as an advisory body to the County of Sonoma concerning development projects within the Bennett Valley Study Area...NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of Sonoma County as follows:

1. The Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association is hereby recognized as an advisory body to the County of Sonoma. The BVHA shall be responsible for reviewing and making recommendations on proposed development projects within the Bennett Valley Study Area..."

The Board of Supervisors has always understood that BVHA does not or could not represent everyone equally in Bennett Valley even if every parcel owner was a paid voting member. We can only speak for those people who are working and participating with us to promote and preserve the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, and even within this mission there can be different opinions. Everyone is encouraged to communicate his or her opinions about any pertinent issue to the BVHA Board of Directors and/or directly to our County Supervisor (Valerie Brown) and/or PRMD. The "advisory" connection between BVHA and Sonoma County does not interfere with any personal opinion from being carefully considered and even accepted by the Sonoma County authorities.

BVHA Board Of Directors
Tentative Agenda For Meeting
July 21st, 2004, 7:00 Pm, BV Fire Station

- Call to Order, 7:00 pm
- Speaker, Laurel Marcus, Water Conservation Plus Household Concerns (more detail on Page 3).
- Updates on BVHA Web-Page & Bennett Valley Calendar. Distribution of amended BVHA Articles of Incorporation to Board of Directors.
- Information on the CAC General Plan Update Circulation Sub-Committee June Meetings; Michael Freidenberg and Helen Bates.
- Shall BVHA support getting a requirement for County-wide groundwater management into the language of the draft Water Resources Element of the County General Plan Update? Shall BVHA join the Sonoma County Water Coalition?
- Any new input or conclusions re: BV parcel owners voting regardless of BVHA membership? Would require a BVHA Bylaws change. What purpose would be served? What gains would be made?

Brief Summary of BVHA Board Meeting

(For a copy of the minutes, please call Bobbie Blair, 542-1608.)

May 19th, 2004

- Charlie Judson of Weeks Drilling and Pump Co. spoke on "How to Keep Your Well Water Safe." Private well owners are responsible for quality. Tests recommended by Weeks include total Coliform and e.coli, nitrate, arsenic (found more and more in the county), and VOC'S (cleaning solvents). Call Weeks Drilling, if there are any questions.
- The BVHA meeting day change for 2005, from the third Wednesday to the third Tuesday, was approved by the Board, at the request of the BV Firefighting staff.
- The VOICE is now online on the BVHA web-page.
- The BV Grange was offered \$100, for letting us have our BVHA Groundwater Forum there in April, but they declined the offer, stating that part of their purpose is to provide a meeting place for community meetings.
- The Board approved donating the profits from our 2005 vintage calendar to the BV Grange.
- The Board agreed to send out a Bennett Valley School District brochure with the July VOICE.
- Michael Cronin expressed his opinion that the BVHA Board cannot represent Bennett Valley unless each parcel owner has a right to vote for the BVHA Board of Directors, with or without BVHA membership. He's proposed that Resolution #94-1042 be rescinded (described above) or voting rights be given to all, regardless of membership status. A lively discussion took place with lots of participation. No action was taken.

Circulation Element, General Plan Update

The Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) Circulation Subcommittee has had four meetings

during the month of June to complete its deliberations and final recommendations for the Circulation and Transit Element of the General Plan. There were some concerns related to road classifications in Bennett Valley. Marilee Jensen wrote a letter to the Circulation Subcommittee expressing these concerns and quoting the Bennett Valley Area Plan as a reference. Michael Friedenberg and Helen Bates attended one of these Circulation Subcommittee meetings, lasting from 5 pm until 9 pm, to voice their concerns. As the result of public input, the Circulation Subcommittee is no longer listing Bennett Valley Road as equivalent to Highway 12, Arnold Drive, Highways 116, 121 and 37. Nevertheless there are still some remaining concerns.

It is our understanding that both Bennett Valley Road and Grange Road are still classified as "Major Collector Roads" rather than "Minor Collector Roads", which means that eventually they could qualify for federal funding for 3 lanes and traffic signals. Also, they are not classifying different sections of Bennett Valley Road with different classifications, such as the more narrow winding sections, which have significantly less width and no shoulders, even though this has been done for Warm Springs Road. Based on public comment, all the other roads in Bennett Valley are classified as "local roads." It is the opinion of many of the BVHA Board of Directors that Bennett Valley Road and Grange Road should be classified as "Minor Collector Roads," which better fits both the "intended use", of those roads, both for now and in the future, as well as the rural character of the area.

The next meeting of the full Citizens Advisory Committee for this General Plan Update is July 14th, (Wednesday); 5:30 – 9:00 pm, PRMD Hearing Room, 2550 Ventura Ave., Santa Rosa. The General Plan Update meetings in the following few months will include meetings of the full CAC in order to complete its policy recommendations for the General Plan 2020 (including Circulation and the Water Resource Element). For further information on upcoming meetings, contact Scott Briggs, PRMD, sbriggs1@sonoma-county.org, 565-1936.

BENNETT RIDGE FIRE PREVENTION

As televised on Channel 50 on Tuesday, June 22nd and Wednesday, June 23rd, Bennett Ridge Community Association (BRCA) has been actively pursuing fire prevention in their hilly tree-covered neighborhood. It is understood that the California Department of Forestry (CDF) has specifically classified Bennett Ridge as one of the targeted hazardous fire areas in Sonoma County,

because of the hills (topography), abundance of fuel, and wind patterns in this location.

Bennett Ridge residents have cleared out a significant amount of grass, weeds, low-lying branches, dense brush and dead vegetation around their homes, with defensible space improved considerably in many instances. This includes three vacant lot owners, whose lots were especially overgrown and hazardous. Besides that, Bennett Ridge residents have individually donated a total of \$12,526 since May 13th, 2004 to pay to have the CDF Fire Break redone along Bennett Valley Rd., as it encircles Bennett Ridge, by FIRESCAPE (a privately-owned company).

(Some) Fire Safe Tips*

- **Remove dead vegetation.**

Dried grass and weeds should be mowed down to three inches. Reduce thick layers of pine needles to a depth of two inches, and remove dead leaves, twigs, cones and branches.

- **Clear debris from your roof and rain gutters.**

- **Move firewood and other combustible debris some distance and preferably uphill from your house.**

- **Pay attention to what you plant:** *Some plants are more fire resistant than others. Good choices include star jasmine, creeping rosemary, dwarf periwinkles, perennial verbena, and rock roses. There is an extensive list of Fire-Wise Plant Material for Sonoma County in "Living With Fire in Sonoma Co. – A Guide for the Homeowner," by Fire Safe Sonoma. People who live near wildlands should avoid pyrophytic plants or plants that ignite readily and burn intensively, which include cypress, eucalyptus, Douglas fir, and acacia trees. There are plenty of better choices, such as oak, Pacific dogwood, Coast Redwood, and white alder, according to CDF.*

- **Create a distance between your plants, so they are not massed together.**

**Press Democrat, July 3rd, 2004, "Get Fire Safe", Sec. D*

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association

(BVHA) Board Of Directors

P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

BVHA Web-Page

<bennettvalleyhomeowners.org>

Marilee Jensen, *President & VOICE Editor*
(576-0405; phone and FAX)

Michael Friedenberg, *Vice-President* (579-5310)

Helen Bates, *Treasurer* (695-8760)

Bobbie Blair, *Recording Secretary & Mailing List/Membership Coordinator* (542-1608)

Leanore (Lolly) Mesches, *Corresponding Secretary* (545-8684)

Eric Burns, *Web-Page Coordinator* (584-7531)

Jennifer Combs, *Director* (546-1190)

Tim Murphy, *Director* (542-7114)

Marilyn Stocks, *Director* (528-2458)

C-Shift Firefighting Engineer

Wildland Fires: 13 Medical Aids: 12
Structure Fires: 2 Vehicle Accidents: 11
Alarm Soundings: 3 Public Assists: 4
Vehicle Fires: 1 Other: 3

May and June have been eventful months for the Bennett Valley Fire District. Summer, especially fire season, is without a doubt here and events last month have proven that fact. California Department of Forestry (CDF) has augmented their staffing to contend with the challenges of fire season. Here at Bennett Valley we have prepared for the fire dangers by increased training, volunteer readiness, and communication with neighboring fire districts to better combat the threat, and dangers, of wildland fires in the Bennett Valley area. As a reminder, in the event of **ANY** emergency, dialing 9-1-1 will offer the best and most time-efficient response from firefighters, paramedics, police, etc.

Significant Events:

- 5/12/04 - On this date, Bennett Valley fire responded to two fires that were both ignited by downed power lines. At the time of the fires, natural barriers and the weather, contributed to rapid containment of the fires. Both incidents were kept to small spot fires with no injuries or structures lost. Bennett Valley and CDF both responded with one engine each to the incidents.
- 5/30/04 – Units from Bennett Valley responded to a wildland (vegetation) fire in the area of Sonoma Mountain Rd. The first arriving crew quickly began a progressive hoselay up the steep hillside and contained the fire to ¼ acre. Due to a timely response by three engines from Bennett Valley and one from CDF, the fire was stopped with no major injuries, property damage, or structures lost.
- 5/31/04 – Bennett Valley, Glen Ellen, and CDF were dispatched to a wildland fire in the area of Enterprise Rd. The first arriving chief officer reported that the fire was approximately ½ acre, with a moderate rate of spread, directly threatening a structure in the final stages of construction. Crews from Bennett Valley quickly knocked down the flames in front of the house and proceeded to conduct a progressive hoselay around the fire (connecting long hoses in order to extend the reach of the hoses even further). Crews from Glen Ellen mirrored the tactic and met the Bennett Valley firefighters on the opposite side of the fire. In order to stop the advancement of the fire, a “wet line” was established around the fire, wetting the unburnt vegetation ahead of or surrounding the fire. It worked and the fire was stopped. The engine from CDF arrived to assist with mop-up operations and the investigation as to cause. The fire was stopped at less than 1 acre, with no injuries or structures lost.
- 6/7/04 – Bennett Valley, Glen Ellen and CDF were dispatched to a vehicle accident off of Enterprise Road. While enroute, the crews were updated that the vehicle accident had touched off a wildland fire that was rapidly

accelerating. Upon arrival, the car was fully involved (no one was in the car) and the fire was advancing rapidly through the grassy, oak woodland area. Firefighters began suppressing the fire. Bennett Valley and Glen Ellen sent a total of 7 engines while CDF sent 1 engine, 1 helicopter, 1 hand crew (to cut back vegetation as a firebreak), and 1 bulldozer to combat and control the blaze. Traffic was temporarily disrupted, but the fire was stopped at 4 acres with no injuries or structures lost.

- 6/8/04 – On this date a significant lightning event rolled through Bennett Valley. The electrical storm dropped multiple strikes in the area. Fortunately, only one fire was touched off in Annadel State Park. The crew from one engine from Bennett Valley and one from Kenwood packed up hand tools and hiked into the fire, to cut out a fire break preceding the fire. The fire was contained to a small spot fire without event.
- 6/15/04 – Bennett Valley assisted the City of Santa Rosa with a small wildland fire on Bennett Valley Road in the area of Farmer’s Lane (¼ acre). While at this fire, the engine from Bennett Valley was abruptly released due to another fire beginning in Bennett Valley.
- The second fire was first noticed by a firefighter at the station observing a column of smoke emanating from the area of Sonoma Mountain Rd. Coincidentally, at the same time, three CDF aircraft were already in the area and began sizing up and attacking the fire from the air. Once ground units arrived at the scene, they began to use a mobile-attack method (driving and pumping water at the same time) to tie into where the CDF tankers had dropped their retardant. Other firefighters from Bennett Valley combated the fire by using handtools and directly attacking the fire in an area that was inaccessible by firefighting apparatus. Units from CDF assisted with the handline while Glen Ellen firefighters began a hoselay at the bottom. All together, air tankers, firefighters, and fire engines kept the fire from making a sustained run up a nearby steep hill full of light, flashy, dry grass. The fire was contained at 2 acres with no events. At the same time, another small fire (5’ x 5’, on Crane Canyon Rd.) broke out in the Bennett Valley Fire District, so Rancho Adobe Fire District was sent to assist in putting it out.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

**6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
(707) 578-7761 or (707) 578-8471**

Board of Directors

Matt Phillips, Chairman, Dan Felciano, Vice-President,
Deborah Haarstad, Secretary,
Marilee Jensen, Mark Richardson

*The Board meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm. at the BV Fire Station. **You’re welcome to attend**, but please confirm the meeting date first. You can leave a message for the Bennett Valley Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, at 823-1084.*

Bennett Valley Firefighting Staff

Firefighting Engineers, 24-hour shifts:

Brian Campbell, Mike Musgrove and Bryon Reid

Part-time Firefighters, 8 am to 5 pm:

Kevin Burris, Matt Tognozzi, Danny Connelly

Bennett Valley Community Activities
Remember to note these dates on your calendar!

1.) Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association -The BVHA Board meets on the third Wednesday of every other month for the remainder of 2004, that is July 21st, September 15th, October 20th and November 17th. The meeting on July 21st, starts at 7:00 pm at the BV Fire Station. **Join us to hear Speaker Laurel Marcus discuss water conservation plus other issues of concern (more detailed information on Page Three).** You can check our web-page at <bennettvalleyhomeowners.org> for more information about BVHA meetings. Everyone is encouraged to attend these Board meetings.

2.) Bennett Valley Fire Protection District -The Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Call 578-7761 to confirm the meeting date and time in advance. Everyone is welcome to attend.

3) Sonoma County Board Of Supervisors meets every Tuesday (except on weeks when there is a holiday) at 575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa. Valerie Brown is the Supervisor for our First District. You may call her or her Aide, Lynn Morton-Weil, at 565-2241, if you have any questions or concerns.

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GP Circulation Sub-Committee
Bennett Ridge Fire Prevention
BV Firefighter Activities

Bennett Valley Homeowners' Association
P.O. Box 2666
Santa Rosa, CA 95405

BVHA web-page <bennettvalleyhomeowners.org>

BVHA Mission Statement: *"Committed to promoting & preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley."*

Return Service Requested

WANTED: Vintage Photos of Bennett Valley
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SPEAKER: Water Conservation Plus+
of LAKEN, Water Conservation Plus+
Wednesday, July 21st, 7:00 pm