



Bennett Valley VOICE

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 1

Bennett Valley Homeowner Association (BVHA)

JANUARY, 2006

SONOMA CO. OPEN SPACE DISTRICT GENERAL MANAGER IS THE SPEAKER AT NEXT BVHA MEETING, Jan. 17th, 7:00 pm

Everyone is invited to hear **Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District**, speak at the BVHA meeting on Tuesday, January 17th, 7:00 pm, at the BV Grange Hall, 4145 Grange Road. She will be presenting information on lands protected by the District in the Bennett Valley area and future plans for these and other BV land parcels. Andrea Mackenzie will also discuss Open Space progress made in leasing Sonoma County land to farmers, and the Open Space District plans for another election to maintain the sales tax funding for the Open Space District, now scheduled to expire in five years, as of 12/31/10. See you there!

BETTER WATER CONSERVATION/REHYDRATION!

by Brock Dolman, Wildlife Biologist,

Brock Dolman was the very informative and imaginative speaker at our last BVHA meeting in November, discussing water rehydration rather than dehydration. The concepts and words in this article are from a much longer article which he had written and from some of his verbal statements. The entire article could not be included because of space limitations, but Brock felt that this "revised" article distilled out the salient points from his longer article. For more information, you may contact Brock Dolman directly at the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center, (707) 874-1557, ext. 206.

By Marilee Jensen, VOICE Editor

MANTRA - "Waste is not pollution but food for the next part in the life cycle." In 1878, [Thomas Henry] Huxley first invoked watershed as a landscape entity or catchment basin stating, "all that part of a river basin from which rain is collected and from which therefore the river is fed." This definition encapsulates the basic physical definition of a watershed today. Our challenge is to move beyond a static, hydrologic definition towards a dynamic understanding of the wholeness of watersheds and how they literally underlie all human endeavors. The

earliest descriptions of North America...evoke a vision of snow-capped peaks, forested ridges, wooded slopes, rolling prairies, flood plains, riparian jungles, beaver wetlands, and river mouth estuaries brimming with wildlife, "an ecstatically pervious world that cleansed and cycled and savored its own water to the benefit of unfathomable biodiversity...These vegetated landscapes of yore seeded and combed the aqueous clouds, rehumidified the downwind air, buffered their own climates, and passed on the surplus to recharge groundwater aquifers that sustained the flow of springs, creeks, and rivers...Now imagine this hydrological wonderland after some centuries of development...Cutting, clearing, burning, and draining have hardened the upland capillaries and aquatic arteries of the landscape. Clearcut logging, mining, over-grazing, plow agriculture, housing, commercial development, road building, and parking lots all add up to extreme imperviousness (*incapable of being penetrated by water*) in a watershed...Studies indicate that once development hardens even 15% of a stream's watershed, aquatic health falls off sharply, (at) 25%, degradation is severe...around 10%...is equal to single family homes on 1-2 acre lots, (and) is often the tipping point where you begin to see decline...Fragmented habitat, species extinction, soil erosion, sedimentation, flooding, loss of ground water recharge, contaminated water, reductions in stream flow, salted soils,... social disruption, community collapse, and economic hindrance form a litany of issues screaming out for a holistic response.

The following is a short list of various strategic ...(actions) for ... watershed protections and restoration:

1. Create a community-based watershed council which embraces all residents, stakeholders, and agency representatives, in order to bring focus to the unique needs of each watershed...have regular meetings to share information, organize watershed clean-up days and hands-on community restoration projects... (Continued on Next Page)

2. Get or make good watershed maps: Maps may be the most effective tool to catalyze people's consciousness about their relation to their basin...

3. Watershed signs: Work with your local county or state road agencies to place signs both at creek crossings and at watershed and sub-watershed divides...

4. Watershed Welcome Wagon packets: Compile a succinct citizen's guide to information for watershed landowners about watershed processes, maps, wildlife, native plants, erosion, fencing, chemical use, forestry management, rural roads, alternative energy, impervious surfaces, ... and other regionally appropriate land use issues...

5. Watershed monitoring: Design a monitoring program that collects data in a standardized manner with consistent quality control for accuracy and reliable analysis.

- Analyze water flows (channels), whether confined or unconfined.
- Survey a cross section of the channel; determine the embeddedness of gravel by doing pebble counts;
- Distribute a number of rain gauges to council members
- Do riparian habitat assessment using aerial photos; determine riparian canopy density using a densitometer; assess the impact of invasive plant species; determine re-vegetation project needs;
- Perform wildlife or endangered species surveys; evaluate habitat connectivity and wildlife movement corridors;
- Initiate water quality monitoring for pH, dissolved oxygen, temperatures, and conductivity;
- Assess fuel load conditions in upland vegetation communities;
- Map upland erosion sites and road networks towards developing a priority restoration plan; assess percentage of watershed with impervious surface cover and map locations and types;
- Study historical and present land use changes and practices.

6. Roads: Paved and unpaved roads cause destructive watershed impacts such as: salting and toxic runoff, habitat fragmentation, road kill, fish passage issues, and direct delivery of sediment products to active channels...

7. Cost Share/Grant Programs: Numerous federal, state, county and city programs exist that provide cost share/grant funds to landowners or watershed councils to perform restoration projects or education programs...

8. Political: ...Work with political officials at all levels...County Boards of Supervisors are especially pertinent for local watershed-related issues...support the development of watershed-based general plans and regional planning units. By bringing watershed literacy to politics you will actually be helping them do their job... and support improvements in watershed function and health.

9. Impervious surfaces: Imperviousness presents the most insidious impact on watershed health. ...Increased frequency and intensity of flooding is directly correlated to increased area of impervious surface in the drainage basin. Lack of groundwater recharge and thus compromised water supply issues are directly related to imperviousness. Water quality degradation...is again related to excessive impervious cover.

Permaculture is a design science with a **pragmatic attitude of applied positive action...*** The permaculture movement is most advanced in its ...strategic application of solutions for watershed restoration. **Increasing roof catchment; infiltration of runoff into groundwater recharging*** through botanically diversified bioswales, contour ditches, detention ponds, settling basins and/or rain gardens; **purifying waste water for groundwater recharging with constructive wetlands,*** preferably close to the source...Using your web-search engine is the best way to obtain more information on how to design residential rain gardens, bioswales or constructive wetlands, to be used to purify water and recharge groundwater, similar to a living carbon filter.

We must stop using storm drains that are connected to sanitary sewers that eventually overflow and pollute the ecosystem. Many pervious paving options are available that infiltrate runoff and provide a remedy to the runoff of urban chemicals, oils, and gasoline. These ideas are being mandated by water quality agencies. The time is ripe and [*the solutions are*] affordable.

The challenge before us is to design development patterns based on principles of rehydration instead of dehydration...*A new paradigm based on watershed restoration is being heralded. Spread the water out, slow it down, facilitate its proper percolation, instead of shedding the water away to flood your downstream neighbors with topsoil-laden, toxic fish-killing effluent. Watersheds ... only work when they are open and porous, permeable, and pervious to the bounty of falling water... With those who share your watershed your fundamental connection as a community is directly related to your shared existence amidst each basin... Water movement over and within the land is a watershed, a primary energetic commodity... Water is the defining element that unrelentingly determines a community's ecological and economic carrying capacity. From living water, all things spring and bubble forth: salmon, soil, vegetation, forest, wildlife, watershed, planet.

**(Bold type added by VOICE editor.)*

Get Involved! Stay Informed!

It's time to step up and join the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association for 2006. We need members to help actively pursue our BVHA Mission; *promoting and preserving the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, while serving as a forum for community participation and providing a bridge for communication.* Your continued support is very important. Let's all get out and support the new Board.

Please send your annual dues of \$15, plus any extra donation you're willing to make. These extra donations enable us to mail our VOICE to all 900 Bennett Valley parcel owners. In addition, these funds support our website so that everyone has the opportunity to keep well-informed and government officials hear our collective voice. Make your checks out to BVHA, and send to Blair/Dougherty, 7373 Bennett Valley Rd., Santa Rosa, CA 95404. A dues form and envelope have been included in this issue of the VOICE for your convenience.

You may get your copy of the VOICE faster and help the Association save money by receiving this newsletter via e-mail. At the present time 178 households use this service, at an annual savings of \$416.52 in postage alone. This is a way you can help keep our costs down; just circle "yes" on your membership form, include your e-mail address and return with your dues. We will do all the rest. If you have questions, please call Bobbie at 542-1608 or e-mail her at dreams7373@sbcglobal.net.

BVHA 2005 Activities

- *"Bridging Our Community" – New Grange Road Bridge Opening Ceremony, June 5th, 2005*
- *Speakers, May 17th: Jane Nielson & Stephen Fuller-Rowell on Sonoma County Water Coalition and Groundwater Conservation.*
- *Speakers, July 19th: Jason Cotter and Jay Ruzicka, on installing solar energy in your home.*
- *Speakers, September 20th: Dean Parsons and Karin Theriault, from Sonoma County's Permit Resource & Management Department (PRMD), discussing the Development Guidelines and the Design Review Process for Bennett Valley area.*
- *Speaker, November 15th: Brock Dolman, Wildlife Biologist, Occidental Art & Ecology Center, discussing the action needed for a "Rehydration Model" to insure the health of watersheds.*
- *BVHA Road Clean-Up Days; June 4th and Oct. 8th*
- *BVHA Bennett Valley Groundwater Survey being done by Doug Martin, with 20 individual wells plus local water company wells such as Bennett Ridge.*
- *Bennett Valley Calendars; 2005 and 2006*

Information Presented By BVHA In 2005

- New Grange Road Bridge Construction Activities
- Bennett Valley Firefighter Activities For The Year
- BV Fire Protection District Board Changes
- New BV Firefighting Staff
- Bennett Valley Grange History Night
- Bennett Valley Rural Mail Theft
- Land Paths Outings, including Jacobs Ranch
- BV Groundwater Choices
- Matanzas Creek Vineyard Plans
- Laws: Dogs on Leashes
- Information on Sonoma County Genetic Engineering Initiative
- Bennett Valley Monthly Community Calendar
- Bennett Valley "Bulletin Board" Items
- Quick Identity Theft Protection
- Toll-free Phone Numbers For Congressional Offices in Washington, D.C.
- Privacy Rights; Telephone Solicitation
- Earthquake Preparedness Info and Handbooks
- Light Pollution
- BVHA Elections

2006 BV CALENDAR - THE GOOD NEWS AND THE BAD NEWS

The good news first. Thanks to all who supported our Bennett Valley Calendars. And a special thanks to the residents who sent in photos showing the different aspects of the beauty in Bennett Valley, from winter rains and morning fogs to moonlit evenings. Once again Ace Hardware and Long's Drug Store helped a great deal by selling calendars for us. Their willingness to do so was invaluable. Thank you also to Suzanne Dougherty for always cheerfully helping the calendar committee as an advisor, salesperson, etc.

Now the bad news; the calendars sold briskly for awhile but then at Christmas, sales suddenly plummeted. We now have fifty of these lovely, inspiring calendars remaining, at \$15 each. If you missed the chance to get a calendar or want additional calendars, be sure to let us know. The calendars will be available at the next BVHA meeting on Tuesday, January 17th. Or you're welcome to order one by telephone, calling either Eve Boling, at 573-8614 or Suzanne Dougherty, at 542-1608. You may also purchase these calendars at the BV Fire Station.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa

(707) 578-8471 ((Non-emergency #)

Board of Directors

Mark Richardon, Marilee Jensen, Arnie Tognozzi,
Joseph Mazeau plus one vacant position

*The Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday
each month, 7:00 pm. at the BV Fire Station. **You're
welcome to attend, but please confirm the meeting
date first. If you have any questions or concerns,
you can leave a message for the Bennett Valley
Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, at 823-1084.***

BENNETT VALLEY PAID FIREFIGHTING STAFF

24-hour Shift Firefighting Engineers:

Captain Brian Campbell, Lieutenant Bryon Reid, and
Engineer Gabe Stirnus

Daytime Firefighters, 8 am to 5 pm:

Danny Connelly*, Matt Tognozzi*, & Steve Gritsch
(*Also Engineers)

BV Firefighter Activities;

November/December, 2005

By Lieutenant Bryon Reid

*Medical Aids-13; Vehicle Accidents-11;
Vegetation Fires-2; Structure Fires-6;
Smoke Investigations-1; Hazardous Conditions-14;
Public Assists-1 Fire Alarm Soundings-5;*

Other-2

Along with the end of 2005 came an unprecedented amount of rain. Sonoma County, as a whole, was pummeled by the torrential rainfall and Bennett Valley felt the effects as well. With all of this rain in the second half of December, there was a spike in vehicle accidents and weather-related calls (reported under *hazardous conditions*, above) which exceeded the norms for this area. Specifically, the rain brought trees blocking roadways, power lines falling, and land slides throughout the valley. The most significant slide occurred at the Pressley Rd/Roberts Rd. junction. Here, the road has been reduced to one lane when a significant amount of dirt slid down the hill from above. It is expected that this will continue to be a one-lane road for sometime, as part of the county's now long list of repairs to be completed.

On December 4th, in Bennett Valley, a structure fire gutted the inside of a house off of Bennett Valley Road. Per the newspaper article, "A woman was hospitalized with second-degree burns ...after a fire tore through two stories" of this home. The other woman in the house escaped unharmed. The paper goes on to say this "may have started in the chimney", as the result of a burning wood stove.

The house suffered extensive damages. Firefighters from Santa Rosa, Kenwood, Rancho Adobe, and Rincon Valley were called to assist in the suppression of the blaze. The cause of the fire is still under investigation.

As a reminder, burn season is open and burn permits and Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) notification forms are available at the fire station for \$10.00. Also, BAAQMD recommends that materials to be burned be down and dry for 30 days prior to burning to reduce the production of smoke into the air.

Your BV firefighters would like to emphasize the importance of allowing extra time to arrive at your location safely during these winter months. CHP has also been proactive in their "Click it or Ticket" campaign to encourage seatbelt use throughout the state during the holiday season.

We want to thank you for all your support which we've received throughout the holiday season.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District **(BVFPD) Board Vacancy**

Late in December, the BV Fire Protection District Board received a letter from Matt Phillips, saying that he was resigning from the Board as he no longer lives in the District.

If you are interested in being on the BV Fire Board of Directors, please contact one of the Fire Board members (listed at the top of this page) or the Gold Ridge Fire Protection District office, at 823-1084, with any questions you might have. Anyone who wants to be on the Board must reside in the BV Fire District area. If you are possibly interested, you are requested to send a letter addressed to the BV Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich, 6161 Bennett Valley Rd., Santa Rosa, 95404, expressing your interest. Please include a brief resume of your past experiences and education. The BVFPD Board will review these statements from candidates, interview each of them and select one for an appointment to the Board. The next required election for this Director's position will be in 2007.

Additional Fire District Items

★ There are four interns working at the BV Fire Station a certain amount of hours each week, in addition to paid staff, either because they are volunteers who live out of district and can't be called for emergencies, or as part of the required internship to become certified as a Firefighter I.

★ Three BV Explorers (high school students in training) will be attending the week-long State Fire Academy in Modesto this spring.

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association
(BVHA) Board Of Directors

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

Marilee Jensen, *President & VOICE Editor*
(576-0405), marileejensen@sbcglobal.net

Tim Murphy, *Vice-President* (542-7114)
tjmcpadvc@yahoo.com

Helen Bates, *Treasurer* (695-8760) hbates@att.net
Marilyn Stocks, *Recording Secretary*,
(528-2458) mjstocks@sonic.net

Leanore (Lolly) Mesches, *Corresponding Secretary* (545-8684) LOL7260@aol.com

Eric Burns, *Director* (584-7531)
datamonk@svn.net

Larissa Goliti, *Director*, (578-3453)
lgoliti@hotmail.com

Craig Harrison, *Director*, (573-9990)
charrison@hunton.com

Frank LaCombe, *Director*, (585-3482)
franksgarage@peoplepc.com

Membership Coordinator, Bobbie Blair, 542-1608
7373 Bennett Valley Rd., Santa Rosa, 95404,
dreams7373@sbcglobal.net

- Spencer Humphrey attended the meeting to say he was willing to be identified as the person writing the letter mentioned in the September 2005 VOICE, expressing concerns about BVHA's actions and responsibilities in regards to the Bennett Valley Area Plan standards. This is an example of when the person writing the letter to BVHA should have been identified in the VOICE.
- The BV Grange has agreed to let BVHA store a locked cabinet in the Grange with photo albums, records and supplies. BVHA approved a motion for Marilyn Stocks to purchase this cabinet.
- The BVHA Board agreed that any profits from the BV 2006 calendar will be split evenly between the BV Volunteer Firefighters Association and the BV Grange.
- Relevant documents were distributed to BVHA Board members, including the Restated Articles of Incorporation, filed 2/2/04, and the Bylaws, revised 5/17/00 to the two new Board members, Craig Harrison and Larissa Goliti. Each of the Board members were asked to submit annual Conflict of Interest form.
- After the meeting was adjourned the Board voted for the following officers for the next year:
President, Marilee Jensen; Vice-President, Tim Murphy; Secretary, Marilyn Stocks; Treasurer, Helen Bates. Although no longer a Board member, *Bobbie Blair* has graciously agreed to continue to be **Membership Coordinator**.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

Tues., January 17th, 7 pm, BV Grange

- **Andrea Mackenzie, Speaker, General Manager of Sonoma County Open Space District**
- BVHA 2006 Calendar; Plans for 2007 Calendar ?
- Status of BVHA cabinet at BV Grange Hall.
- BVHA Web-site status. Up to date?
- Latest Grange Road Bridge landscaping plans
- Status of BV Groundwater Survey Project
- Board members, submit Conflict of Interest Forms
- Report on mail-outs to Realtors selling BV property
- BVHA Meeting Day; 3rd Tuesday or Wednesday?
- Board clarification on BVHA Role: Standards In Bennett Valley Area Plan, when changes are being proposed (PRMD), complaints are received or apparent non-compliances are observed.

Brief Summary, BVHA Board Meeting

November 15th, 2005

- There was general agreement that BVHA correspondence should be available to the public and will continue to be kept in the binder that is available at all our meetings, unless the person writing the letter requests confidentiality for an understandable reason. (*No Board member can remember that ever occurring in the past.*)

CELL PHONES: Left hanging on 911

Per information from an article in the Press Democrat on December 5th, 2005, the vast majority of 911 calls placed from cell phones in nine Bay Area counties are answered by dispatchers in Vallejo. "In some cases the wait can be 10 minutes or more, according to California Highway Patrol (CHP) officials, who blame delays on staffing shortages and people who call 911 with non-emergencies."

"Experts recommend putting the emergency seven-digit number for your local police department in your cell phone for emergencies that occur anywhere but on a CHP-patrolled highway or road."
For our unincorporated areas, that number is the Sonoma County Sheriff's phone number, 565-2121. Another possibility for emergencies in the immediate BV area, when you can get through on a cell phone, is the BV Fire Station, at 578-8471.

Per the experts, "People should use their cell phones to call 911 only to report life-threatening medical emergencies, crimes in progress, a reckless or suspected drunken driver or a serious traffic accident or hazard {on CHP-patrolled roads}. It's not... to be used to check road or weather conditions" or other non-emergencies.

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2006

(BVHA MAILING LABEL)

Please mail in this form with your annual dues of \$15 plus any donation you're willing to make, in order to enable us to pursue our specific purposes: *To promote and preserve the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, serve as an open forum for Bennett Valley community participation and provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community.* Make the check out to BVHA and mail the envelope to Blair/Dougherty, 7373 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 or call (707) 542-1608.

Let us know if you would like to receive the VOICE by e-mail. If yes, include your e-mail address.

E-mail address: _____

We also are interested in hearing any comments or concerns you may have, or any corrections or additions we should make to your name(s), address, or phone #. (Current Phone#: _____) If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

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BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2006

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E-mail address: _____

We also are interested in hearing any comments or concerns you may have, or any corrections or additions we should make to your name(s), address, or phone #. (Current Phone#: _____) If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

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BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITY CALENDAR

(Remember to mark these dates on your calendar.)

1.) Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA): The next BVHA Board meeting will be on Tuesday, January 17th, 7:00 pm at the BV Grange Hall. Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District will be the speaker. See the Tentative Agenda for this next meeting on Page Five. BVHA meetings are currently scheduled on the third Tuesday of every other month, plus October, starting at 7:00 pm, at the BV Grange Hall, 4145 Grange Rd. Changing the meeting day back to the third Wednesday is under consideration by the BVHA Board.

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. You are welcome to attend these Board meetings, but it is important you call 823-1084 to verify the meeting day in advance, as it is necessary to reschedule these meetings from time to time. The scheduled meeting dates for 2006 are January 10th, February 14th, March 14th, April 11th, May 9th, June 13th, July 11th, August 8th, September 12th, October 10th, November 14th and December 12th.

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 County Supervisor for our First District. You may call her or Lynn Morton-Weil, her Aide, at 565-2241, if you have any questions or concerns.

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

BVHA web-page: bennettvalleyhomeowners.org

SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF BVHA: *"To promote and preserve the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, serve as an open forum for Bennett Valley community participation and provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community."*

Return Service Requested

***ANDREA MACKENZIE, OPEN SPACE
DISTRICT, January 17th, 7pm, BV Grange***

