



Bennett Valley VOICE

VOLUME 29, NUMBER 2

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA)

MARCH, 2006

Possible Impacts On Bennett Valley From Sonoma County's Proposed Updated General Plan

(Please note BVHA's changed meeting date to Wednesday, March 22nd)

Greg Carr, Manager of Sonoma County's Comprehensive Planning Division of PRMD, will be the speaker at the next BVHA meeting, on Wednesday, March 22nd, 7 pm at the BV Grange Hall. In January, notification was sent out to the public that the draft environmental impact report for the proposed updated Sonoma County General Plan had been completed and hearings are scheduled for late February and March by the Sonoma County Planning Commission. This notice said that changes in policies are being proposed for a number of areas throughout Sonoma County, including Bennett Valley and Sonoma Mountain. At our request, Greg Carr has agreed to review those proposed issues and policy changes which might impact our area. You are invited to join us for this very important presentation.

Chainsaw Accident; THANKS So Much To Bennett Valley Fire!

By Eric Burns, BVHA Board of Directors

My dad told me a few rules for working with a chainsaw. The first was to always be sure you had firm footing and knew where the blade was going to go should it cut too quickly or kick back. The second was that I really shouldn't work alone in remote areas.

Well recently I made the mistake of violating both of those rules. I was off in the woods breaking up some small bay trees. Up to my waist in brush, I was moving through the fallen tree by cutting and pulling out branches. Unfortunately I slipped as I cut through much quicker than expected. I could feel the running saw headed for my legs as I fumbled to keep

it from falling into me. Somehow the still-running blade did hit me - across the right wrist. It was a scary moment in my life. I saw enough blood and a big enough gash to know it wasn't a good situation. I had a cell phone, but would have to release my right wrist to get at it. As I gripped my wrist, I wasn't losing any more blood and the pain wasn't as bad. After reviewing the options I realized that driving my truck down the hill wasn't possible, so I started walking the half mile to my nearest neighbor.

I've always wondered how I'd handle a situation like this - always hoped it would never happen, but also hoped I'd be able to keep a level head. Knowing that Bennett Valley Fire was close by, and also knowing the sort of people that work there, helped me keep that level head. During the long walk down the hill I just did my best to stay calm and focus on what I was going to say when I rang my neighbor's doorbell. Fortunately the neighbor was home and called 911 for me. It was nice hearing them say "dispatch out of Bennett Valley Fire - they are the closest." It wasn't long until we heard sirens and saw the truck come up the driveway.

I've dealt with Captain Brian Campbell and Engineer Matt Tognozzi many times - between chatting with them at BVHA meetings and at the Community Days in August each year. They were a real relief to see walking up with their gear, and at that point I could relax and know that I was in capable hands. They went through the routine of checking the wound, checking my vitals and getting more information to the ambulance that was also en route. They passed me off to the medics on the ambulance who transported me to Kaiser. I was lucky enough to get off with only 13 stitches and no tendon damage. We are so fortunate to have the competent firefighters so close at Bennett Valley Fire, and I really appreciated them that afternoon.

BV Fire Protection District **(BVFPD) INSURANCE RATING** **IMPROVEMENT**

The insurance industry designates a certain **ISO** (*Insurance Services Office*) rating to each residential area, based on an evaluation of the quality of the fire services for that location. For instance, the accessibility of water, the competence of the firefighters, the fire engines' features and appropriateness for the area (*Can they traverse narrow winding roads as found in Bennett Valley?*), all play a part in determining the ISO rating.

In 2002 the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District, through an extensive grassroots effort, overwhelmingly passed a special tax specifically for the Fire District. This needed revenue has resulted in more paid firefighting staff, better training, an increase in the number of volunteers who sleep over, significantly improved fire engines and equipment, and excellent supervision of the firefighters, and the operation of the BVFPD through the Administrative Agreement with Gold Ridge Fire District. Included in this is improved maintenance for the both the BV Fire Station and their firefighting equipment. All of these improvements have helped to get our ISO rating improved, from a 6 to a 5, for those buildings within 1000 feet of a fire hydrant. This kind of improvement can result in reduced fire insurance premiums, either now or sometime in the future, and it is the direct result of volunteer community action by Bennett Valley residents.

If you live in the Bennett Valley Fire District area, but not within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant, then the ISO rating is 8B. This number can be rounded up to a 9 and result in significantly higher premiums and even disqualification for fire insurance coverage by some insurance companies. Gold Ridge Fire District, with the same Fire Chief and administrative staff as Bennett Valley Fire District, has been able to demonstrate to the insurance industry that with mutual aid assistance from nearby fire districts, they can increase their timely accessibility to sufficient water, even without fire hydrants, and thus have been successful in significantly improving their rating. Bennett Valley Fire District is waiting to be able to demonstrate that they can assure similar protection, so as to have our rating also improved for those areas not close enough to a fire hydrant.

There is nothing further that BVFPD Board of Directors, staff or residents can do at this time to improve these ISO ratings further. Meanwhile, it is Fire Chief Andy Pforsich's assessment that Bennett Valley has "just what we need to ensure a reasonable level of public safety and response capability."

COME JOIN BVHA AND SUPPORT **OUR RURAL COMMUNITY**

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

If you haven't already joined your BVHA, why not send your check in now? The goal is to preserve and protect our lovely Valley and you can help. The dues are only \$15.00. Your continued support is very important. If you have sent in your membership, thank you very much. If you forgot or are still considering it, please join and help support the new Board of Directors. Please send your check, made out to "BVHA", to Blair/Dougherty, 7373 Bennett Valley Rd. Santa Rosa, CA 95404, for the annual dues of \$15, plus any donation you might like to make. You'll find a membership form on Page Five of this VOICE, to send in with your check.

You can get your copy of the VOICE faster and help the Association save money by receiving your VOICE by e-mail. At the present time 184 households use this service, at a savings of \$416.52 in postage alone. The Board has agreed to send the VOICE to all Valley homeowners, as long as the budget will allow. This is one way you can help to keep costs down and continue to have the VOICE sent to one and all. Just circle "yes" and include your e-mail address on your membership form and return it with your dues. We will do all the rest.

If you have questions, please e-mail Bobbie at dreams7373@sbcglobal.net or call her at 542-1608.

Welcome to our New Members!

We want to welcome the following people who have recently joined BVHA for the first time or rejoined after an absence: *Bassam Salameh, Dan Kley, Linda Espinosa, Carol Guanella, Loria & Richard Rolander, Sherry & Richard Balletto, Dawn Marshall, Joan E. Freeman, Diane & Anne Giles, Alma & Richard Lukasko, Kathleen & David Pitou, Susan Feichtmeir & James Greaves, Barbara Morrow, Lynn & Steve Olsen, Michael & Lisa Topolos, Carol & Rodney Johnson, Gary Garabedian, Tom Menzies, Carol & Mark Wieszczyk, Barbara & Ken Maberry, Sally Rosenblatt, Laura Saunders, Janelle & Kevin Holtzinger, Vicki & Tim Haddad, Maria & Ignacio Tejada, Nichole & James Duncan, Sally & Ed Jensen, and Thomas Brunsing.*

BV SPRING CLEAN-UP DAY!

Saturday, April 29th, has been chosen for the next Bennett Valley roadside clean-up day. We are asking volunteers to meet at the BV Fire Station at 8:30 am. Donuts and coffee will be served.

Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, gloves and a hat for sun protection. The BVHA provides "pick-up sticks" that are a great help in preventing sore backs.

We do appreciate the residents who come out every Spring and Fall to help keep our community roadsides free of litter. Questions? Call Eve Boling, 573-8614 or Sandy Sandine, 579-0282.

Help Clean Up Our Valley!

Bennett Valley Calendars

- 2006 Calendar: Another calendar season has come to a close and it is time to say thank-you to Long's Drug Store and Ace Hardware for being so willing to support our Association. We sell over 100 calendars at the two locations. The Manager at Long's is Chuck Adamack who has for several years worked with us in selling calendars at Long's. Ace Hardware in the Safeway Plaza has two new owners, Damon Pham and David Harrison. They have been very supportive and a pleasure to work with. We wish them the best in their new venture.
- 2007 Calendar: Now it is time for all of our readers to start thinking about what would make a good picture of our valley, and prepare for the 2007 edition of the Bennett Valley Calendar. A report on the 2007 calendar committee will be made at the next BVHA meeting on Wednesday, March 22nd.

Brief Summary, BVHA Board Meeting,

January 17th, 2006

- Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager, and Kim Batchelder from the Sonoma Co. Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District gave an informative overview of the district's programs. To protect it for future generations, they buy land within four general categories; agriculture, separation belts, water habitat, and recreation. On their web site, www.sonomaopenspace.org, there is

a great deal of information. Future challenges for the organization include: keeping farms and ranches in agriculture, working with diverse communities, using creative approaches to protect sensitive habitat, changing demographics, and the reauthorization of the ¼% sales tax which will need two-thirds voter approval before 2011.

- The BVHA Board decided to meet on the third Wednesdays for the remainder of 2006, rather than on the second Tuesday of the month. Because of the schedule of the speaker, the March meeting will be on the fourth Wednesday, just for this one month only.
- Craig Harrison, Frank LaCombe and Martin McClure agreed to work as a committee for the consideration of emergency preparations in Bennett Valley for possible disasters such as an earthquake or major fire.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

Wednesday, March 22nd, 7 pm, BV Grange

- **Speaker: Greg Carr, Manager, Sonoma County Comprehensive Planning Division, PRMD, to discuss possible impacts from the proposed updated General Plan on Bennett Valley.**
- Plans for BVHA 2007 Calendar
- BVHA Web-Site Status; purchase of 2 pdf files?
- BV Emergency Preparedness Committee Report
- Further discussion on BVHA Role, when changes are being proposed (PRMD), complaints are received or apparent non-compliances with the Bennett Valley Area Plan are observed.

Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association

(BVHA) Board Of Directors

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

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Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

**6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
(707) 578-7761 ((Non-Emergency Business Phone)
Board of Directors**

Mark Richardon, Joseph Mazeau, Marilee Jensen,
Arnie Tognozzi, 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;

January/February 2006

By Lieutenant Bryon Reid

*Medical Aids- 11; Vehicle Accidents-9;
Structure Fires-5; Smoke Investigations-1;
Hazardous Conditions-1; Public Assists-3;
Fire Alarm Soundings-4; Other-1*

January and February have come and gone and it is hard to believe that spring is just around the corner. Spring marks the end of the burn season on April 30 and leads us into the summer months of fire season. It is a good time to now start thinking about fire prevention and get a head start on cutting back weeds just after the last rains. Also, the Bennett Valley Fire District is still selling burn permits for \$10.00 dollars to those who qualify.

Other news from the Fire Station is that we have a fire engine on loan from the Gold Ridge Fire District. The Gold Ridge Fire District recently purchased a new water tender and placed it into service in the west county. At the same time, we at Bennett Valley have our water tender in the shop for modifications to add new compartments to the engine. Gold Ridge, being a gracious neighboring district has allowed us to borrow one of their engines until ours is back from the shop.

Be cautious on the roads because the wet weather is still upon us and thank you for your continued support.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District (BVFPD) Board Vacancy

There is one vacant position on the Bennett Valley Fire Protection District Board. Anyone who wants to be on the Board must reside in the BV Fire District area. If you are 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. This Director's position will be open for re-election in November, 2007.

Letter to BV Fire Chief, Andy Pforsich

"February 9th, 2006...Dear Chief Pforsich, On Tuesday evening, January 10, 2006, at approximately 2330 hours, my youngest son Patrick was involved in an accident on Bennett Valley Road. While trying to avoid hitting a deer that had jumped in front of him, Pat rolled his truck with it ending upside down on its roof. Thank God, Pat and his two friends...were all wearing their seat belts. They were able to exit the truck with some cuts, bruises, and soreness; but no serious injuries. Engine Company 7882 (BVFPD) responded to this...(motor vehicle accident) with Lt. Bryon Reid, FF/OPR, Brandon Budd, FF, Anthony Rocha, FF, John Matej, FF, and Russell West, FF as the crew. When my wife Regina and oldest son Andrew arrived on the scene after being notified by Pat of his accident, she was very impressed with the crew of E7882. The professionalism, care and concern extended to my son and his two friends brought great comfort to her during this most stressful time. I would be remiss if I did not let the #1 Man of the BVFD know of the fine work that his men are doing in the field. They were a credit to themselves, their Company, the BVFD and the Santa Rosa Community that they obviously serve with immense pride. As a proud member of the...(San Francisco Fire Department) in my 32nd year of service, I know all too often that our service to the people of the City and County of San Francisco is taken for granted. Most of the time, when a... (Chief of Department) receives a written correspondence, it is of negative content. I chose to write a positive letter because it was warranted. In closing, kudos to Lt. Bryon Reid and the fine men of E7882. Their actions were to the highest standards of "our" profession.

Respectfully, *Tom Gibson*, SFFD Engine #2"

BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES, 2006

(Mailing Label on Reverse Side)

NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

Current Phone Number: _____ 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.

If you would like to receive the VOICE by e-mail, circle "yes" and 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 #. If you don't have enough room, insert additional paper. Thanks!

Comments/Changes: _____

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Thank-You From Andrea Mackenzie

The following is a summary of a letter dated January 23rd, 2006 received from our speaker at the last BVHA meeting, that is Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager, Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District: *"We would like to thank you for inviting us to the Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association meeting last week...We really are excited about all the different activities we are involved with right now. From our new ReVision Plan 2005 to the Taylor Mountain acquisition, from the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail to the reauthorization of our funding source, this year shows so much potential to really have an impact here in Sonoma County...Kim Batchelor would like to make sure that the North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail gets constructive feedback through the design and construction process from groups like yours. He has planned two public meetings to ensure public participation in the creation of this incredible trail network at the top of the Matanzas Creek watershed and to comply with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). We definitely will notify your organization of the dates of these meetings. We welcome your input and hope that you will share the meeting information with your friends and neighbors. We look forward to working with you and thanks again for the opportunity to speak to your group."*

LandPaths Outings Calendar, Winter 2006 Land Partners Through Stewardship

Fostering a love of the land through public access, environmental education and land stewardship
"About Our Outings & Signing Up: All outings are free and open to the public. However, as space is limited, reservations are required. To reserve space(s) and for outing details contact us at: **E-mail: outings@landpaths.org** or call **LandPaths Event Line: (707) 524-9318**. Most outings run from about 9 am to 2:30 pm, unless otherwise noted. We make every effort to confirm all reservations. If you do not receive a confirmation within a week of your request—please try again."

You might be interested in the outing on Saturday, March 25th; "Taylor Mountain: Nature Inspires Art—Santa Rosa (Moderate Hiking) How do nature & open space inspire art? In this second of a two-part series, we'll explore this question and more as we join local artist Brooks Anderson for a tour of the Taylor Mountain properties above Santa Rosa, protected by your Open Space District. Leaders: Brook Anderson and Staff from the Open Space District, LandPaths, & Sonoma County Museum."

HAZARDOUS DISPOSAL NOTICE: Bennett Valley Grange will be accepting discarded batteries, except for car batteries, no longer allowed in your garbage or in recycling containers. Look for the identified BV Grange Disposal Box in the vicinity of their driveways at 4145 Grange Road.

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 Wednesday, March 22nd, 7:00 pm at the BV Grange Hall with Greg Carr, Manager of Sonoma County's, Comprehensive Planning Division of PRMD, as the speaker. See the Tentative Agenda for this next meeting on Page Three. After this March meeting, BVHA meetings in 2006 will be regularly scheduled on the third Wednesday of every other month, plus October, that is May 17th, July 19th, September 20th, October 18th and November 15th, starting at 7:00 pm, at the BV Grange Hall, 4145 Grange Rd.

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 578-7761 or 823-1084 to verify the meeting day in advance, as it is necessary to reschedule these meetings from time to time. The next three scheduled meetings are March 14th, April 11th, and May 9th.

3.) **Bennett Valley Grange Spaghetti Dinner:** The Grange is having their tasty Spaghetti Feed on Saturday, April 22nd, 5:00 to 8:00 pm. Watch for the signs!

4.) **Bennett Valley Spring Clean-Up Day:** Saturday, April 29th, 8:30 am, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station.

5.) 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

***Greg Carr, Sonoma Co., BV General Plan Impacts,
March 22nd (changed date), 7pm, BV Grange***

BV Grange Spaghetti Feed, April 22nd, 5 to 8 pm

BVHA Spring Clean-Up Day, April 29th, 8:30am