



JANUARY NEWSLETTER

VERG To The Rescue

The big winter storm on Thursday, December 15th, saw our Valley Emergency Readiness Group (VERG) springing into action.

As our creeks overflowed their banks VERG monitored and reported events via their ever increasing neighborhood radio network, providing updates to the community through local social media sites including the Valley List Yahoo group, the SGV Facebook page and NextDoor San Geronimo. VERG also crosschecked with local KWMR radio to make sure they had the most up-to-date and accurate reports of incidents.



Castro Street Flooding; Photo by Alex Bernstein

By 5:45 pm on Thursday the Marin County Sheriff's Office relayed a request to open the Community Center for evacuees from the flash flood affecting Forest Knolls residents, among others. The community gym was considered the best option for immediate assistance and VERG went to work recruiting volunteers to staff a reception center.

Jim Fazackerley, VERG's leader, was pleased and even a bit surprised at the speed and spontaneity of the turnout. Utilizing just their neighborhood radio net, they recruited VERG members from Lagunitas, San Geronimo, and Woodacre to respond to the

gym. Many members responded in less than 30 minutes! Thankfully, the shelter operation was not needed that evening.

In the wake of the almost spontaneous activation they learned some valuable lessons and realized that they need to have some equipment and plans to make things work in a future scenario. They will be gathering with the Community Center staff, the Lagunitas School District, and VERG leadership to develop the Community Center's capability more fully and formally.

VERG also received a grant award from the County of Marin to purchase and stock a second cargo trailer somewhere in the western end of the Valley and they would welcome any offers or suggestions of a stable parking area for this new disaster asset.

VERG has purchased a fleet of Motorola portable radios and would like to issue them to willing participants in the SGV. They will supply residents with a long-term loaner radio and in return you will supply them with your weekly participation in a 5 minute check-in drill on Thursdays with your village coordinator. These radios can provide not only critical updates to a command post and ultimately to the county Emergency Operations Center but they can also connect you with immediate help from your neighbors in case of a large-scale emergency. VERG will even deliver a unit to you and provide training!

The VERG monthly meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 25th at 7:00 PM** at the Wilderness Way building across from the Lagunitas School parking lot. The meetings is open to the community and everyone is welcome to attend.

SFD Blvd Road Work

PG Member Charlie Wirtz reminds us that the County has plans to use \$937,000 in Measure A funds to restripe and repave the 50-year-old, 1.5 mile stretch of Sir Francis Drake Blvd from Wild Iris Drive in Forest Knolls, west to Lagunitas Rd.



The improvements will also take into consideration opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, as well as replacing culverts. Construction is scheduled to begin in Summer of 2017, with the project completed by Fall. For more information, go here:

<http://www.marincounty.org/depts/pw/current-projects> and scroll down to Sir Francis Drake Blvd.

Mtn View Bridge Replacement

The Planning Group will send a notice to members for the next community meeting regarding the replacement of the Mountain View Rd bridge off SFD Blvd in Lagunitas. The bridge was built out of old railroad cars in 1962 and is considered by the County to be structurally deficient and functionally obsolete.

Construction is scheduled to begin in Summer of 2018. There are plans for another community meeting. For more information go here:

<http://www.marincounty.org/depts/pw/divisions/engineering/mtn-view-rd-bridge-repl-project>

For a fact sheet go here:

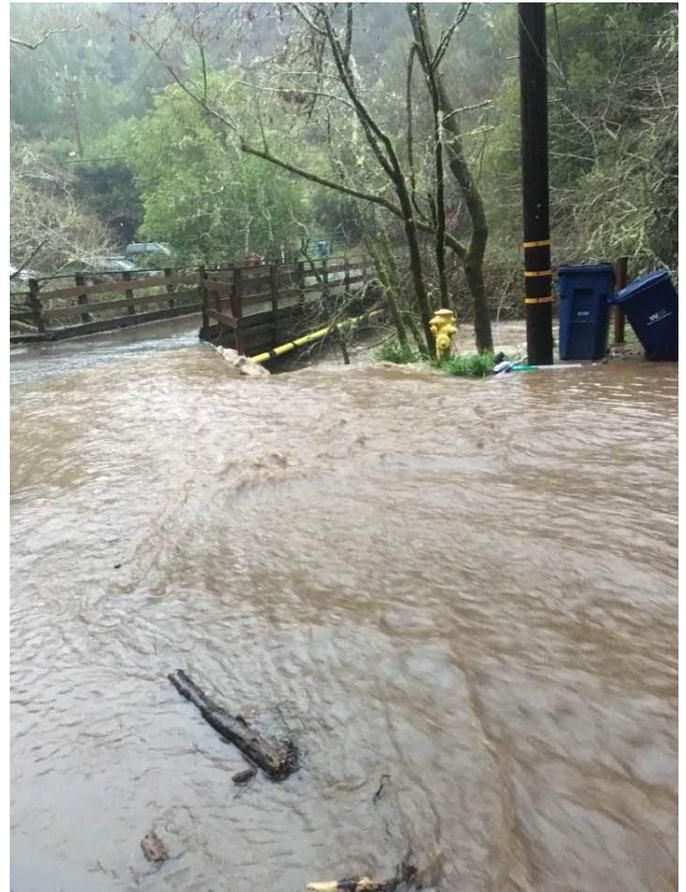
http://www.marincounty.org/~media/files/departments/pw/current-projects/mtviewrdbridge_factsheet_20151202.pdf?a=en

For a summary of the March 17th community meeting, go here:

file:///C:/Users/Jean/Documents/SGVPG/mtviewrd_031716_publicworkshop_summary-report.pdf

And for the presentation at the meeting, with lots of interesting photos, go here:

file:///C:/Users/Jean/Documents/SGVPG/mtviewroadbridge_presentation.pdf



Mountain View Road bridge about to go underwater during the December storm. Photo by John Smithyman

Coho Salmon Update

MMWD aquatic ecologist Eric Ettlinger shares his latest update on this season's coho salmon run:

“Dry weather allowed for spawner surveys to resume this week, following the largest flood in a decade last week. As suspected, many of the redds in Lagunitas Creek were destroyed in the flood, but most of the redds in the tributaries appear to have survived. Spawning continued apace, with 44 new

coho redds seen this week, which was essentially unchanged from last week. To date 154 coho redds have been seen in the watershed, including 29 redds reported by SPAWN in the tributaries leading to San Geronimo Creek. Typically the coho run is 60% complete by this date, putting this year's run on track to reach 250 redds, the long-term average. That would also be an increase over the run three years ago (the parental generation), which is always what we hope for."



New Uses For Dead Redwoods

Two dead redwood trees along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Samuel P. Taylor State Park were felled and repurposed for fish habitat restoration in Lagunitas Creek on Tuesday, December 20.



The two redwood trees, one 168 feet tall and the other 184 feet, were recently reported dead. Standing only a couple feet from the roadway, the trees were deemed a hazard to the traveling public along the stretch near Shafter Bridge. Thanks to a

preexisting agreement aimed at increasing wood in Lagunitas Creek to benefit salmon, the collaborating agencies were able to expedite the project and eliminate the public hazard. Instead of being chopped down and carted off as timber, the two trees were strategically cut and their falls were guided into Lagunitas Creek using a pull line.

The strategic placement of the enormous trees into the creek was seen as ideal for fish habitat by State Parks and MMWD salmon specialists. The water current around the logs will create deep pools that remain cool even during the summer months, allowing the temperature-sensitive salmon to survive. Also the redwood logs will capture additional wood and branches, providing the salmon with protection from predators.

"It's rare to have large redwoods fall into Lagunitas Creek," said Eric Ettlinger, MMWD Aquatic Ecologist. "Being able to do this project was a fantastic opportunity for the benefit of Marin's salmon population. It's great that the County was able to make this happen."

MMWD Distributing Woody Debris

Lots of woody debris tends to collect at Peters Dam on Kent Lake. MMWD has been collecting this debris in a stockpile at the base of the dam and then allows the limbs and branches to be carried off by Lagunitas Creek. The woody debris floats downstream during heavy flows and collects in discrete locations. This will benefit the fish by providing essential habitat which allows the fish to escape predators and high stream flows. For more information, contact MMWD fishery program manager Greg Andrews at 415-945-1191.



The Last Picture Show

Businesses come and go. But some help shape a community. One such enterprise, that will be missed by many, was Video West (and Pizza Too) in Forest Knolls. In continuous operation for over two decades, Video West was one of a handful of Valley businesses that offered employment to local residents including many of our youth. In its heyday, its popularity made the store a social center, as Valley friends congregated in numbers, especially on weekends.



Opened by Michelle Hansen, its first years were a time of building inventory and clientele. The store operated without a use permit for a number of years. When Michelle became aware of this legal requirement, she quickly corrected the oversight. For many, the face of Video West was Ace Ferrari, who managed it for its last several years. We could always count on Ace to maintain quality control over our pizza pies, and reserve our favorite films for us. While on-line video rentals caused even the giant rental stores to close, Video West hung in there for an amazing stretch, propped up by its faithful. Ace kept it going, long past its prime, for the sake of its employees and to support a local charity. We wish all the folks who worked there a happy and prosperous New Year.

San Geronimo Ridge Road Closed

Due to storm damage, the San Geronimo Ridge Road has been closed from the Lower Peters Dam Road to the intersection with Continental Cove Road until further notice. To help reduce fine sediment in the creek and to protect the fish please avoid using this fire road. For a map of the closure and an alternative route, please go here:

<http://www.marinwater.org/documentcenter/view/4658>

Creek Restoration Workshop

Sarah Phillips, Urban Streams Program Manager for the Marin Resource Conservation District, invites interested parties to join Dr Ann Riley and several additional partners on Saturday, January 28th, from 10:30 - 1:30 pm at Sir Francis Drake High School at 1327 Sir Francis Drake Blvd. San Anselmo, for a hands-on workshop for Best Management Practices to use nature-based solutions to enhance water quality for steelhead trout right in your own neighborhood. Here is a link to the flyer:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#search/sarah/159472d9d8c6ff0c?projector=1>

Specifically, you will be learning hands-on approaches to erosion control (applicable to riparian/creek side areas), and stream bank stabilization with three different nature-based soil bioengineering techniques. You will also hear from our local partners about regulatory compliance, what support can be provided by the local watershed group in the greater Corte Madera Creek watershed, how you can improve water quality with tips from MCSTOPPP and more!

You must register to attend. Space is limited, so please go online as soon as possible to register at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/bank-stabilization-workshop-for-marin-streamside-residents-tickets-30560309709>

You can contact Sarah Phillips at: Sarah@marinrkd.org (415)-663-1170 ext 302

Rainfall in Marin for 2017

Due to our impressive rainfall this season it looks like there won't be any water rationing this year. According to data from MMWD we have had a total of 46.32 inches at Lake Lagunitas as of January 11th, compared to only 20.98 inches at this time last year. The historical average rainfall as of January 11th is 22.79 inches. Our reservoirs are at 100% of capacity, which is 129% of normal. Even with our rainfall embarrassment of riches we still need to conserve our water for a rainy day.

Rodoni Sworn In As Supervisor

Our new District 4 supervisor was sworn into office by Judge D'Opal on January 3rd, in a celebratory event attended by PG steering committee members. Dennis Rodoni is now officially a member of the Marin County Board of Supervisors. As the 4th District Supervisor, which includes the San Geronimo Valley, he let us know that, "I'm here for you."

New Developments

For those of you that hike the Top Flite Trail on the back nine of the San Geronimo Golf Course, there is a new addition developing at the last lot in the San Geronimo suburb of West Nicasio. A building permit for the vacant property at 98 W Nicasio Rd was issued to Daniel J McHugh and will eventually result in a single family residence of 3,969 square-feet that is 22 feet high with a built-in pool and detached garage/art studio.



In Memoriam

It is with regret that we report the passing of Woodacre resident David Paul Anderson. We will miss Dave's charming personality, his radio-quality voice and his razor sharp wit.

Marin Carbon Project Video

Did you miss our well-attended Special Speaker Series #6, featuring John Wick of the Marin Carbon project? Fear not; the video of the meeting is now on YouTube. Here is the link:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38vc9dGhP_E

This exceptional video will give you hope that maybe we can still save the planet for our offspring. John Wick speaks about his successful efforts on his ranch to improve soil and reduce carbon.

San Geronimo Valley Medical Marijuana Dispensaries Update

The Planning Group recently emailed an online survey to each membership household for their input on medical marijuana dispensaries in the San Geronimo Valley and the proposed dispensary in Forest Knolls. The results will be announced at an upcoming meeting and in a future newsletter.

The County will be holding a community meeting sometime soon for public input on proposed dispensaries. The Planning Group will notify members as soon as a date is set. The final decision will be made by County Administrator Matt Hymel and can only be appealed by the applicants. It is possible that the proposed dispensary in Forest Knolls may be the only legal dispensary in all of Marin County. You can still send comments to the County here:

<http://www.marincounty.org/main/medicalcannabis/public-comment-form>



Valley Full Moon Hike

The Marin County Parks Department has scheduled a full moon hike at Roy's Redwoods on Saturday, January 14th from 5 – 6:30 PM. Bring a flashlight and leave your pets at home. Rain cancels.

<http://www.marincountyparks.org/depts/pk/calendar?trumbaEmbed=view%3devent%26eventid%3d121260384>

Last Call For Wood Stove Replacement Rebates!

Combined rebates for up to \$15,000 are still available to those wishing to replace their wood burning stoves with electric or propane units.

To register for this program go to <http://www.baaqmd.gov/grant-funding/residents/wood-smoke-rebate> and click the “APPLY TO THE WAITLIST” button. If you have any questions, contact Kellen Dammann, Sustainability Marketing & Outreach Specialist at (415) 473-2698 or kdammann@marincounty.org

The County's Marin Green Building Program offers \$250 for decommissioning a wood stove, insert or open fireplace and \$1500 for replacing it with either an EPA certified wood stove, propane or electric heat. The application can be found at www.marinegreenbuilding.org under the “Wood Stove Rebate Program” menu.

The Marin Housing Authority offers low interest loans up to \$35,000. In cases of financial hardship, no monthly payments are required and repayment of the loan is deferred, either for a specified period or until the property is sold or title to the property is transferred (interest accrues at 5% per year, simple interest).

<https://www.marinhousing.org/residential-rehab-loan-program.html>

The “Energy Upgrade California” Home Upgrade provides financial incentives and free technical support for homeowners that are looking to improve the comfort and energy efficiency of their homes. The rebate is based on how much energy the project saves; the bigger the efficiency improvement, the

bigger the rebate. Right now, the rebate for this program caps at \$6,800. Contact the Home Energy Advisors at (866) 878-6008 or www.marincounty.org/energyupgrade

As of **June 1, 2016** the new Wood Smoke rules requires anyone who is selling, renting, or leasing a property in the Bay Area to disclose the potential health impacts from air pollution caused by burning wood. Starting **November 1, 2016**, anyone whose sole source of heat is a wood-burning device must use an EPA-certified or pellet-fueled device that is registered with the Air District to qualify for an exemption from any future burn bans. To create cleaner air and avoid future problems, consider applying to replace your wood stove today while the rebates are still available.

Belling The Cat

Domestic cats are eating more than their share of wild birds. You can help reduce this devastating depredation by 87% by outfitting your feline with a “Birdsbesafe” cat collar. The bright colors are easily seen by songbirds so that they fly to safety at first sight. Rodents have poor eyesight and are still easy prey for collared cats. The collars are made in the USA and are reflective to keep your cat safe at night. For more information go here:

<http://www.birdsbesafe.com/>



Cat outfitted for the Renaissance Faire. Note the lack of songbirds, who have wisely left the area, or died laughing.

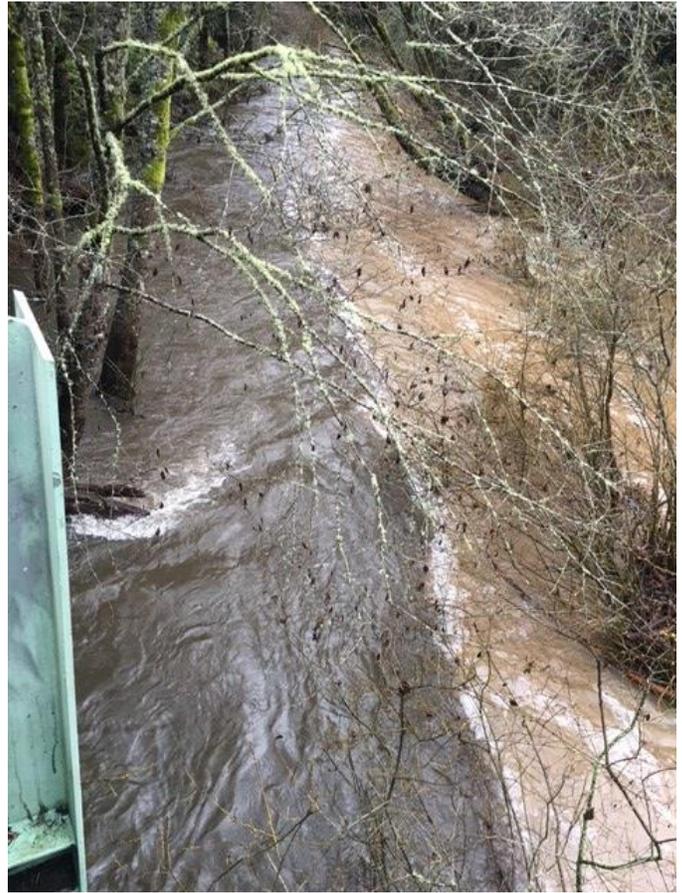
Flood Photos

The two flood photos on the right from the Dec 15th 2016 storm were provided by Linda Nave.

Top right: note how the silty San Geronimo Creek on the right meets with the clearer Lagunitas Creek on the left at Shafter Bridge.

Bottom right: Serious erosion to the creek bank at the Inkwells footbridge.

Below are some photos from Alex Bernstein showing the flood waters from the swollen San Geronimo Creek. Unfortunately, some residents living along this section of Castro Street in Forest Knolls suffered damage to their property.



Creek water rises over Castro Street in Forest Knolls



Submerged vehicle on Castro Street

These two pictures show the same location on San Geronimo Creek quickly going from a placid waterway to a raging stream. Just add water. Photos provided by Linda Nave.



There is also a stream gauge on the San Geronimo Creek at the Lagunitas Rd bridge. You can see how much water has been passing under the bridge by visiting this website:

<http://www.balancehydrologics.com/geronimo/creek/>

The gauge at the bridge measures the flow in the creek in cubic feet per second (cfs). 1 cfs is equal to about 450 gallons a minute (gpm). The daily mean flow for Wednesday, January 10th, was 659 cfs, which translates to 295,779 gallons passing by every minute. Compare this to a creek flow of only 8 cfs on December 29th.

At 7 PM on January 10th, the gauge measured 1668 cfs, or 748,652 gpm! The creek rose nearly five feet in less than twelve hours.

SGVPG Water Testing Makes Front Page of IJ

The Planning Group's efforts to positively identify the source of pathogens in our local creeks were featured in a front page article in a recent issue of the Marin Independent Journal. Reporter Richard Halstead noted the Planning Group's efforts to secure funding for a thorough study that identifies over 10,000 markers and their quantities using Phylochip technology. The County is conducting microbial source testing studies at the urging of the Planning Group, but the method they have chosen will only identify pathogens from mammals but not avian sources. Birds have been identified as the culprit in most pathogen-contaminated bodies of water including the San Lorenzo River, the source of the city of Santa Cruz's drinking water supply.



Phylochips were used recently to test the water in the creek at Chicken Ranch Beach on Tomales Bay, which was constantly identified as having high levels of pathogens.

Thanks to this thorough method of testing it was proven conclusively that the pathogens were not from human sources.

For more information on the Phylochip please see our video of the Marin Carbon Project on page 5.

To read the Marin IJ article, please go here:
http://www.marinij.com/environment-and-nature/20170104/san-geronimo-lawrence-lab-to-measure-water-quality#disqus_thread

WHO WE ARE . . . WHAT WE'RE ABOUT . . .

The Planning Group has been putting out a regular Newsletter for our membership and posting it on our web site since 2010. Our purpose is to keep our members informed about issues that affect the Valley whether the issues originate here or from outside our Planning Area and have some fun along the way.



Deer tracks in the mud, center of Mt View Bridge

From time to time we remind our readers (and new residents) that the county designated our Valley as being one of three corridors in 1972 when the County Wide Plan was first adopted. We are in the "Inland Rural Corridor" which includes Nicasio Valley north to the Sonoma county line.

Our corridor lies between the Eastern Urbanized Corridor (from White's Hill to the Bay) where 90% of Marin residents live and the Recreation/Ranch Corridor West of Taylor Park that goes all the way

to the ocean. A closer look at our unique Valley shows four villages, all rural in character, in the midst of extraordinary open space that, through the efforts of some residents and political leadership, will remain in public ownership as protected open space preserves. In 2007, The Board of Supervisors adopted The Baylands Corridor, a fourth corridor as part of the 2007 County Wide Plan.



The geography of our Valley is truly what makes us unique. The Valley is oval shaped, surrounded by ridges with only three entrances (exits) -- White's Hill, the Inkwells and Moon Hill. A closer look shows that Loma Alta, Cascade Canyon and White's Hill Open Space preserves protects our eastern ridge above Woodacre and Flanders Ranch. West



of Lagunitas is a narrow gorge at the base of Barnabe Ridge. This gorge leads to the Inkwells and Samuel P. Taylor State Park, which acts as a buffer preventing direct contact with our rural neighbors in further West Marin. To the

south is a five-mile ridge from Woodacre to Lagunitas, now known as San Geronimo Ridge (formerly Pine Mtn. Truck Road). This ridge is the boundary line between the SGV Planning Area and the Tam watershed owned and maintained by the MMWD.

Lastly, to the north, is the ridge arm of Mt. Barnabe reaching east to join the ridge arm of Loma Alta reaching west, with the two arms meeting at Moon Hill -- the pass that leads to Nicasio, our rural neighbor to the north. Surrounded by such beauty, is it any wonder that a few of us formed the ad hoc SGV Planning Group and spent five years creating the Valley's first Community



Plan that replaced the 1961 approved Master Plan that would have made the Valley a city” of 5,000 homes and 25,000 people rather than the 1600 homes and 4,000 residents we have today?

This geographical description is critical in describing our Valley. But the heart of what has been described has been preserved by the effort of dedicated environmentalists who worked to protect its main features for current residents and

future generations to enjoy by seeing that the bond act adopted in 1972 by a vote of the people to preserve public open space extended to the San Geronimo Valley.

To date the Valley has four Open Space Preserves: Roys Redwoods, Maurice Thorner, Gary Giacomini and French Ranch whose acreage totals almost 2600 acres. We will describe each of these unique Preserves in detail in future newsletters.

SGV PLANNING GROUP NEWSLETTER

- Editor-in-Chief and Email Tech: Eric Morey
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- Proofreader: Jean Berensmeier
- Suggestions, comments and Valley observations are welcome. Send to the editor at info@sgvpg.org

Please provide February Newsletter submissions by:
Wednesday, January 25, 2017

PLANNING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Urge a friend or neighbor to join us.
\$15 Single, \$25 Family, Free for over 65 and under 21

Make your check out to SGVPG and mail to:

P. O. Box 57, Forest Knolls, CA 94933

Visit our website at **SGVPG.org**

“This is the last place. There is nowhere else to go.” -- Lou Welch

This line, always at the top of our agenda, is an excerpt taken from a poem by Lou Welch that was included in the extraordinary document, “Can the Last Place Last?” that, in the late ‘60’s laid the ground work for the unique County Wide Plan that was adopted in 1972 and created zoning, policies, codes & regulations that has served to preserve major parts of Marin from inappropriate development.



Arriving at Camp Taylor (Samuel P Taylor State Park) by train, 1900