

The Newsletter of the

FITCH MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

One mountain,  one river, one community

January/February 2014

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We want to thank those who responded positively to our plea for placement of garbage cans along Fitch Mountain Road, as well as trimming vegetation creeping into the road. The problem is not completely solved. In January we contacted Transportation and Public Works of Sonoma County to seek help on this and to ask for replacement reflectors and road striping. It is not a matter of aesthetics, but rather a safety issue. When drivers cross over the center line to avoid hitting cans, breaking mirrors or scratching the car, oncoming traffic sometimes has nowhere to move to avoid a collision. Pothole repair has been on the mind of some of our residents; we will also take this issue up with the County.

Additionally, we are working with the County to remove vegetation that is encroaching on the water storage tank on Madrone Street. [See page 6.] Defensible space is required of homeowners and should be implemented in the water system's vital storage. Dave Henderson has provided us with a photographic survey, which we will show Transportation and Public Works staff in our meetings. We will keep you informed of the outcome of these meetings and any action planned by Transportation and Public Works. Supervisor Mike McGuire stated that the last time the county trimmed the vegetation there were many complaints from residents. Steve Urbanek, Engineer, stated that County road clearing had a goal of safety for traffic. We will be consulting with parcel owners beforehand and will keep you informed.

A Year Ago at the Top of the Mountain

[The following is excerpted from a message from Laura Rodriguez, former FMA President, dated the 6th of December 2012.]

This morning Donita Proctor and myself had the privilege of meeting with Supervisor Mike McGuire and Ed Wilson, who represents the anonymous owners of the 200 acres that make up the top of Fitch Mountain.

It was shared at this meeting that the sale of the open space (including the seven lots and the development rights) had been tentatively approved and would be purchased with funds from the Agricultural/Open Space District.

Final approval of this deal is expected to take place this coming week by the Healdsburg City Council and the County Board of Supervisors.

The anonymous ownership group has been the cause of much angst for many residents over many years. The primary concern has been the possibility of development of this pristine open space. For years people have worried and wondered. That time is coming to an end.

Land Paths will be responsible for the stewardship of the property for the three years after purchase. The area's access will remain as it currently is—closed to the public—for that three-year period.

On the first day of the fourth year, the City of Healdsburg will assume ownership in perpetuity.

I am sure you all have many questions and concerns. You will have an opportunity to ask them at public meetings that will be scheduled in the near future.

Finally, we have been assured that the Fitch Mountain Association will be an active partner in the upcoming planning process. We are at the beginning of an incredible journey, and it is important that you be involved as we go ahead.

Sincerely,
Laura

But, As You May Have Noticed, There Have Been Some Bumps Along the Way ...

Fitch Mountain Open Space, December 2013

The escrow on the County purchase of the property of Francez, LLC, is not complete. The problem is that a new survey commissioned by the County has found about 20 properties that are located on the open space land.

Our communication with Supervisor Mike McGuire has produced this statement: "The resolution of the boundary corrections lies in the hand of the seller. If there are lot line adjustments needed these must be handled by the sellers of the land as public funds cannot be expended on those costs."

"The resolution of the boundary corrections lies in the hand of the seller."
—Supervisor Mike McGuire

We have no projected date for escrow closure. We hope that these issues will be solved and the project moves forward. Any property owner who has land in dispute will be dealing with Francez. Mr. Ed Wilson, representative of the owners, has been in contact with some of these owners. McGuire reported that he met with Mr. Wilson 12/16/2013 and that it was a positive meeting.



Year in Review: Highlights of 2013 Association Activities

JANUARY

- Noticed residents of **\$35.00 partial refund** for \$150.00 *California Fire Prevention* fee and how to apply.
- Meeting of the **Wastewater Committee** with Karen McBride of **Calif. Rural Assistance Corp**

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 6: **Fitch Mountain Acquisition Open Space Meeting**, at Villa Chanticleer, with Landpaths and Supervisor Mike McGuire
- Meeting of **Wastewater Committee**

MARCH

- March 10: **Quarterly Trustees Meeting**. Discussion focused on: new membership brochure; upcoming Water Summit; Water District management transition to Russian River Utility; Del Rio dam removal; website update; possible by-law changes; public art project.
- March 16: 3-hour **Water Summit held at Healdsburg Golf Course**, with 50 attendees. Topics: Status of Russian River; reducing water usage; history of Fitch Mountain Water district; Water District challenges; agencies and businesses as resources for water conservation. Presenters: **Don McEnhill, Dave Henderson, Donita Proctor, Laura Rodriguez, Mike McGuire**. Committee members: **Dave Henderson, Laura Rodriguez, Kate Symonds, Linda Selover, Sharon Barbee**. Volunteers: **Rose Marie Johnson; Luisa Yates; Suzy Macaluso; Phyllis Pucci; Kathryn Henderson; Ginni Buckley-Webb**.
- March 16: **Wastewater Committee issues Bulletin #1 on AB855 and cleaning up our Russian River**.
- March 18. **Wastewater Committee** meets with Supervisor McGuire
- March 19: **Healdsburg City Council** meeting with a discussion of regionalization of fire service and **Fitch Mountain fire contract**: Donita Proctor attended

APRIL

- April 6: **Landpaths Broom Pull at Villa Chanticleer**, attended by **Marty and Ellen**

Silge, Becky Goodsell, Sharon Barbee, and Dave Henderson.

- April 17: **Water Advisory Committee** meeting with Mike McGuire, Supervisor
- Correspondence with **Sheriff Freitas** regarding continued summer law enforcement.
- "No Turn Around" signs installed by **Transportation and Public Works** on Hilltop Road

MAY

- Notification from **Sheriff Freitas** on **law enforcement for Memorial weekend**.

JUNE

- June 9: **Quarterly Trustees Meeting**. Discussion focused on: Water Advisory meeting; Wastewater Committee updates; website update; public art project; donations program; Fitch Mountain park developments; FMA Mission Statement; July membership meeting planning; Del Rio dam removal update.
- June 23: **Resignation of Laura Rodriguez as President** due to health issues.
- Notification from **Russian River Utility** transition to new billing system will be complete and bills will show actual water usage by June.
- Posting to the blog of the list, "**Recommended septic tank pumpers and consultants**"; results of **Waste Water Committee survey of FMA membership**.
- Transition of **Website Manager** from **Donita Proctor** to **Rheyana Laney**
- **FMA Summer Newsletter** mailed to residents and posted to website
- **Wastewater Committee issues Bulletin #2 on AB885, cleaning up Russian River project**

JULY

- July 3: Confirmation of **law enforcement coverage for July 4th holiday traffic**.
- July 6: **Special Trustees Board Meeting** held; **Donita Proctor** elected interim president until elections at July 2014 general membership meeting.
- July 7: **Annual Membership meeting**:- 81 people attended, VP Kathryn Henderson presided. Re-election of Treasurer (Dave

Henderson) and Vice-President (Kathryn Henderson) by acclamation. **Supervisor Mike McGuire** covered current issues. Fire Chiefs **Mark Aston, Steve Adams, and Roberta McIntyre** spoke about **Fire Safe Sonoma** and upcoming inspections of properties for defensible space.

- **Wastewater Comm** presented Bulletin #3, What We've Done, Where We're Going.
- July 17: **Fire Hydrant testing** (of 43 hydrants on mountain) begun by **Sonoma County Fire and Emergency Services**

AUGUST

- Trustees and officers begin discussions on **road hazards represented by garbage cans and vegetation encroachment**, and Ludwigia infestation of river (in consultation with **Russian Riverkeeper**).
- **Fire and Emergency Services**: Fire property defensible space **inspections** conducted.
- Eblast notification to members of free chipper service provided by **Fire Free Fitch**.
- August 23: **Wastewater Committee** meeting with **Supervisor McGuire** and County Well and Septic personnel, **Permits and Resources Dept.**

SEPTEMBER

- Sept. 15: **Quarterly Trustee meeting**: Discussion focused on: Use of e-blasts; Ludwigia removal project (for 2014); FMA officer recruitment; conclusion of hydrant testing; Wastewater Committee de-activation; water rates; website development progress; Fitch Mountain park status; additional annual donations.

OCTOBER

- Fire and Emergency Service approval of **2014 Community Service Project to paint fire hydrants**, supplies delivered to Dave Henderson
- Eblast October Interim President report
- October 13: **Trustee and Officers Retreat** hosted by the Hendersons
- October 26: **Meet and Greet** held by **Kate Symonds** on Redwood Drive for Fitch Mountain neighbors

NOVEMBER

- Review **FMA Articles of Incorporation** in regard to political activity
- Review Cal Trans recommendations on road striping

DECEMBER

- Dec. 16: **Quarterly Trustee Meeting**. Discussion focused on: Removal of hazardous vegetation along N and S. Ft. Mtn. Rds; request to County for re-striping center of N and S. F Mtn. Rds; details of hydrant-painting project; construction of FMA float for 2014 Water Carnival and Twilight Parade; FMA membership survey form; regularly scheduled meetings with Supervisor; details of 2014 Ludwigia removal project; candidates forum for 2014 supervisorial elections.
- **Water Advisory Committee** meeting: Budget of Fitch Mountain Water System

Upcoming Trustee Calendar

- **March 9, 2014, hosted by the Hendersons**
- **June 1, 2014, hosted by Kate Symonds**
- **July 6, 2014 Annual Meeting**

Reminder: Our meetings are public and anyone can attend. If you are interested in coming to a meeting, please write an email to: donitaproctor@gmail.com for the time and address. If you simply wish the officers and trustees to consider an issue, please send an email with the details.

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A HOMEOWNER
TO BECOME INVOLVED!**

Current FMA Officers and Trustees: Terms of Office

Trustees	Phone	Email	Terms
Rheyne Laney	433-7170	rlaney1@gmail.com	2017
Al Pucci	650-345-0484	apucci@myastound.net	2014
Sylvia Seventy	433-2946	None	2017
Martin Silge	431-0814	martinsilge@yahoo.com	2014

Officers	Phone	Email	Terms
Donita Proctor, President	433-8789	donitaproctor@gmail.com	2014
Kathryn Henderson, VP	433-1930	kathrynkeg@gmail.com	2015
Dave Henderson, Treasurer	433-1930	davehen@sonic.net	2015
Kate Symond, Secretary	318-3183	Kate@terraserve.net	2014
Ellen Silge, Newsletter Editor	431-0814	ellensilge@yahoo.com	None
FMA P.O. Box 1233 Healdsburg, Ca	any above	fitchmntnassociaton@gmail.com	

Opportunities for FMA Involvement

We are now six months out from the elections to be held July 6, 2014. These offices are up for election: President, Secretary ,and two Trustee positions. Officers serve for two years and Trustees for six years.

The recruitment committee members are Dave Henderson and Donita Proctor. If you wish to serve in any office, or know someone you would recommend, please email us. Email addresses are above.

Officer/Trustee meetings are held quarterly. You will get an understanding of what transpires in these meetings in the Year in Review on pages 3-4.

The association is fortunate to have had high-caliber office holders with a variety of professional skills. You do not have to be a full-time resident to serve. In the past we have efficiently operated with persons who live in other cities and find it no burden to attend the quarterly meetings held locally.

You will be helping the Association support our mission:

The Mission of the Fitch Mountain Association is to:

- **Disseminate relevant information to the membership**
- **Encourage community**
- **Maintain the unique nature of our locale**
- **Establish a positive identity with the public sector**

We are looking forward to hearing from you.



Intrusive Garbage Cans, Sneaky Branches, and Car-Jarring Potholes

Thank you for responding! We are working on the pothole and vegetation encroachment issues!

—Photos by Dave Henderson

Fitch Mountain Water System, CSA 41

At the last FMWS advisory meeting we asked Supervisor McGuire about the future of the Ad Hoc Water Advisory committee given that he has chosen to run for State Senate. He assured us that the committee would continue with his successor. We are indebted to Mr. McGuire for restoring this committee after a hiatus of some 25 years.

The County is continuing negotiations with the City of Healdsburg. At this point they are honoring the moratorium on bringing the rates up to the city wholesale rates adopted in July 2011. The rate increases adopted by FMWS have built up the reserves. Other good news is that the Fire and Emergency Service department made a lump sum payment into the water system debt. This will allow the state loan to be paid off sooner than the original 2022 date.



Wastewater Report

The FMA ad hoc Wastewater Committee, informally known as the Septicians, has been busy since the last report, in the June 2013 newsletter. We compiled and sent out, from an FMA member survey, a list of recommended septic tank pumpers and consultants; we issued a third progress bulletin in July; and we met with Supervisor Mike McGuire and staffers of the County Well & Septic division.

We had hoped to be able to offer a “Septic Summit” (with a better name!) in early spring 2014, but planning of this important event has been put on hold. The reason is that the current members of the committee do not have the time necessary for this and other committee projects. Thus, regrettably, the work of the committee is temporarily in abeyance.

I say temporarily, since the responsibility of the FMA to be a stakeholder in the long-term process of deciding new septic treatment regulations in order to clean up our beloved, but quality-impaired, Russian River is too important to abandon. So I will offer, at the FMA general membership meeting on July 6, a proposal for a re-constituted committee.

*Until then, for a clean river—
Dave Henderson*



One mountain, one river, one community

[Note: There are 333 households within Fitch Mountain Water System District 41.]

FMA Membership Stats:

91 voting members, 68 households

Membership States: Alaska, California, Texas, and Washington

Membership Cities in California: Burlingame, Daly City, Davis, Healdsburg, Hillsborough, Mountain View, Oakland, Placerville, Pleasanton, Redwood City, Rohnert Park, San Anselmo, San Bruno, San Francisco, San Mateo, San Rafael, Sebastopol, Sonoma, and Tiburon

Emergency Calls to the Mountain

If you follow the *Healdsburg Tribune* Police and Fire Dept. log, you will often see calls to Fitch Mt. Road.

We asked Rebecca Leda, of the Healdsburg Fire Department, to make a special report on HFD calls to Fitch Mountain., backing out emergency medical calls to the Senior apartments located on South Fitch Mt. Rd. near Badger Park.

She sent a report listing 47 calls to our area in 2013. Among these calls were two incidents of power lines down, 16 medical assists including a helicopter rescue, 2 beach-related calls, 6 hazardous conditions, 1 gas leak, and various others.

We are fortunate that there were no fires.

Water Conservation in a Drought Year

Sonoma County is experiencing one of the driest years on record. We are nearly reaching the drought levels of 1976-1977.

The State Water Quality Board River has approved a 30% reduction in flows from Lake Mendocino. We ask that you use water prudently. Small changes, practiced consistently, can achieve laudable savings. If you're not already doing so, try taking "military" showers; catching warm-up shower water in a bucket for flushing; eschewing car washing; sweeping decks instead of hosing them off; watering outside vegetation as sparingly as possible; and other good habits that you've adopted (which we encourage you to share with the community).

Our system water is purchased through the City of Healdsburg, which draws water from wells in the Russian River and Dry Creek. Information on conservation from the City is located on the website under the Public Works section.

More information is located on the Sonoma County Water Agency site at:

www.scwa.ca.gov/current-water-supply-levels/



FMA Receives Thank-You Letters

The decision to convert the newsletter to email saved the Association money that is now redirected to supporting local organizations. We do mail a “hard copy” of the newsletter to the few members who do not have internet access. We appreciate new and long-term members who provide us with funds to operate our own organization and help other groups that have a goal of protecting the Mountain and the River and our Community .

We wanted you to be able to take pride in what you give, so some of the thank-you letters FMA has received recently are reproduced here and on the following page.



The Camp Rose Players

September 15, 2013

Mr. Dave Henderson
Treasurer
Fitch Mountain Association
PO Box 1233
Healdsburg, CA 95448

Dear Dave and Association Members:

How delightful to receive your letter of September 8th!

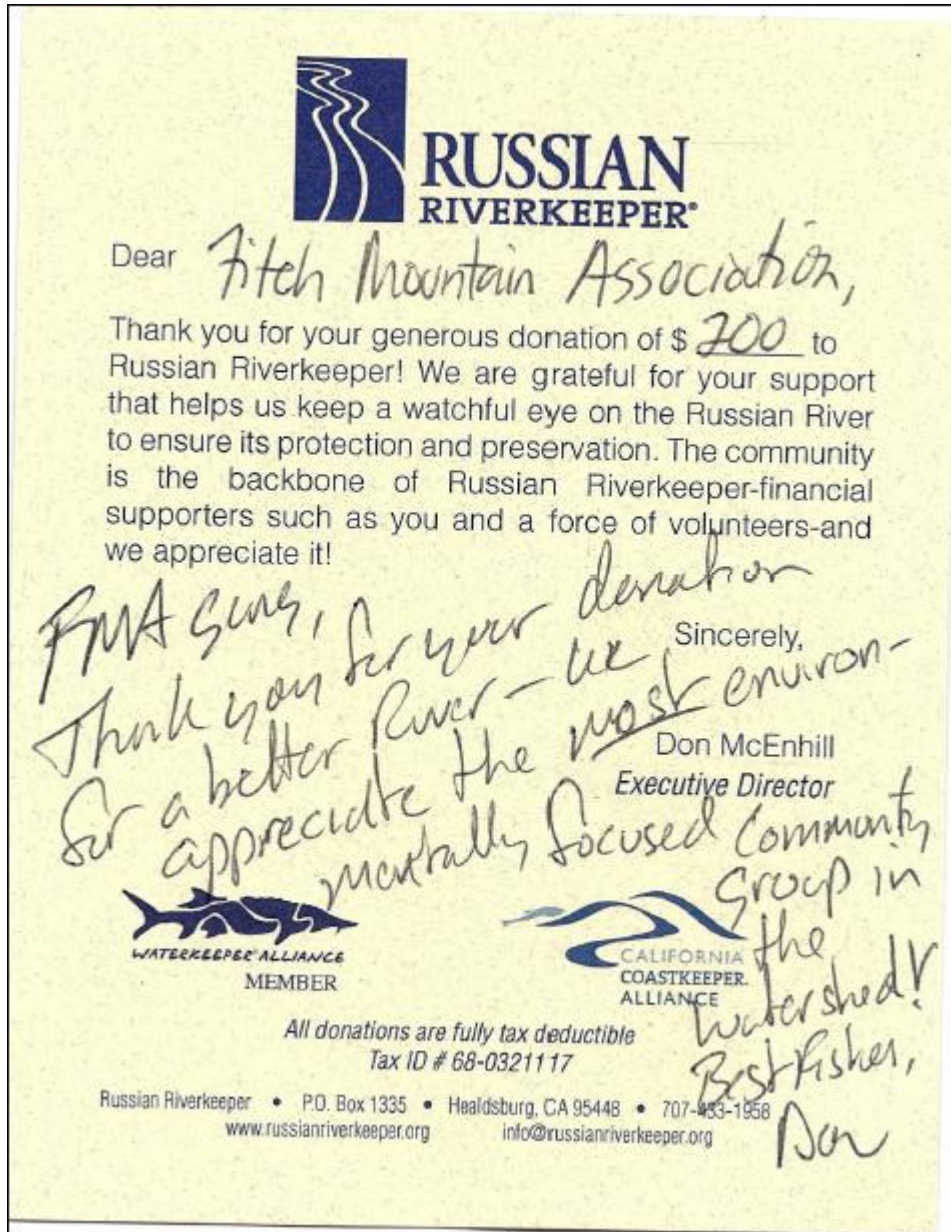
On behalf of the Camp Rose Players, let me express our thanks for your generous donation and kind words. We love what we do and are committed to continuing our endeavors in the true spirit of local community theater.

We are currently in rehearsal for the musical "Gigi" performing this November (tickets go on sale October 7). Hope to see you there.

With sincere regards,

Suzanne Webb
President
Camp Rose Players, Inc.
A non-profit corporation





[The following has been retyped.]

Community Foundation
Sonoma County

October 21, 2013

Dear Mr. Henderson,

Thanks for your donation to The Fitch Mountain Fund of Community Foundation Sonoma County. This fund is associated with the Healdsburg Area affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County. We are so pleased that you have elected to partner with us.

At Community Foundation Sonoma County we believe in the power of connecting people, ideas and resources to benefit the lives of those who live here. Every day we create partnerships with donors, organizations and community leaders to invest in the promise of Sonoma County. Thank you for your investment in the future of our community....

Sincerely,

Beth

Elizabeth Brown
President and CEO

**FITCH MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION
TREASURER'S REPORT**

December 8, 2013

SUMMARY

- I. CHECKING ACCOUNT \$ 3,159.17**
- II. SAVINGS \$ 1,052.43**
- III. PETTY CASH: \$ 10.12**
- IV CREDIT CARD (-0-)**

.....

TOTAL ACCOUNTS:

\$ 4,221.72

DEDICATED*

(\$ 500.00)

*FMA Trustees, at 16 Sept 2012 meeting, set aside \$500 as seed money for Public Art Project.

TOTAL AVAILABLE:

\$ 3,721.20

PREVIOUS TOTAL ACCOUNTS (Sept 15, 2013)

\$ 4,643.89

DIFFERENCE (\$422.17)



For many years the Mountain residents would gather for a potluck party when the dam was taken down....

Time is coming for the very last "Dam Bustin' Party."

(See next page.)

Del Rio Dam looking south

Del Rio Dam: Good-bye in 2014

Trustee Al Pucci reports that the DRWPRD is moving forward on the required demolition of the dam structure. “Our professional services, with the regulatory agencies' fees added, will total approximately \$100,000. To this we must add the demolition cost of removing the structure. We are hoping it will be under \$300,000, but no one knows now and we won't know until the bids come in.” New residents may not know that the district fruitlessly tried complying with regulations from the following agencies: National Marine Fisheries, North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, California Dept. of Fish and Game, and others. The work is expected to be completed by October 1, 2014.

History

A dam at Del Rio was attempted in 1904, but was stopped by a rancher complaint, as reported in an article in the *San Francisco Call*.

The demise of the current dam will end an 80-year tenure in providing recreation to the residents and visitors to Fitch Mountain. In the 1935, 80th Anniversary Issue of the *Press Democrat*, there is a full-page feature on Fitch Mountain titled “Fitch Mountain Area Mecca for Thousands of Vacationists.” The article's photos show canoeing and horseback riding. The article reads in part: “Several hundred new homes have been erected in the Fitch Mountain resort area in the last few years, and many more are planned. Opening of the Golden Gate Bridge is expected to be a decided boost to the area, and many summer sports are enjoyed in the Fitch Mountain resort area along the Russian River near Healdsburg. Recognized as one of the most ideally located resort areas in the county, the region is rapidly developing into a high class summer colony site. Above is a picture of canoeing on the Russian river, with beautiful tree-covered Fitch Mountain rising in the background. Below, an equestrian party rides over trails on the mountain-side. Such sports are only a few of the many to be enjoyed by summer vacationist or encouraging more newcomers to frolic in the beautiful surroundings.”

Records kept by the California Highways and Public Works document permission granted in April 1934 for the construction of a flashboard timber structure dam here. It appears that construction and cost of

putting in the dam were borne by property owners before the creation of a recreation district. California Senate records indicate that the legislature passed a bill in 1931 that allowed creation of recreation districts. This bill was later codified in 1935 as AB 725 (Scudder). Scudder was an assemblyman from Sebastopol who later became a U.S. Congressman. The historical document speculates: “It is plausible that Scudder carried his 1931 bill to promote recreation for the vacation resorts along the Russian River in Sonoma County. Many San Francisco families kept summer cottages on the River and resort owners also had cabins and rooms for rent. Four recreation and park districts currently exist along the Russian River—Camp Meeker, Del Rio Woods, Monte Rio, Russian River—and some still run swimming facilities.”

In September 1941, Fitch Mountain residents petitioned the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors for the creation of a formal recreation district. A \$500.00 bond was posted by residents to cover the court and investigation cost. The report submitted in Nov. 1941 stated the purpose of the district was to strengthen and extend (by 20 lineal feet) the existing dam and obviate the need for donations from the residents. It also referenced “thousands of people” using the area. The BOS held a public hearing in December 1941 at the County court house. Notice of the election was published in the *Healdsburg-Sotoyome Scimitar*, January 8-15, 1942, and on the front doors of Old Del Rio Store, the front door of Sid and Ned's Store (Camp Rose?), and on the front door of Palomar Dance Hall. An election was held at Precinct No. 1, the Old Del Rio Store. In January 1942, a formal recreation district, with seven county-appointed directors, was approved by the BOS, after the election. The boundaries of the district contained 250 properties, and the projected costs were \$1,500, of which \$500 was set aside for maintenance. The approved tax rate was \$1.30 per hundred dollars of assessed valuation, garnering \$1,540 (which in 1942 had the same buying power as \$22,818 in 2013.)

The removal of the dam is an end to an era. Many Fitch Mountain residents gave of their time and money (through donations and taxes) to provide recreation for many.

The last installation of the dam was in 2002.

Mountain Roots: Maryanne Murray

Maryanne is a former FMA treasurer; her husband, John J., was a trustee for 6 years. **As the saga goes....**

In 1929 (**85 years ago!**), Bill Desmond (Cousin Willy) bought a summer cabin in what was then one of the Russian River's newest developments, Del Rio Woods. The cabin called "**Y Worry**" on Fitch Mountain's Riverview Drive is still in the family and is fondly referred to by all as "The Cabin."

Willy was a city guy and used "**Y Worry**" as an escape from San Francisco's dreary summers. Willy's first cousin, **Margaret Kavanaugh**, and her family were offered use of the cabin in the early 40's and 50's when Margaret and Jack's daughters Maryanne, Joan, and Linda were children. The River was a great getaway, and in those days almost all the cabins belonged to vacationers and had unique names such as **Y Worry, Snug Harbor, Slaney View, Laff A Lot Lodge,** and all were festooned with colorful outdoor lights. Del Rio Beach, the Dam, Store, and Palomar Skating Rink were the focal points of the locals. The town was remote, and weekly trips were made to the store and to church.

When **Maryanne Kavanaugh and John Murray**, married and with a young family, settled in San Francisco, the cabin on Fitch Mountain lured them away from the City's summer fog. Bill Desmond died in the early 1960's and left the cabin to his cousin Margaret, making it more available to her family. Maryanne and John took great advantage of this, since they both loved The River. As the family grew, the demand for the cabin increased, so when the Murrays had the opportunity to buy the **Morans' River House**, they jumped at it and became proud owners in March of 1976. It was a decision that they have never regretted. The **River House** has been the site of weddings, baptisms, and of course the annual New Year's, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day, and Thanksgiving celebrations and any other reason to party. It is the scene of great memories and happy, happy days on the beautiful Russian River.

This year yet another milestone was added to the family's River/Mountain history when **3rd generation family members Kate Murray Garcia and Margi Roemer Beima** collaborated to create a whimsical "River Rat" raft for the Russian River Water Carnival. The cousins converted the back yard of the River House into a design studio where the team created what was destined to be the winning float. "Rio" the River Rat won first prize and thus created yet another reason for an annual family party. And the tradition lives on!



Community and Arts Project 2014

We have the supplies on hand for painting the fire hydrants this spring. There are 47 hydrants to be cleaned (brushed) and painted.

The date will be announced at a later date and recruitment of volunteers will come by eblast.

We have a loyal core of volunteers who have worked on past projects such as the Villa picnic tables refurbishing and painting the Spring Street wall. If you haven't volunteered in the past, please consider it this year. You will get to know your neighbors, and be serving our community at the same time.

"Without community service, we would not have a strong quality of life. It's important to the person who serves as well as the recipient. It's the way in which we ourselves grow and develop." —Dorothy Height

Many thanks to the volunteers, committee members, and officers who come through year after year...



For example... Dave Henderson, Laura Rodriguez, Ann Bullard, Kate Symonds, Linda Selover, Sharon Barbee. Volunteers: Rose Marie Johnson; Luisa Yates; Suzy Macaluso; Phyllis Pucci; Kathryn Henderson; Ginni Buckley-Webb, Marty and Ellen Silge, Becky Goodsell, Sharon Barbee, Don McEnhill, Sr., Dennis Byrne. A Special Thanks to Supervisor Mike McGuire, and Sonoma County staff, Transportation and Public Works, Permits and Resources, and Russian Riverkeeper Donal McEnhill, Laura Tietz Fire Free Fitch.

Float-Building Opportunity!

FMA is looking for a few good men, women, and children! We need enthusiastic, creative, artistic, or just energetic people who live on Fitch Mountain to help plan and construct an official FMA float. FMA is considering entering a float in the Healdsburg Twilight Parade (May) and in the Water Carnival (July). One float, two festivals. That means we need

to get going—we have less than 5 months. Ideas are needed and welcome.

We need to start with a committee, which would select the design of the float, do the paperwork, etc., and then we need a good crew to help construct it. It will be fun. If you would like to get on board, in whatever capacity, contact Kathryn Henderson, kathrynkeg@gmail.com.

Membership Survey

You'll be receiving a membership survey by e-blast in late winter.

The year-end report (*pp. 3-4*) gives you information about our 2013 activities, the agencies we work with, and the projects and training we provide. By providing confidential answers to the forthcoming survey, you will let us know your desires on the frequency and topics of our communication to you in the e-blasts and newsletter. We are seeking input about your own priorities on Mountain issues, how to foster community with neighbors and newcomers, and the frequency of meetings.

Let us know if we are on the right track, and guide us to new directions if need be. And give some thought to some "hands-on" involvement through a trustee or officer position! (*See pg. 5.*)

This association exists to serve you—you are vital to a positive and productive continuance!

We are looking forward to your answers.



Community Bulletin Board

If you have been on the mountain for a few years you will remember the bulletin boards that were housed at the Del Rio Store and Camp Rose Inn. FMA is looking to revive this feature of community living.

A bulletin board would serve as an announcement center, and perhaps reach neighbors who are not on our eblast list. It can be used for personal postings as well (e.g., For Rent, For Sale items).

If approved by the member survey, we will be seeking help in getting this board up in the spring. The location will be at the start of Redwood Drive.



Fitch Mountain
Free Chipping Day
Tuesday, February 25, 2014

FireFreeFitch is pleased to offer a **free chipping** day on Tuesday, February 25, 2014. This free chipping day is available to **all** residents of Fitch Mountain . We offer **one hour** of free chipping **per property**. Talk to your neighbors, and if there is an area where a single large chipping pile could be established with your direct or nearby neighbor, it would help us cover more places during the day. We encourage everyone to use this opportunity early in this potentially serious fire season.

To participate, go to <http://firefreefitch.org/chipping> to download and/or print out an application and to access the directions on "How to Make a Chipper Pile" for free chipping (very important!). Sign and return the chipping application by mail to 1083 Vine St. #154, Healdsburg 95448; e-mail to info@firefreefitch.org; or fax to 707 433-8280. **Please submit your application as soon as possible** so we can coordinate logistics for the day (including a second day of chipping if enough people sign up). Help us make this an effective tool for everyone on the Mountain to improve fire preparedness.

—*Laura Tietz, FFF*

Dues July 2013-June 2014	Become a new member or renew	Dues \$20.00 per member
Name(s)		
Address		
Phone		
E-mail		
Fitch Mountain Association P.O. Box 1233 Healdsburg, CA 95448		Amount enclosed: \$ _____
Donations are tax-deductible California 501c #C093278		

**FMA Membership—Always Open
to All Residents and Friends of the Mountain**

Fitch Mountain Association membership is open to all residents and friends of Fitch Mountain, whether property owners or not. The FMA membership year goes from July to June and costs \$20 per person. The form and a check can be mailed to FMA, Box 1233, Healdsburg 95448.

We currently have memberships of 20.4% of the households served by FMWS. Do you have a neighbor who isn't a member of the association yet? Pass the membership form along! Invite your neighbors to join the FMA e-blast list by emailing Kate Symonds: kate@terraserve.net

Mark your calendar for the Annual Membership Meeting Sunday July 6, 2014.

**Del Rio Dam Notification of Dam Removal
Draft Negative Mitigation Report**

A notice has been posted on the gate at Del Rio inviting review and comment on the Negative Mitigation report by Feb. 24, 2014. A copy of the report is located at the Healdsburg Public Library for review. Electronic copies can be requested by emailing to laura@pcz.com.

The board is meeting March 9, 10:30 a.m. at 2745 Del Rio Woods Road (home of Judge Don King). Please RSVP to: apucci@myastound.net if you plan to attend.