

The Newsletter of the

FITCH MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

One mountain,  one river, one community

June 2016



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President's Message

Your FMA is currently working on many issues impacting our community—just leaf through this and past newsletters, and listen at our annual membership meeting (Sat. July 2, 1:00-4:00pm!) and you'll see a long list. Many of those issues are “put in our lap” by circumstances or by County request, e.g., representing our water district users to the County, conversion of Del Rio Woods beach into a County Park, cooperation with Healdsburg on the Fitch Mountain Summit Preserve, creating an overall vision for Fitch Mountain Road (requested by Supervisor Gore), etc. With other issues, we realized that there are impacts on our community that we have to deal with, e.g., fire prevention, emergency preparedness and evacuation procedures, future County regulations on septic systems, removal of the invasive *Ludwigia* plant from the River (coming), and summer holidays enhanced law enforcement, to mention just five. I can't imagine that anyone who values our Fitch Mountain environment and community would want the FMA “absent” on any of these issues, no matter what individual members' positions might be on any one of them. And we can be sure that other major issues will arise as we go forward.

So three considerations occur to me at this point, which I'll advance for thought and discussion.

One, as I mentioned in the last newsletter, is to bring more of our community into the FMA. We currently have 91 paid members (221 on our e-blast “notification list”) out of a total of 336 homes (in our water district) on Fitch Mountain. We would like to see more residents joining the ~50 wonderful members who are working on our issues. That will make the FMA even more representative of the diversity in our community, and we will be able to “hear more voices” and benefit from more “human resources.”

Second, it has become clear, during considerations related to some of the above issues, that *no one* has an accurate idea of the demographic makeup of the Fitch Mountain community, nor of how our makeup might have recently changed or be changing right now. Who are we? Well, we are permanent year-round residents, absentee lot-owners, new and “legacy” vacation-period homeowners, rental landlords, long-term renters, temporary renters, service-sector renters, vacation-rental renters, vacation-rental owners, etc. What a complicated mosaic! It would be useful to know something about who we are in order to see how certain issues (e.g., septic system regulations, vacation rentals, neighborhood parking, future FM Preserve access) might impact certain sectors of our community, or what different sectors might want. That's why we asked Supervisor Gore for County-supported professional and financial assistance in designing and executing a demographic survey of the Fitch Mountain community in the unincorporated Sonoma County area. If that assistance seems possible, we won't proceed without fully involving our entire FM community in that decision.

Finally, that understanding of who we are might help us have a conversation about a vision of what we would like our community to be (or not be) 5 or 10 years from now. Are there any goals (small, large, or overarching) we want to work toward? Supervisor Gore is suggesting that all the communities in his district create a long-term vision for themselves. I think that's a great idea—complex and daunting, of course, but we can start talking about it anytime you wish, this next year..., or the next....

FMA Money and Membership

The FMA has \$4391 in its accounts (\$3,258 in checking, \$1097 in savings, and \$35 in petty cash) as of 5/1/16. Last year's all-accounts total was \$2841 as of 6/22/15.

We currently have 91 paid members representing 72 households, an increase of 29 members and 23 households from the previous year. We have 221 people on the e-blast list, an increase of 32.

The FMA membership year goes from July through June. Renewals/signups for voting memberships are being solicited for the annual meeting on July 2, 2016. The membership form is on the last page. You can bring it with you to the meeting on July 2nd or mail it ahead of time to the Fitch Mountain Association, P.O. Box 1233, Healdsburg, CA 95448. FMA is a registered nonprofit organization; donations are tax-deductible.

A Picture (Postcard) from the Past



When Do You Think It Was Made?

Check out the bathing suits and the hairstyles. And it's pre ZIP codes. The 50's, maybe? Thanks, Sylvia, for sharing it with us!

The printing on the card says:

Canoeing on the Russian River, California

Canoeing has been a tradition on this popular river for many years. People today enjoy peaceful paddling along the wooded banks and miles of beaches.

Distributed by Ed Wood, Forestville, Calif.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

FMA will be holding its first annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner **September 18th** at beautiful Del Rio Woods Community Park. It is a way to thank the many volunteers, over 50 of them, who have helped serve our Mountain community by donating their time and serving on the various FMA committees. We look forward to an evening of getting to know each other and building strength through volunteerism here on Fitch Mountain.

Kathryn Henderson
FMA Vice-President
Volunteer Dinner Coordinator 2016



The next FMA Trustees meeting will be Sunday Sept. 11 at Dave and Kathryn's from 10:00-noon.

Second Annual Fitch Mountain Fun Evening

About four dozen folks, including both FM residents and nonresident “friends,” gathered at the Villa Annex on Sunday Jan. 31 for a reprise of Fitch Mountain Fun Night. The North Fitch Mt. Rd. contingent won the prize for the most attendees. As in 2015, the free program featured a pasta dinner and a unique kind of bingo. The meal included spaghetti, salad, garlic bread, and cake, with a “cook-off” in which Ken Hite’s spaghetti sauce was voted the crowd favorite.

Attendees were more familiar this year with the F-M-A format of “Fitch Mountain Bingo” and cheerfully used pennies to cover local street names, organizations, and animals to claim prizes for bingos. Blackout prizes were contributed by Healdsburg Running Company, Levin & Co., Mountain Mike’s Pizza, Summer’s Market & Deli, and generous attendees, who also brought fun white elephant prizes for “letter” bingos. Other community donors were Fire Free Fitch, Round Table Pizza, Safeway, and Shelton’s Natural Foods.

The evening wouldn’t have been possible—or as much fun—without the help of many volunteers who helped with publicity, set-up, kitchen preps, and clean-up. Additionally, the sauce competitors (Marty Silge, Don Dana, Donita Proctor, Kevin Germano, and Ken) were very generous with their talents and food. Many thanks to all!

We’re already looking forward to the third annual fun event in 2017. January seems like a good time for it, but it’s possible the menu will change. Stay tuned!



**Fun Night
Photos by
Michael Haran**

Further Vacation Rentals Prohibited on Fitch Mountain

On May 24, 2016, the Board of Supervisors found that the Board's following five criteria for application of a **Vacation Rental Exclusion (X) Combining Zone** applied to Fitch Mountain:

1. There is inadequate road access or off-street parking.
2. There is a significant fire hazard due to topography, access or vegetation.
3. The housing stock should be protected from conversion to visitor-serving uses.
4. The residential character is to be preserved or preferred.
5. The prevalence of vacation rentals is detrimental to the residential character of neighborhoods.

The BOS therefore approved applying that designation to the 713 parcels in the unincorporated area of Fitch Mountain (extending roughly from Scenic Lane to McDonough Heights Road). Like the X zones approved for other areas of the County (various locations in Sonoma Valley, and the Vineyards subdivision near Asti), it **permanently prohibits any future vacation rentals in the Fitch Mountain area.**

Currently-permitted vacation rentals are not affected, except that upon sale or transfer of the property, the vacation rental permit would expire.

The measure took effect May 24, and no new applications for permits will be accepted. However, the measure does not affect applications for vacation rental permits currently under consideration by the County. Their consideration and approval will go forward. Fitch Mountain, as of May 24, had 47 permitted vacation rentals and 10 pending applications, or a full 17% of our approx. 340 homes. (The highest numbers: N. and S. Fitch Mt. Rds. each have 14; Redwood Dr., 11; Madrone, 4; Riverview, Hilltop, and Buena Vista, 3 each.)

Supervisor Gore, recognizing the complexity of the vacation rental issue for Fitch Mountain, indicated to the Board that he will be working with the FM community to find some alternatives acceptable to the community in place of the complete ban. If such alternatives can be found, he intends to bring such a plan to the BOS in a year.

Full information on every aspect of vacation rental regulations (County Code Sec. 26-88-120), including a handy FAQ section, updated regularly, can be found on the PRMD website: www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/docs/vacrent. Note that **bed and breakfast inns, and hosted rentals of not more than one room or sleeping area, are not considered vacation rentals**, and have a separate County regulation (Section 26-88-118).



Fitch Mountain-Russian River 2016 Holidays Enhanced Law Enforcement (FM-HELE) Program Report

On May 13, 2016, representatives of the FMA—President Dave Henderson, Road Safety Committee Chair Al Pucci, Del Rio Woods Committee Chair Pat Abercrombie, and Camp Rose Beach owner Don Dana—met with Supervisor James Gore and representatives from SC Sheriff, CHP, Healdsburg Fire Dept, and SC Regional Parks for the fifth annual Holidays Enhanced Law Enforcement joint meeting.

A. Illegal parking and traffic problems

It was felt that measures introduced in past seasons (informational banners, fliers on roadside sandwich signboards, Q&A sheets to residents) have worked well and will be continued. Regarding more frequent CHP and Sheriff Deputy patrolling, severe staff shortages are impacting this, but they promised to swing through as often as possible, maybe even on off-duty hours. They are sympathetic to our situation, but resources are stretched.

Redwood Drive is a real problem, especially with large numbers of vacation-rental cars clogging emergency vehicle access. The triangle area at the intersection probably cannot be striped for legal parking, but both road margins can probably be painted, thus making it very clear where NO cars can park. The Road Safety Committee is looking into this.

Bottom line: **Residents must be pro-active**, watching for problems and reporting them immediately to the appropriate authority, using the telephone numbers on the *Traffic & Parking Q&A* sheet e-mailed to the FMA eblast list.

Speeding: CHP offered to place a “speed trailer” somewhere on Fitch Mountain Road, probably near the Redwood Dr. stretch. Watch for it and slow down! CHP will also put Fitch Mountain on their “Neighborhood Patrol Team” list, and this may bring some added attention.

B. Disruptive behavior on the beaches

FMA thanked SC Regional Parks for a fine initial season in managing the Del Rio Woods Community Park (note the name change, requested by our DRW Committee—no “Beach” and addition of “Community”). Park Rangers will be patrolling as frequently as their staffing allows (very few of them for covering all SC parks!), and residents are encouraged to call them if any disturbances are sighted (Tel. no. on the *Traffic & Parking Q&A* sheet).

The Sheriff Dept. has a four-person Marine Unit (with boat), but their priority is Lake Sonoma, and we don’t expect to see them here.

Regional Parks will be experimenting with a water patrol coming upriver from Veterans Beach, but we do not yet know any details.

Have a happy summer holidays season, and give us your suggestions on how we can improve these measures. Looking for creative and constructive input!

Dave Henderson
davehen@sonic.net



What Can We Do about Fitch Mountain Road?

Supervisor James Gore requested, in a meeting on May 13, that FMA create a **long-term vision for what Fitch Mountain Road could/should be**, instead of addressing individual problems in a piecemeal and ad hoc fashion. In that way, the projects could be studied and scheduled well ahead of time and, just as important, slotted into the regular County budgeting cycle.

The Trustees are in the process of putting together a draft of such a vision. It *could* cover such issues as:

- making the road more efficient for emergency and fire vehicles
- making it safer and more enjoyable for drivers, pedestrians, dog-walkers, runners, and cyclists
- reducing dangers in the worst locations
- introducing speed-calming measures
- improving pavement surface, or re-paving the entirety or individual sections
- providing, in spots, dedicated pedestrian-cyclist pathways

This is a project that has some urgency—since County monies are limited, there is much competition for funds, and budget cycles are relentless.

Project Schedule:

July 15-29: Trustees and Officers complete draft vision statement.

July 29: Draft vision e-blasted to FMA membership for study and input.

August 13: FMA community meeting (place to be announced) for input and finalization of draft vision.

August 19: Final draft e-blasted to membership for final comments and input.

Sept 11: Consideration by Trustees at Trustees Meeting.

Sept. 12: Final approved Fitch Mountain Road Vision e-blasted to FMA list. It will then be submitted by the President and Trustees to Supervisor Gore and Director of TPW Margaret Klassen, and a subsequent meeting with them will be requested.

The Roads (Committee) Report

Potholes, vegetation encroachment, a sinking road, and speeding. These are but a few of the issues on which your FMA Road Safety Committee focuses. One gigantic pothole was repaired the day after the Road Safety Chairman pointed it out to the county's Deputy Director of Transportation and Public Works, John McCarthy, and several more were repaired during the week of June 14, but many more go untouched and must be repaired. The sinking road below Scenic Lane will be addressed, according to Mr. McCarthy, using county employees once all of the rains have passed (which they now have), allowing it to be put on the calendar for repair. As of last week there hasn't been an advisory re this. For up-to-date information re the above, please attend the FMA annual BBQ/meeting at the Villa on July 2.

Al Pucci

Chair, FMA Road Safety Committee



Del Rio Woods Community Park Update

The Del Rio Committee continues to meet quarterly with Sonoma County Regional Parks (SCRP) in an advisory role as SCRP takes over permanent responsibility for the park. For the past year, they have served as interim managers, so have become familiar with the rhythms of the park and its visitors. Now that the LAFCO process has concluded, they are officially responsible for all aspects of the park's operation and upkeep. The name of the park as it will appear when it is eventually added to the county web site will be Del Rio Woods Community Park, emphasizing the fact that it is embedded in a residential neighborhood. It will be listed as a beach with river access and wildlife viewing. Soon you will see the old pipe arch and mismatched and conflicting signage come down. The county signs to the right as you enter the park will be updated to include the rules as we have requested them to be enforced. Some of the boulders placed about the parking lot over the years will be moved to less precarious locations.

The primary focus for the next year or so will be the redesign of parts of the park to make it compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Del Rio Committee will be meeting with SCRP's landscape and park planner, who is also well versed in ADA design, in June to provide our feedback and desires so that they can be incorporated into the design as it moves through the planning and permitting process. The real work will not begin until late in the year.

As a side note, when a significant water leak was detected under the parking lot this past winter, the water to the hose bib by the picnic tables was turned off. Since the leak appears to be somewhere under the parking lot, which will be affected by the ADA work, restoring the water was put off. However, in response to neighborhood requests, a new faucet was installed upstream of the leak, by the porta potty. A long-term solution will become part of the redesign.

As always, if you have questions, don't hesitate to contact me:

Pat Abercrombie

Chair, Del Rio Committee of the FMA

Fitch Mountain Preserve Committee Update

As many know, the top 171 acres of scenic and wooded Fitch Mountain finally became permanently protected in late 2014 as a public open space preserve. This milestone was accomplished through a long-term effort by a consortium of public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, and local political support. By agreement among those entities, LandPaths, one of the participating nonprofit organizations, has ownership and management responsibilities for the Fitch Mountain Open Space Preserve (Preserve) for 3 years, until they turn it over to the City of Healdsburg to permanently own and manage. LandPaths is now halfway into their interim ownership period.

The Preserve is not formally open to the public, but LandPaths conducts public stewardship workdays on the second Saturday of the month, and they have brought in summer youth groups and interns to remove invasive plants, and improve the trails and drainage. The Healdsburg Fire Department and CalFire have dramatically reduced fire danger within the Preserve by removing French broom and other “ladder fuels” close to the trails.

The City of Healdsburg has started preparation of the Fitch Mountain Preserve Open Space Management and Public Access Plan (Plan), in anticipation of formally opening the Preserve for public access when the City assumes ownership responsibilities at the end of 2017, or shortly thereafter.

FMA’s Fitch Mountain Preserve Committee met several times over the past year to develop a proposed vision statement and list of recommendations for the City to consider incorporating into the Plan. The Committee wants to make recommendations that reflect the broadest area of common views held by our diverse membership. The vision that has been developed states that the Preserve will be managed to promote responsible access, stewardship, and educational opportunities that protect the natural and scenic values of the Preserve while respecting surrounding private property. The FMA’s vision and recommendations letter was sent to the City and its project partners in March and also sent out on the FMA’s eblast list. You can view the letter on the FMA website at <http://fma.wildapricot.org/issues/mountaintop>.

The City’s planning effort for the Preserve requires public input on various aspects of the Plan. The first of several public meetings occurred on June 2. FMA President Dave Henderson and FMA Trustee and Preserve Committee Chair Kate Symonds attended this first Focus Group meeting with several other parties. They gave input to the City and its consultants on issues pertaining to natural resources, public access, fire reduction management, and educational opportunities on Fitch Mountain, in accord with the FMA’s vision and recommendations letter. Over all, the group was in agreement on preserving the natural quality of the mountain, recognizing its “wilderness” quality near town. The participants stressed that any management actions should be “just enough, not too much” to maintain the overall existing character of the Preserve.

We were pleased with the general views of how the Preserve should be managed. We’ll stay tuned on whether the City will have enforcement authority on Fitch Mountain, as it’s outside City limits. With anticipated increase in recreation in the Preserve, it’s important that the City has authority to manage potential conflicts between various user groups and ensuring public safety while protecting the natural values of the Preserve. We learned that there are no plans to build new trails at the outset, other than improving the short trail access from the Villa to the Preserve, which concentrates all users on the same trail. Hence there is concern for increased conflicts should there be an increase in various kinds of recreational uses. Subsequent trail building, if any, will be subject to the ability to raise funds, such as through the locally led Fitch Mountain Fund. (We also learned that the approximately 27 acres called the “Phase II parcels” that were held back from the initial land acquisition deal in 2014 will not become part of the Preserve, due to ongoing unresolved boundary encroachment issues.)

Upcoming steps: The City will hold another public Focus Group meeting in late July, and probably other meetings as well to gather public input on the Plan. The Fitch Mountain Fund will hold an event at the Villa in October to raise money for the long-term operations of the Preserve. The City is slated to take full ownership of the Preserve by the end of 2017. LandPaths is likely to continue stewardship and educational activities at the Preserve after the City takes ownership, for at least another year or two beyond that, if not longer. The FMA Fitch Mountain Preserve Committee will stay engaged throughout the City’s planning process for the Preserve and continue to advocate for our recommendations, which reflect our collective interests in enjoying living and spending time on and around Fitch Mountain. If you’d like to have more information or want to get involved, contact Kate Symonds at [kate “at” terraserve.net](mailto:kate@terraserve.net).

Emergency Preparedness Committee

Please join us at the annual meeting for a discussion about emergency preparedness on the Mountain. There are two items we would like your input on:

1. Identifying neighborhood boundaries
2. Exploring the idea of Neighborhood Captains.

Below is a potential description for you to peruse and discuss at the meeting.

We welcome your feedback. If you are unable to attend the meeting, please feel free to email **Priscilla Abercrombie** pdanp@comcast.net with your ideas and ways you would like to participate.

Neighborhood Captain Duties and Responsibilities

The neighborhood captains serve as liaisons between their neighborhoods and the FMA Emergency Preparedness Committee. The neighborhoods will be determined by geographical location and the captains will be full-time residents of their neighborhoods.

The captain will participate in periodic training in safety and emergency procedures (to be determined). The captain will maintain and distribute emergency services information to her/his neighbors and serve as a resource for questions, concerns, and advice. In addition, the captain will encourage neighbors to sign up for notifications from Nixle, Cal Fire, CHP, Healdsburg FD, Sonoma County Sheriff, and Sonoma County Emergency Services (reverse 911), and NOAA river level projections.

The captain will be an exemplar of emergency preparedness. For example, “grab bags” at the ready, defensible space maintained around the property, knowledge of emergency shut-off valves, survival supplies, etc.

The captain maintains a list of neighbors that includes contact information (address, phone, emergency contact person, location of gas shut-off valve, special considerations [e.g., health issues, language limitations, skills or tools available in the household that may be useful in an emergency]). The information will be kept confidential by the captain unless the neighbors are agreeable to sharing the information.

The captain will have understanding of local emergency response systems including: siren signals, contact info for local emergency responders, etc. The captains will help determine placement of sandwich board evacuation arrows in their neighborhoods as needed. They will share their knowledge of evacuation route and assembly areas off the mountain.

The neighborhood captain will communicate with the FMA Emergency Preparedness Committee regarding information or training needs and neighborhood issues such as neighbor involvement, special circumstances, potential hazards, or any other issues of concern.

CSA 41 Water Advisory Report: Donita Proctor

While the drought has replenished our reservoirs, as of this writing we are still mandated to conserve water supplies by watering only two days a week. The Board of Supervisors extended this resolution March 16, 2016: “Adopt a resolution to extend the State Water Resources Control Board Emergency Water Conservation Regulations to Restrict Outdoor Irrigation in Community Service Area #41 Freestone, Jenner, Fitch Mountain and Salmon Creek Water Systems to October 31, 2016.”

The Fitch Mountain Water Service is a county service district among three others (listed above) in CSA 41. In November 1996, California voters passed Proposition 218, the “Right to Vote on Taxes Act.” *This constitutional amendment protects taxpayers by limiting the methods by which local governments can create or increase taxes, fees and charges without taxpayer consent. Proposition 218 requires voter approval prior to imposition or increase of general taxes, assessments, and certain user fees.*

The water systems have been studied individually by the NBS Government Finance Group. Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works (TPW) conducted a public meeting May 31, 2016, at Healdsburg City Hall. Ample notification of the meeting included an email blast (221 email addresses) sent from FMA on May 18, and postcards (336) from the county received 10 days prior. Eleven (11) Fitch Mountain Water Service users attended, three of whom were officers of the FMA. This was the first step of the legal requirements of Prop. 218.

To impose a new or increased property-related fee, local government must comply with the fee restriction and fee rate calculation requirements discussed in the last section of Prop. 218*. *(Cost must be justified and cannot charge more than costs to provide the water.)*

Local governments must also:

- **Mail information** regarding the proposed fee to every property owner.
- **Hold a hearing at least 45 days** after the mailing. (Board of Supervisors hearing).
- **Reject the proposed fee if written protests are presented by a majority of the affected property owners. 50%**
- Hold an election on any property-related fee, **other than a fee for water, sewer, or refuse collection.**

For customers of FMWD, this process was followed for the current rates adopted in 2012.

*Information from the Legislative Analyst’s Office about Proposition 218 can be found at http://www.lao.ca.gov/1996/120196_prop_218/understanding_prop218_1296.html

[A summary of the May 31 meeting and a Committee description are on the next page.]

May 31, 2016, Public Meeting on Water Rates

Representing TPW was Johannes Hoevertsz, County of Sonoma Deputy Director Transportation and Public Works (TPW) Small Water Systems. Also present were Trish Pisenti, Division Operations Manager at County of Sonoma; Jamie Dunton, Russian River Utilities, Operations and Maintenance FMWD; and Carmen Narayanan, a consultant who presented for the NBS Government Financial Group.

Ms. Narayanan's presentation contained facts, figures, and charts that explained the justification of increased water rates of 4% a year for the next five years, as well as three structures from which to make a choice. All questions from the attendees were answered. The group was asked to vote on the three alternative rates, and selected Alternative Two.

The vote was such a small sampling that the County asked for further information distribution and a survey through our website. The deadline was June 15, for input.

Jamie Dunton gave a "state of the union"-type assessment of the current infrastructure of our now 27-year-old system. He also provided a capital improvement list of over \$100,000. New water meters are among the suggested expenditures. Our old meters may account for some of the unexplained water losses. The type discussed could warn customers when usage goes beyond normal, indicating possible line leaks.

New FMWD Committee Members

Pat Abercrombie, John Murray, and Susan Steinman have joined Donita Proctor, Dennis Byrne, and Dave Henderson on the FMWD Committee. We are currently pursuing a formal appointment status by the Board of Supervisors for these volunteers. Long-time members will remember that the Board of Supervisors disbanded the original advisory committee in 1993. We have been functioning on an invitation basis since 2011, when Mike McGuire called for an Ombudsman. Johannes Hoevertsz will assist us in forming a MAC (Municipal Advisory Council).¹

¹In California state government, for example, municipal advisory councils serve unincorporated communities as links to county boards of supervisors under authorization of a 1971 legislative statute. Such a council is an advisory body of local citizens elected by the community or appointed by the board of supervisors with the purpose of representing the community to the board. Although a MAC is a governing body, it has no fiscal authority or administrative organization. Because it lacks authority to implement its position directly, it seeks to accomplish its goals through county government.

Annual Meeting—The Logistics!

The Fitch Mountain Association's annual meeting will be held at the Villa Chanticleer's outdoor BBQ area on Saturday July 2 from 1:00-4:00 (not the traditional Sunday—we couldn't get the site for that day).

Come early to pick up a meeting info packet and update/renew/initiate your FMA membership. Why membership? Note that this is a meeting for FMA members (and guests), and you need to be a member to vote on any resolutions or elections. FMA is your voice for Mountain issues, and when we work with County and local officials on a wide range of issues, we want to be able to show that we represent a committed membership truly representative of our FM community. Your financial support of \$20 per member is also important in facilitating the FMA's activities, both issue-based and for fun and fellowship.

The get-together on July 2 will begin with a picnic lunch. The Association will provide the plates and such, beverages, and burgers (beef or veggie). It is very important that you **RSVP** to Donita via donita.proctor@gmail.com or 431-8789 **by Wed. June 29** with the number attending and your choices of a meat or veggie burger so Kathryn can shop for enough supplies and food and drink!

Please bring a picnic dish to share, going by the following last name "assignments." Other than that, just show up and enjoy!

A-F: salad (green, pasta, or ?)
G-L: salsa or dip, chips
M-R: veggies or fruit
S-Z: dessert



The business of the day will include announcements, updates on current issues, and elections. The offices of President, Secretary, Treasurer, and 4-year and 1-year Trustee positions are to be filled by election. (*See page 14.*) The agenda will also include interactive elements to help attendees get to know each other better and exchange information and ideas. There will be major presentations on the planning process for the FM Summit Preserve and on the new County Fire Fuels Abatement Ordinance. There will also be "breakout brainstorming" groups on the Del Rio Woods Community Park, the FM Preserve, Fire Prevention, and Just Plain Anything Else, so we can hear opinions! This important meeting is a chance to renew your Mountain friendships and make new ones, influence the course of activity of your Association in the coming year, and become more personally involved in issues of special importance to you.

There will be a memorial table for Fitch Mountain residents whom we have lost in the past year, including Jeff Sanders, Dorothy Sypal, and Louisa Yates. Please feel free to bring items in remembrance of them or for any one we might have missed.



Candidates for FMA Elections

Two trustee positions and four offices are up for election at the Annual Meeting. There is currently one candidate for each position; their statements are below. Nominations will be taken “from the ground” at the meeting if there are additional members wishing to run for any of the positions.

Board of Trustees (filling out remaining 4 years of a 6-year term): KEN HITE

My wife, Connie, and I own a home on Redwood Drive that we have been using the last several years as our winter retreat, spending 3-4 months a year in Healdsburg and escaping the rain and gloom that envelop Seattle in the winter. We have now decided to jump in with both feet, and are relocating to Fitch Mountain at the end of August on a full-time basis.

With this change, I would like to offer myself as a candidate for an FMA Trustee seat. I do have previous board experience, having served as President of my homeowners association for 3 years, serving 2 years on the Kirkland City Alliance of Neighborhoods board, and 11 years on the board (7 as President) of a non-profit that supports Washington State Parks, raising over \$2 million for the parks during my tenure. In these various roles I have had experience dealing with officials at the city, county, and state level.

I hope I can lend a hand to the efforts that many are putting forth to continually improve the Mountain community.

Board of Trustees (filling out remaining 1 year of a 6-year term): PAT ABERCROMBIE

I would welcome serving as a trustee of the FMA. After living on the mountain for 4 years, I have become very committed to the health, safety and beauty of our community and would like to be involved in the organization formed to advocate for these interests. I currently serve on the Water District Advisory Committee and am Chair of the Del Rio Community Park Committee working with Sonoma County Regional Parks on the future direction of this wonderful neighborhood asset.

FMA President (2-year term): DAVE HENDERSON

I was prevailed upon, in 2014, to offer myself upon the altar of the Presidency. I reluctantly agreed. The subsequent two years have been full ones, perhaps too full, but I would like to step forward for two more years, if the members will have me.

The issues impacting our community on Fitch Mountain are many, and sometimes pretty daunting, but so is life. What makes it all worthwhile is achieving something important with all the terrific people we have here among us, who are called trustees, officers, volunteers, but are in reality just our wonderful neighbors and friends.

What are some specific goals for the next two years?

1. Complete a vision for how to improve Fitch Mountain Road (and the other “upper” roads).
2. Make us more fire-safe and get us out of here safely when we “have to go.”
3. Get us equitable, fair regulations regarding upgrading--or not!--septic systems.
4. Start to remove the Ludwigia that is choking our river.
5. Attract more members to FMA and “spread the work around.”
6. Have more fun events involving our entire community.
7. And about 53 other things ...

Thanks for your criticism, your input, your work, and your vote.

FMA Treasurer (2-year term): MARTIN SILGE

Ellen and I bought our property between N. Fitch Mt. Rd. and the end of Redwood Dr. in 1986. For the next 20 years we were “weekenders,” becoming permanent residents in 2005, when we went through all the red tape of building a house (and getting water!). It is wonderful being full-time residents and getting to know our neighbors. I became involved in FMA by filling out a Trustee position in 2011, and I am currently serving as Treasurer. I know the duties now, and I ask for your support to fulfill them for another 2 years; it is a privilege to serve our “forever” community.

FMA Secretary (2-year term): DANA EATON

Currently on Fitch Mountain Fire Safety Committee

My husband and I have been on Fitch Mountain since 2002. We have lived full-time on the mountain since 2007. Prior to moving to Healdsburg, we lived 30 years in Silicon Valley. We have two adult children and one grandchild.

Life from my Silicon Valley days included being a mother, artist, curator, educator, community organization volunteer/leader, and China tour organizer/leader. In Healdsburg I attend yoga and tai-chi classes, garden, walk my dog, do art and participate in a reading group. Together, Chuck and I get away to visit family scattered around the state, country, and the world.

The unincorporated Russian River-Fitch Mountain area has a unique community. Protecting and preserving what we value living on the mountain and by the river is a balance and responsibility for all who live here.

Updating our Mission Statement

The current FMA Mission Statement was created and adopted by the membership in 2009. Organizations and their activities change and evolve over time, and the Trustees and Officers thought it was time to take a fresh look at our statement. The conclusion was that, with the broad range of issues involving our community (*see some of them listed in the President's Message, on page 2*), some of the language should be sharpened, and the result submitted to the membership.

Below are the revisions approved by the Trustees, with brief explanations. (Current Mission Statement is in normal font; suggested changes are indicated in **boldface**.)

The revised statement will be submitted to the members for their approval at the July 2 annual membership meeting.

The Mission of the Fitch Mountain Association is to:

The Mission of the Fitch Mountain Association is to:

1. Maintain the unique nature of our locale.
Preserve and enhance the unique nature of our locale, and to promote the safety and well-being of its residents.
[Remarks: *Preserve* stronger than *maintain*. *Enhance* allows for improving, beyond static preservation. *Promote the safety...* alludes to issues such as fire prevention, etc.]
2. Establish a positive identity with the public sector.
Support and cooperate closely with public and other entities that impact our lifestyle and environment.
[Remarks: *Support and cooperate* more accurately describe the active nature of FMA's relationship to our Supervisor, SC Transportation & Public Works, SC Regional Parks, the three local fire depts., Sheriffs Dept., LandPaths, FireFreeFitch, etc.]
3. Encourage Community.
Encourage a sense of community and shared pride in our Fitch Mountain environment.
[Remarks: Just expansion.]
4. Disseminate relevant information to the membership.
Disseminate relevant information to our members and serve as a forum for exchange of ideas.
[Remarks: Adds idea of two-way active listening and consideration of member input.]

