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ISSUE 14

FRIENDS *of* VILLA GRANDE NEWSLETTER

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OUR MISSION:

- ❖ RESTORE AND MAINTAIN PATTERSON POINT AS A RIPARIAN PRESERVE FOR LIMITED PUBLIC RECREATION USE
- ❖ PRESERVE THE HISTORIC AND UNIQUE CHARACTER OF VILLA GRANDE
- ❖ ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE GREATER VILLA GRANDE COMMUNITY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, fall is here and we are able to get to work on restoration in the Preserve again. The volunteers have made substantial progress in the work days that we have had since the end of the bird season. If you want to help out on the work days, simply show up at the Preserve on Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00. This is the best free exercise that you will find.

On another topic, the Sonoma County Water Agency has received approval from the California Coastal Commission to let the mouth of the Russian River be closed all summer long every year. The project is intended to help restore steelhead to the river but there is considerable debate about whether this will occur with the project as proposed. In any event, the mouth closure creates substantial impacts to our recreational beaches at Patterson Point. The water depth

that SCWA is proposing will inundate 90% of both of our beach areas and make them so small as to be almost unusable.

Members of Friends of Villa Grande have met with SCWA to determine if the water level can be maintained at a slightly lower level that will not impact our beaches as greatly, but they replied that they are unable to do so.

FoVG will continue efforts to get the project modified. See the fact sheet included with this newsletter for more information or go to our website at villagrande.org/estuary, which includes links to SCWA's online documents. We plan to have a community meeting soon to discuss this issue.

Hope you all had a great summer.

Rich Holmer
President, FoVG



PPP DEBT IS PAID OFF!

Thanks to the generosity of FoVG members and donors, we have just paid off the balance of the \$60,000 loan made in 2009 from members to purchase Patterson Point Preserve. If you weren't involved back then, here's the story: In 2007, the property owner - the Torr family - gave the newly created Friends of Villa Grande the first right of refusal to purchase the 2 acres. There was a deadline of two years to come up with the funds, but since FoVG had no assets, it could not acquire a mortgage and needed to pay cash.

The purchase price negotiated with the Torrs was \$170k, and FoVG secured a grant for \$140k from the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space

District. When the property appraisal came in at only \$100k, it limited the amount of the grant that could be applied to the purchase, requiring FoVG to come up with another \$70k. With the escrow deadline one month away, seven FoVG members came to the rescue with unsecured loans, which along with \$10k in the FoVG bank account, just beat the deadline and the purchase went through.

The loan terms were 5% simple interest over 20 years, beginning in December 2009. Now, just four years later, the last of these loans will be paid off, 16 years early! We are grateful to both the lenders and all of you who have supported our fundraisers. Thanks!

SUMMER FUNDRAISERS REPORT

Remember the wonderful tour of Villa Grande Homes and Gardens on Sunday of Memorial Day Weekend? Five groups of 20 people toured thirteen homes and gardens, with commentary by our own history buffs as well as the property owners. The groups proceeded to a grand reception at the Octagon House, home of antique dealer and caterer-extraordinaire, Christina.

A silent auction capped the day's events, and brought the total donations to \$2,958! A special thanks goes to the tour leaders: Rich Holmer, Leah Norwood, Linda Fisher and Roberto Esteves, and also to Ken Wikle, who coordinated the shuttle service. Thanks to all the shuttle drivers and a special thank you to those who opened their homes and gardens for this fun event.

Photo: Marcy Beck



Rich Holmer Leads a Tour Group

If it's true that one person's trash is another person's treasure, then the FoVG Treasure Chest in September was a bonanza for all, as community discards and donations of household items netted FoVG \$2,134. Special thanks to Rick Hopkins and Carl Carlson who, in addition to their

many donations of quality items, also drove from Los Angeles to spend a week organizing and staffing the sale. Also, extra thanks to Nancy Lopes for her Treasure Chest marketing and sales expertise.

PPP GETS AN ELDERBERRY TREE

The entrance "lobby" of Patterson Point Preserve is getting a new look with the addition of an elderberry tree (*Sambucus mexicana*). The 12' tall tree, donated by Victoria and Ken Wikle, is a native species that will provide habitat and fruit for PPP's bird and butterfly population.

The elderberry is deciduous, with white flowers and light green foliage. Once the tree is established and supplying fruit, the non-native plum tree nearby will be removed.

The transplant team included Roberto Esteves, Ken Wikle, Harold Appleton, Victoria Wikle, Michael Crofut, Rick Tatum, Steve Koury and Linda Fisher. Thanks everybody for the great work!

Photo: Linda Fisher



COMMITTEES SEEK MEMBERS

Patterson Point Preserve operates under two governing agreements with SCAPOSD: a Conservation Easement, which requires restoration of the land to its native habitat, and a Recreational Covenant, which mandates public access and "limited recreational use" of the land. To fulfill the conservation easement, the Restoration and Management of Patterson Point Preserve Committee (RAMPPPC) was established by the Board two years ago, under the leadership of Victoria Wikle. RAMPPPC meets approximately 6 times a year, on Saturdays, and focuses on restoration plans and a budget for the following year.

Starting in 2014, a second committee is forming to address the Recreational Covenant, with Kyra Wink as its first chair. This committee will consider recreation-related issues including beach crowding, bird-watching, camping, dogs, fires, fishing, barbecues, neighbors, parking, signage, toilets, trash, and visitors.

For both of these committees, members are appointed to one year terms, beginning in January. If you have an interest in serving on either, please contact Rich Holmer at (707) 865-2998 or richandwanda@sbcglobal.net.

WINTER CAN BE SUCH A DRAG (PARTY!)

Winter is a great time to use your imagination and create your fantasy character. On Saturday, January 25, drag out your hidden madness and come to our winter wonderland party, dinner and dance in whatever outfit floats your boat. A no-host bar, appetizers and make-up artists will kick off the evening at the General Store at 6 p.m.

Dinner with complimentary wine will be served at the Old Villa Grande Hotel at 7:30, catered by Christina of Simply Scrumptious. Then it's back to the General Store for dancing and music, provided by our favorite dance band, Malcolm Granger and the Stumptown Bootleggers.

Price is \$85 each, and seating is limited to the first 45 reservations, so don't tarry. To make your reservations, go to: villagrande.org/drag



F. Scott Fitzgerald - 1916

PPP BOUNDARY SURVEY UNDERTAKEN

Historically, the exact location of properties in west Sonoma county has been more art and craft than science. FoVG is moving forward with a comprehensive boundary survey of PPP, including the location of its

entrance. Once complete, the Restoration Committee will plan improvements to the entrance and also installation of a hedgerow - a border of native plants - defining the Preserve's boundaries.

MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATED

In 2011, the document *Restoration and Land Management Plan: Patterson Point Preserve* was written to be a conceptual guide to the restoration work required in the newly acquired Preserve. After three years of removing trash, ivy and other invasive, non-native plants, the FoVG Board realized it needed a more detailed analysis to address the next phase of restoration in the Preserve.

This past summer, FoVG hired Harold Appleton of Prunuske Chatham, Inc. to advise how to restore sensitive zones, including specific recommendations dealing with erosion and the low-hanging Oregon Ash tree limbs on

the Sandy Beach. Appleton also addressed restoration in the riparian swales, managing human incursion into the Preserve from the gravel beach and he recommended plants for a hedgerow between the Preserve and adjacent neighboring properties. All of these are unique restoration challenges that were not addressed in the original Plan.

The resulting report, *Addendum to the Restoration and Land Management Plan for the Patterson Point Preserve* was accepted at the July 27 FoVG Board meeting, and is available on our website at: villagrande.org/Plan

FOVG 2013 FINANCIAL REPORT

FoVG ended the fiscal year on June 30 with \$41,570 in the bank and a loan debt balance of \$10,946. Contributions through the year totaled \$37,492, with expenses of \$19,431. For fiscal year 2013, beginning July 1, the Board voted to pay off the loans and proceed

with a boundary survey that had been discussed over the past year. A budget of \$37,307 for 2013-14 was adopted, which includes \$18,000 in reserve funds for emergencies and grant-funded restoration reimbursements.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FoVG Board Meeting
21905 Russian River Ave.
10:00 a.m.
January 11

**Winter Can Be
Such a Drag (Party!)**
6:00 p.m.
January 25

**PPP Restoration
Work Parties**
1:00-4:00 p.m.
Every Saturday

Online at:
villagrande.org/calendar

Go ahead and "like" us like we like you on Facebook at villagrande.org/Facebook

ON THE WEB AT

VILLAGRANDE.ORG

SURVEY PROVIDES COMMUNITY INPUT TO FOVG BOARD

Thirty five members and community representatives filled out a survey to help the FoVG Board update its strategic plan for the organization. The survey provided a sounding board and gave valuable input as the Board considers charter and policy changes for the next phase of FoVG.



While many respondents were complimentary toward FoVG's accomplishments, there was also criticism as well as concern about the impact of Patterson Point's popularity. Discussions will continue and the Board will report back to the community this summer.

RUBUS PARVIFLORUS (THIMBLEBERRY)

A dense shrub native to northern California, and common in redwood forest communities. Growing up to 8' tall, with white flowers, the fruit is too soft to be cultivated commercially, but can be used for jam and is popular with wildlife. Photo: calfloranursery.com



FOVG MEMBERSHIP FORM

July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014

RENEWAL NEW

BENEFACTOR	\$1,000	TWO FREE TICKETS TO ALL EVENTS
PATRON	\$500	ONE FREE TICKET TO ALL EVENTS
FAMILY MEMBERSHIP	\$100	LIST NAMES BELOW
CONTRIBUTING MEMBER	\$50	SINGLE MEMBERSHIP
DISCOUNT MEMBER	\$25	LOW INCOME

ADDITIONAL PATTERSON POINT PRESERVE DONATION (\$1-\$1 MATCH) \$ _____

TOTAL PAID: Cash/Ck/PayPal \$ _____

Name of member/family members: _____

Mail Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Local Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Please send check and form to FoVG
PO Box 28, Villa Grande, CA 95486
or online through Paypal at
villagrande.org/FOVG/Membership