

April 2014
ISSUE 15

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

There has been quite a bit happening since the last newsletter. The work in the Preserve is done until September, when the bird nesting season is over. The Restoration and Management Committee is working on a plan for next year's work season that will be presented at the Community Meeting on July 5. Thanks to all of the volunteers at the meetings and on the Preserve for their many hours of work.

We have also established a Recreational Uses Committee that will look at issues such as beach crowding, parking, signage, boat storage, beach rules and other issues related to the recreational uses of Patterson Point Preserve. All are welcome to attend any of the committee meetings and give input. Meeting times and locations are listed on the FoVG website calendar at villagrande.org/calendar.

FoVG continues to interact with the agencies involved with the Sonoma County Water Agency's Estuary Project. We are attempting to get them to address our concerns about water quality and levels relative to our property, and there is a joint meeting scheduled with Efren Carrillo and the SCWA. It is difficult to get movement on any of our issues because the project is so far along in the process, but we will keep trying.

Finally, I attended a meeting on March 13 at the Regional Water Quality Control Board regarding the TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads) process that they are working on. Initially, they will identify sources of contamination to the river and its tributaries, and then develop a strategy for mitigating contributions from contaminating sources. They are about halfway through the process and expect to be done by 2016. The project could have significant impacts for residents along the river with septic systems. You can find information on their website at tinyurl.com/TMDLS

Have a great summer.

Rich Holmer
President, FoVG



CANOE AND KAYAK ANCHORAGE OFFERED AT PPP

Current FoVG members are invited to apply for the opportunity to tie up a canoe or kayak onto our anchor chain at the gravel beach this year, from May through October. There is only space for 15 boats, so if more members apply, a drawing will be held on April 20 at noon in the town square to award the 15 spaces.

The fee is \$150 for the summer, which is due by May 1. Along with the fee, a

waiver must be signed, agreeing to terms and conditions too lengthy to list here. For complete details, please go to villagrande.org/anchorage

To apply for a tie-up, contact Roberto Esteves by email at friends@villagrande.org or call 707 865-9558 before noon on April 20. Proceeds from the anchorage program are used for the restoration and maintenance of Patterson Point Preserve.

WINTER WAS (NOT) A DRAG FUNDRAISER

The winter doldrums were swept away on January 25 when 54 partiers dressed to the nines sparkled through the evening in sequins, wigs and beyond. The very progressive party kicked off at the General store, hosted by Jeanine Zimmerman, Susan and Greg Sampson, where guests gathered to enjoy hors d'oeuvres and libations. The entourage next migrated to the Old Hotel, which hosts Kyla Brooke and Jon Box had decked out with colorful floral arrangements provided by Nancy Lopes and Claire Marie Flowers of San Francisco.

Members and guests dined on salmon, lamb and other succulent dishes prepared by Christina of Simply Scrumptious. The wine flowed, thanks to the generosity of Kristina Spencer and Kellee Kessler. After dinner, everyone strolled back to the General Store where they danced 'til the witchin' hour to Malcolm Granger's Stumptown Bootleggers, featuring Laurel Lee Brown on vocals.

A best costume (most outrageous outfit) contest awarded prizes to Kyra Wink, Leah Norwood, Linda Fisher, Rock Ross, Katie Gibson and Craig Snider, shown at right, in no logical order.

The evening was not only fabulous fun, it also raised over \$1800 for FoVG!



ATTENTION ALL PATRIOTS: YOUR ATTENDANCE IS DESIRED AT THE TOWN SQUARE ON JULY 4TH AT 4:30 SHARP FOR THE READING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND SUNDRY OTHER SPEECHIFYING, SINGING AND RABBLE ROUSING. A PARADE AND NOISY HOOPLA WILL ENSUE. APPROPRIATE ATTIRE RECOMMENDED.

DEFINING THE PRESERVE: THE HEDGEROW PROJECT

Patterson Point Preserve is bordered by the Russian River and our neighbors' fences except on the eastern boundary. There, you could find a nebulous mix of invasive plants, discarded trash, building materials, a giant rose bush and random trees. Now that most of the unwanted elements have been removed, FoVG is planning for a hedgerow along this property line. Naturally, there are questions:

What is a hedgerow?

A living fence composed of evergreen plants, primarily shrubs and trees, used to border a field. The PPP hedgerow will contain native plants indigenous to our growing area and is expected to be between 6 and 20 feet wide.

Why a hedgerow instead of a fence?

A hedgerow provides habitat for birds and animals without being an obstruction to wildlife movement. It also provides attractive visual screening while deterring PPP visitors from wandering onto our neighbor's property.

What is an example of a hedgerow plant?

The toyon shrub is a handsome native evergreen, 6 to 10 ft. tall and often just as wide. It likes sun or partial shade, and is drought tolerant. Spectacular bundles of red berries are relished by birds and are often used in winter decorations. One well-established toyon is already growing in the hedgerow area.

When will we see the PPP hedgerow?

There are existing shrubs and trees along the property line that already start to define the hedgerow, and new plantings will be added this fall. Initial focus will be on the section between the 3rd street entrance and the rose bush, followed by the section between the rose bush and the blackberries closer to the river. The taller plants will take some years before they are mature and the hedgerow is fully developed. We will also plant some native understory plants to help fill out the hedgerow sooner.

PPP 2013-14 RESTORATION REVIEW

Restoration volunteers worked in the Preserve every Saturday afternoon from mid-September 2013 to mid-March 2014, putting in nearly 300 hours and removing 33 cubic yards of debris. Kudos to all the volunteers, as well as our restoration stewards Vickie and Julie, who took on many of the more intricate tasks, including hand-weeding stands of native plants. Restoration work is now paused for the bird-nesting season, resuming in mid-September this year.

A highlight of this past season was completing the boundary survey so that we now know what land FoVG is responsible for managing. The survey also defined the area for planting a hedgerow at the property's boundary.

Along the main path we planted redwood understory plants, specifically redwood sorrel, western sword fern and yellow flowering redwood violet. A mature Elderberry tree was planted near the utility area. Once it starts to provide berries, we will remove the large plum tree nearby which has been the source of hundreds of invasive seedlings.

We witnessed an explosion of small pernicious weeds in the sunny demonstration loop trail area near the top of the path. In areas where we removed the weeds, native plants have started thriving, with competition out of the way.

We also planted willows on the north shoreline above the gravel beach to further stabilize that vulnerable area from erosion. The trees over the sandy beach were trimmed for the enjoyment and safety of the beach users.

To deter weed seeds from entering the Preserve by clinging to footwear and pets, we will sheet mulch the weedy eastern half of the 3rd Street right-of-way and the eastern side of the entrance area. Sheet mulching is a very popular and effective way to suppress weeds by covering them with layers of newspaper and cardboard, which is then top-dressed with wood chips. The covering kills the weeds by starving them of light, and the sheet mulching materials will decompose over time and enhance the soil.

FIREHOUSE LEASE AWARDED TO FOVG

Sonoma County has given FoVG a revocable, no cost lease to use the V.G.F.D. firehouse in perpetuity. Up to now, we have been using it informally for tool and supply storage, but its functionality is limited by a leaky roof. With donated materials and volunteer labor, we plan to replace the roof, stabilize the foundation and repaint the building in its wonderful "firehouse" red.



ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN JULY

FoVG's annual membership meeting will be held on Saturday, July 5 in the town square. The meeting will include an update on the Estuary Project, a report on PPP restoration efforts, discussion of the newly-created Recreational Uses Committee's activities and a report on our financial condition by treasurer and outgoing Board member, Tom Wackerman.

There will be an election to fill five positions on the Board of Directors. Four current members are seeking re-election: Ken Wikle,

Greg Sampson, Victoria Wikle and Sukey Robb-Wilder. We are also seeking members to join the board; for more information, contact either of the two nomination committee representatives before June 15: Kyla Brooke at 707 481-0098 or Rich Holmer at 707 865-2998.

We invite all members of the community to attend and participate in the open forum discussion that always concludes our meeting on a lively note!

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Summer 2014
Boat Anchorage Signups
Final Day
April 20, Noon**

**FoVG Board Meeting
21905 Russian River Ave.
10:00 a.m.
May 3**

**Deadline for FoVG
Board Member
Applications
June 15**

**Independence Day
Celebration
Town Square
4:30 p.m.
July 4**

**FoVG Annual Meeting
Town Square
11:00-12:30
July 5**

Online at:
villagrande.org/calendar

ON THE WEB AT
VILLAGRANDE.ORG

LOCAL FOX SIGHTED

This gray fox vixen was photographed by Ken Wikle in January in broad daylight. She was foraging in the floodplain near the Russian River. Gray foxes are distinguished by the black stripe on their tail, and they are one of the few canids that can climb trees.



SAMBUCUS MEXICANA (BLUE ELDERBERRY)

The tree we planted last fall on the Preserve is a native blue elderberry which is often seen along rivers and streams. It is a fast-growing deciduous shrub or small tree that can reach heights of 25 ft. Creamy yellow flowers in flat topped clusters are followed by blue berries that are very popular with birds.



FOVG MEMBERSHIP FORM

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

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