

COTTONWOOD CREEK AND YOU

A NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY COTTONWOOD CREEK WATERSHED GROUP

Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group, P.O. Box 1198, Cottonwood, CA 96022

Email: ccwg@shasta.com Web site: cottonwoodcreekwatershedgroup.com Phone (530) 347-6637



Election Time for CCWG Board!

It's time again to elect Directors for the Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group! Ballots will be taken and tallied at the CCWG Annual meeting, which will be held at the Evergreen middle School on January 26th. The following landowners are running for these service positions:

Dennis Mitchell- Incumbent. Mr. Mitchell a teacher at Evergreen School, and has lived in the watershed for 49 years. He is concerned about the quality of our surrounding natural resources, especially Cottonwood Creek (current CCWG Chair)

Roy Richards-Incumbent. Mr. Richards is a forester consultant and has lived in the watershed for 10 years. Mr. Richards has a vast knowledge of natural resources and wants to monitor agency involvement (currently on Board).

Julia Arnold-Ms. Arnold is a retired equine instructor at Shasta College and moved into the watershed 1 ½ years ago. Ms. Arnold purchased ten irrigated acres and is very interested in what happens in the north state and the Cottonwood Creek Watershed.

Bill Gibson – Mr. Gibson is a rancher and has lived in the watershed for 14 years. His ranch includes over a mile of frontage on both sides of the mainstem Cottonwood Creek. Mr. Gibson believes the best interest for the area is to keep the decisions affecting property local.

Michael McGuire, M.D.-is a Professor of Medicine Emeritus with the University of California. He and wife Nancy moved into the watershed seven years ago and is interested in improving the property to the point where it would be worth preserving by the California Conservation Trust. Dr. McGuire is interested in introducing the Conservation Trust into the Cottonwood area.

Results of the vote will be made shortly after Jan 27th. Our sincere thanks to all of these individuals for their willingness to provide their time and support to the success of CCWG, as well as the dedication of our outgoing Board member, Gene Davis. Thank you!

Miscellaneous Announcements

TAX TIME LIES AHEAD!! It just so happens that CCWG is IRS-recognized Non-Profit, meaning donations can be used as tax deductions! CCWG appreciates folks like Dan Lawson who makes contributions to the organization which helps to pay costs such as this newsletter, which is mailed quarterly to some 3,400 names (Thank You, Dan!).

ASSISTANCE TO THE DEER CREEK WATERSHED CONSERVANCY: CCWG Coordinator Vivia Swearingen is working through a contract between CCWG and DCWC for her services as coordinator of the Deer Creek Rangeland grant, as well as the Deer Creek Flood Corridor Feasibility Study. This effort provides assistance to both organizations and personifies the spirit of watershed collaboration on similar issues.

LOOKING FOR A FREE CALENDAR? 18-month calendars provided by State Fire Safe Council (FSC) are available FOR FREE and can be picked up at the CCWG office on Brush Street.

FIRE PREVENTION PLANNING NEWS: CCWG, CDF and a willing landowner are working to place a water tank in the Quail Ridge Subdivision with another location being considered, for a total of two, 5,000 gallon water tanks to be placed in strategic locations. This would provide fire fighting water in the event of a wild land fire. Another asset of these water tanks is the ability to obtain reasonable cost fire insurance for landowners. For more information, please contact Vivia.

The Celebrated Jumping Frog

Did you know that the historic range of the California red-legged frog includes the Cottonwood Creek watershed (below 4,000 ft. elevation)? Are you concerned about whether or not you may have the species and/or its habitat on your property? While it is a bit of a distance away, the discovery of three threatened California red-legged frogs in a rancher's stock pond in western Calaveras County in the fall has triggered a new effort to convince the state's ranchers that the amphibians are important to their long-term economic survival. When the rancher's children stumbled upon the frogs — a male and two females — while playing around a water hole in October, the

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Mission Statement: "The Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group will work to preserve the environment, private property and water rights, and economic resources of Cottonwood Creek watershed through responsible stewardship, liaison, cooperation, and education. and education."

family's decision to report the find to the Murphys-based Jumping Frog Research Institute was of historic importance. According to Robert Stack, who founded the institute in 1996, it was the first documented sighting of red-legged frogs in Calaveras County in almost 35 years.

The frog is now federally listed as Threatened, after having disappeared from 70% of its former range. Historians and scientists generally agree that it was a red-legged frog named Dan'l Webster that Mark Twain referred to in his classic Gold Rush tale "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County." Stack and Thomas have also enlisted several government entities — including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CA Department of Fish and Game, and the county — to help establish a system that rewards ranchers and farmers for protecting threatened and endangered species while enhancing the environment. The goal would be to eventually remove them from protections under the federal Endangered Species Act.

California Cattlemen's Assn. officials expressed cautious support for programs designed to reintroduce such wildlife as the frog. Because the frog's habitat is generally below the 3,500-foot level, virtually all the land on which the amphibians once thrived is in private hands, usually home to cattle or other livestock operations. So protecting and enhancing the environment for frogs and other endangered species is almost entirely up to individual landowners, Stack said.

The two scientists and governmental entities that are involved have been careful to keep the identity of the family and the location of the ranch secret to protect their privacy and to prevent curious outsiders from trespassing and perhaps jeopardizing the frogs' survival.

If the rancher, by disclosing the discovery, benefits economically from steps taken to establish a breeding population and gets financial support to enhance his acreage for the frogs and cattle, other ranchers may be willing to take similar steps, said Jim Nickels, a spokesman in Sacramento for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "We really want to work with them in a partnership, so they can keep their cattle operations going and build trust in the [ranching] community," he said. His agency "really has an interest in keeping ranching viable," he said. "If the ranch becomes a subdivision, then everybody loses." Contact Vivia if you'd like to learn more.

News from the Past

The following is an excerpt from Dottie Smith's book, History of Cottonwood, Now and Then, about the mobility of the Post Office. Enjoy!!

The first Cottonwood Post Office was established in 1852 at the home of Marcus Clanton, postmaster and owner of Clanton's Ferry, on the south side of Cottonwood Creek near the I-5 Bridge. It was delivered via the Baxter & Monroe Stage Line. After a few months it moved across the road into the home of G. W. Clanton, Marcus' brother, who became the new postmaster. It moved for the third time in 1853 to the home of David Huntoon, a farmer who lived about a mile and a half west of the I-5 Bridge. It soon moved again for the 4th time to the home of William Lean, owner of the Olive Branch Hotel and Lean Ferry. The 5th move in 1860 put it almost back to where it started except in the new Jackson Hotel, Alexander Jackson, postmaster. The 6th move on September 20, 1872, brought it from Tehama County to Shasta on the SE corner of Main and Front Streets in the Foster's Hotel with Jacob Foster as postmaster. On January 26, 1874 it moved for the 7th time to Syman's Mercantile Store and Henry Syman became the new postmaster. On March 10th it moved for the 8th time back to Foster's Hotel. The 9th move was on August 20, 1877 into a small store owned by William Knowlton on Front Street just east of where Holiday Market stands...

See what's on the flip side!

NEWS FROM THE PAST CONTINUED:

...January 28, 1903--the Holiday Market burned to the ground along with the Cottonwood Herald newspaper office and the Cottonwood Post Office, therefore it made the 10th move into Ed Carter's store (Country Lane Antique Store), and Carter served as postmaster. The 11th time was into one of Ed Carter's smaller stores on the south side of Front Street. Move #12 was into the building on the west side of Country Lane Antiques, Alfred Seale, postmaster. Lucky #13 is our current building at 3270 Walnut Street, completed in 1970. WHEW!

Ag Waiver Update for Irrigated Farmland Owners and Operators

NOTICE TO IRRIGATED FARMLAND OWNERS AND OPERATORS Regarding NEW WATER QUALITY REQUIREMENTS BY THE CENTRAL VALLEY REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD

As a farmer in the Sacramento River watershed, your agricultural operations are subject to new regulations by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board) under California Water Code § 13260. This section requires any person or entity that discharges into waters of the state to file a report of waste discharge (ROWD) to ensure that all discharges are consistent with the water quality objectives set by the Regional Board. California Water Code § 13269 provides authority for the Regional Board to issue "conditional waivers" of waste discharge requirements.

The Regional Board on July 11, 2003 adopted a conditional waiver for certain agricultural activities, including surface discharges, subsurface drainage and storm water runoff from irrigated farm lands where water is applied for the purpose of producing crops. This also includes commercial nurseries, nursery stock production, managed wetlands and rice production. Therefore, if you satisfy certain requirements as a discharger, you will not need a waste discharge permit.

To comply with the regulations, a landowner must do one of the following (Failure to comply with one of these options may result in the assessment of civil penalties that accrue every day there is a violation. It is important to note that these new requirements are not being imposed by the County, Agricultural Commissioner or Irrigation District, but instead, the County and Irrigation District are providing a service to help you and other growers understand these new requirements):

1. Participate in a Coalition Group: Under the Regional Board's new regulations, individual dischargers that participate in a Coalition Group such as the Sacramento Valley Water Quality Coalition (Coalition) will be covered under the conditional waiver without having to obtain an individual discharge permit. Agricultural and managed wetlands interests in Northern California have formed the Coalition to develop a "watershed" approach to improve water quality and to meet the Regional Board requirements in an efficient and effective manner. The Coalition's "Regional Plan for Action" (Plan) can be seen at www.norcalwater.org/pdf/svwqc.pdf. In addition to the Coalition Group, subwatershed groups will continue to develop and implement approaches that reflect local hydrologic, geographic and operational conditions.

The Coalition provides economies of scale in monitoring and reporting water quality data, as well as the opportunity to field test, evaluate, and disseminate information on management practices. The Coalition is working closely with leading scientists

to develop a monitoring and reporting program that will drive local actions designed to improve the quality of discharges from irrigated lands.

It is important to note that each grower is ultimately responsible for making the program successful. Each grower who elects to proceed under this watershed approach will be responsible to participate in their subwatershed program, to attend grower seminars on this topic and to implement best management practices necessary to improve water quality within each subwatershed.

Although there is not an initial fee to participate in the Coalition, there will likely be future costs to implement the Plan. For example, you may be contacted by a subwatershed group representative to help fund their efforts. Again, it is worth noting that the costs associated with participation in a watershed group are likely to be substantially less than seeking coverage under the following two options. **Again, the Coalition will:**

1. Ensure compliance with conditional waiver regulations
2. Develop the monitoring and management practices programs in conjunction with subwatershed group representatives
3. Report the required monitoring findings to the Regional Board
4. Provide management practices information to landowners in partnership with the County Agricultural Commissioners, University of California Cooperative Extension, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service

2. Individual Waiver Coverage: The conditional waiver also provides dischargers with an option to file for individual coverage. Dischargers with individual coverage will have to meet the monitoring and reporting requirements. The California Farm Bureau Federation, in conjunction with an independent consultant, has studied this option closely and estimates that for a farm of 200 acres or less, development of a farm plan and purchase of equipment would cost approximately \$3,000-\$6,000 per farm. Annual monitoring and reporting costs for that farm are likely to be \$7,000-\$14,000. Most notably, the individual program is similar to a permit program under which an individual files a report of waste discharge (see below).

3. Individual Waste Discharge Permits: The third option is for a discharger to file a Report of Waste Discharge (ROWD) and obtain a Waste Discharge Requirement (WDR) under California Water Code sections 13260 & 13263. The monitoring and reporting requirements under this option are the discharger's responsibility and the costs are likely to resemble those discussed under the individual waiver (Option 2). Additionally, the Regional Board will impose a fee for submission of a Report of Waste Discharge and issuance of a WDR. The Regional Board can also impose limits on discharges and it can issue cease and desist orders and impose monetary penalties for non-compliance with the requirements.

REVIEW YOUR OPTIONS CAREFULLY! For an election form, Contact your local Agricultural Commissioners Office or Vieve Swearingen at the CCWG office.

Stakeholder's Meeting Schedule:

When: 4th Tuesday of each month at 6:15 pm

Where: Room 18 at Evergreen Middle School, 19500 Learning Way, off Bowman Road, Cottonwood, CA Upcoming meeting dates: February 24th, March 23rd, April 27th and May 25th.

This newsletter was brought to you by the Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group. If you would like to participate in the group or have questions, please contact us! We'd also appreciate any volunteer help you can provide. We look forward to hearing from you!

