

Cottonwood Creek and You

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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. CCWG 10/27/99 and education.

CCWG 10/27/99

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1. Secured Grants and Those on the Horizon

The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman personally presented CCWG with a grant for fuel reduction management project on June 15, 2001. CCWG received over \$38,000 to create a fuels management and reduction plan for the watershed. The plan is expected to describe present fuel conditions and provide recommendations for site specific actions needed to minimize fire damage in the wildland urban interface. Vieva Swearingen (coordinator) and Roy Richards (BOD member) were on hand to receive the grant.

A proposal submitted to CALFED for funding of the watershed management plan was unfortunately denied. While the reviewers of the proposal felt it had merit and was well written, they would prefer having the watershed assessment in place first. Given the assessment will be completed in early 2002, timing would be right to resubmit the plan proposal for the 2003 funding cycle. Additional comments on the proposal indicated that the possibility of funding next year looks very promising.

A proposal for a pilot watershed restoration project was submitted in mid June to the 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation grant program (administered by the State Water Resources Control Board). The proposal included bank stabilization work to protect farmland and reduce erosion, riparian habitat improvement, and reducing the braided nature of the creek in the area (thereby improving fisheries habitat and water quality). Stay tuned!!

2. From the Board of Directors

By Phillip Grossberger, BOD member

WATER WORLD – Water is to our way of life what blood is to our bodies. In fact, our bodies are made up of mostly water! So, what about the water in your watershed? Just as with blood in your body, it’s a precious and limited resource. While Nature constantly renews our watershed with a seemingly endless fresh supply, there are limits.

If too much water is removed from the natural cycle, the system breaks down. Human impact has severely degraded many watersheds; but future damage

can be minimized through education and wise management.

What can you do? Get involved with your local watershed group and become a student of the issues at hand. As far as how your local watershed fits into the regional big picture, I recommend reading, Cadillac Desert by Marc Reisner (Penguin Press). This is a fairly grim, unflinching and not exactly encouraging history, and forecast, or Western water. I also recommend renting the movie, “Chinatown” STARRING Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway. He’s a private eye back in the Thirties solving a murder which implicates him in a seamy power play for water rights in the Los Angeles area. A word or caution—it’s R-rated—put the kiddies to bed first!

The bottom line is, there’s a finite amount of available water being shared by an ever-increasing population. However, just as with the current electrical power crisis, through wise use and conservation, water problems can be mitigated. It’s encouraging to know that there are many new promising technologies and tools for watershed management. You can help their implementation by getting involved and becoming your watershed’s custodian rather than just its consumer. Encourage invention and innovation. Take what you need but give back what you can. I’ll see you at the next meeting!!

3. Photos Still Needed and Other News!

We are still collecting old and new photographs of Cottonwood Creek. Please bring your photos to the Cottonwood Creek Watershed Office. Please contact Vieva for more information. Thank you!!

National River Cleanup posters were judged, and the following awards were made: K-2 (each awarded \$6.00): Jason Meda, Sadie Youtsey, Maria Freitas, Brittany Browland and Andy Lanester. 7th grade: Misty Davenport (1st); Danniell Ashby (2nd); and Don Woolery (3rd). 8th grade: Desiree Bills & Maegan Havens (1st); Gary Kimbrough (2nd); and Krystal Thomsen (3rd). Prizes are: 1st place, \$15.00; 2nd, \$10.00, and 3rd, \$5.00. Congratulations!!

BOARD MEMBER FOR UPPER WATERSHED NEEDED: After involvement with CCWG since its inception, Jim Noble has stepped down from his role as a BOD member. CCWG would like to thank Jim for all of his hard work and dedication to the watershed.

A replacement is needed for Jim, so contact Vieva if you are interested.

4. River Quotes

By Stacie Gallmeister and Katie Jones, Evergreen Middle School Env. Committee

“Boundaries don’t protect rivers, people do.” Brad Arrowsmith—Landowner along Niabrara National Scenic River, Nebraska.

“What makes a river so restful to people is that it doesn’t have any doubt—it is sure to get where it is going, and it doesn’t want to go anywhere else.” Hal Boyle

“The song in the river ends not at her banks but in the hearts of those who loved her.” Buffalo Joe

“There’s a river somewhere that flows through the lives of everyone.” Roberta Flack

“Rivers are exquisite in their abilities to nurture life, sublime in functioning detail, impressive in contributions of global significance.” Tim Palmer, Life Lines

“Rivers are magnets for the imagination, for conscious pondering subconscious dreams, thrills, fears. People stare into the moving water, captivated, as they are when they are gazing into fire. What is it that draws and holds us? The rivers’ reflections of our lives and experiences are endless...” Tim Palmer, Live Lines

5. Fire Season and Defensible Space

Due to unseasonably hot, dry, and windy conditions in much of the state, all units of the California Department

of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) officially declared fire season open as of May 22, 2001. Homeowners can greatly reduce the risk of wildfire by creating “defensible space” around structures. Section 2191 of the California Public Resource Code required clearing flammable vegetation around structures a minimum of 30 feet, up to 200 feet depending on conditions. In areas of dense vegetation or on hillsides, 100 to 200 feet of clearance is needed. The need to be firewise must be balanced with the need for privacy, shade, and aesthetics. Want more info, including defensible space considerations for new home construction and other ways to make your home more firesafe? Go to <http://www.fire.ca.gov>, or contact your local CDF station for more info.

6. News from the past

With the gracious permission of Dottie Smith, we are now including excerpts from her book, History of Cottonwood, Now and Then, which is a conglomeration of historical information on the Cottonwood Creek watershed. Enjoy!!

“(Year)1909--An old-timers description of how “thick” the salmon were in Cottonwood Creek and its tributaries during these years: ... You couldn’t step without stepping on them...the salmon would just run right over your feet and almost trip you...you had to be very careful walking across!!”

“Children who crossed creeks when walking to school always carried a big stick during salmon runs expressly for the purpose of pushing salmon out of the way in order to safely cross.”

7. Questions and Answers

Vieva has had a few phone calls about the following: “Is there a going to be a dam built on Cottonwood Creek?” Answer: Not to our knowledge. A feasibility analysis and report was completed in 1978, but beyond that nothing appears to have happened.

Information on dam feasibility will be in the watershed assessment (rough draft expected in July 2001).

Please provide Vieva the following info:

What types of subjects/speakers do you want to hear from?

What goals would YOU like to see accomplished in the watershed?

Upcoming Events

CCWG 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

July 24th Frank Stewart, Quincy Library Group

August 28th (Speaker not yet selected)

September 25th (Speaker not yet selected)

Larabee Farms Field Tours: (Butte Creek Watershed) Learn about Rice Harvest and seasonal wetlands (ongoing) For info, call Jason Larabee @ (530) 982-2167 or email jglarabee@thegrid.net

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Thank you to the following authors for their article and/or input: Stacie Gallmeister, Katie Jones, Dottie Smith, Phil Grossberger

