

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

Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group
P.O. Box 1198
Cottonwood, CA 96022
(530) 347-6637
email: ccwg@shasta.com
Vieva Swearingen, Coordinator

1. Fire Safe Council Formed

CCWG has submitted a grant request for the purpose of organizing and sustaining a Fire Safe Council for the communities within the watershed boundaries. U.S. Bureau of Land Management awarded the grant. Meetings are being scheduled for **local citizens** to voice their concerns and help with the planning for safety during the fire season. Some items for consideration are prescribed burning, thinning, fuel breaks, water storage and evacuation planning. **The first meeting will be November 1st, 10:00 am at the CCW office.** Also stay tuned via stakeholder's meetings!

2. From the Board of Directors

By Phillip Grossberger, BOD member

Love Thy Neighbor--As the saying goes, you can pick your friends but you can't pick your neighbors. With this in mind I'd like to offer a few thoughts on fire safety in your neighborhood.

After you've created a defensible space (basically a greenbelt) around your homes and other buildings; cleaned the leaves from your gutters; checked your fire extinguishers; and checked your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, what about your neighbor? There is always the problem-child neighbor who won't keep the brush on his side of the fence trimmed and is storing flammables alarmingly close to your property. What to do? Hypnotize them? "You are getting very sleepy, when you wake you will be filled with the desire to clean up your yard..."

There's no sure fire way to deal with this, but diplomacy is important. Developing a working relationship with your neighbors can pay big dividends when it comes to important matters such as fire safety. You may have to call your local fire department to help you. Remember, you're not just looking out for your property, you're looking out for your neighborhood. For that matter, what about your neighborhood? It's very important to be aware of your local topography and flora; that is, do you live on a steep hillside on in the valley

flats? Are there rolling, grass covered hills or is there thick manzanita 12 feet tall? All of these considerations will help you assess the fire danger in your area. If you live on a hillside, you need to be concerned about who and what is below you. This is because fire tends to gain momentum as it climbs a hillside. The people in the Oakland foothills can testify to this. If the properties below you are more susceptible to fire, you may need to increase the defensible area between you and them. Make sure you know the local road system in case some roads are ever blocked due to fire. For a better perspective, take a drive to nearby hills or come into the CCWG office to see an aerial photo of your property. This way, you'll create a more realistic analysis of whether or not your preparations are adequate.

To be a good neighbor yourself, consider your own property. If you're considering remodeling your home, are you planning on using fire safe materials such as stucco, tile or cement shingles, or metal roofing. Is the area around the propane tank clear of all flammable material? If you have a pond that a firefighting helicopter might use you save your house, is it clear of obstacles so the helicopter can get to it?

These are simple choices that can have a great impact during fire season. Common sense cannot be overemphasized when it comes to design, construction and maintenance of your home and property. Here at CCWG we are working with private and government agencies to promote fire safety. There are many people willing to help you with your planning, but possibly there is something you can do for them. You may be asked to participate in a study of your area of the watershed. There are multiple programs in play and one of the requirements is to gain access to various areas of the watershed. Any access to your property or assistance you might offer could really make a difference! Your help is greatly needed and appreciated.

If you can lend a hand to our efforts, I think you'll find it's fairly painless,

and who knows, you might even like it. I'll see you at the next meeting.

3. Grant Happy

CCWG has been very active in this regard during this calendar year. We submitted three CALFED grant requests including: Environmental Education, working through our partnership with Evergreen Middle School; Anadromous Fish Monitoring specific sites in Cottonwood Creek for water temperatures, water quality and fish life history; and one for a feasibility study for Channel Restoration. We will likely hear whether or not we were successful in the spring, 2002.

4. The Need for Access

One important factor to consider in implementing these grants: They will require access into the creek at various sites and will require the cooperation of willing landowners. The board is currently reviewing several landowner agreements from other watershed groups, to determine one that best suits our area landowners. If you have any questions or comments, please contact one of the directors or the coordinator.

5. New Board member Selected; Annual Meeting Info

Congratulations to Tom Harrington who was selected by the Board to fill the unexpired term of Jim Noble. Thanks to the other candidates that expressed interest in the position.

FYI on board positions: More information on the election and nomination process is found in the CCWG by-laws—By-laws are available for review in the CCWG office): See **ARTICLE VI NOMINATION AND ELECTION OF DIRECTORS, SECTION 1: DATE OF ELECTION** and **SECTION 2: NOMINATIONS OF DIRECTORS (A and B).** **The Annual meeting** will be the fourth Tuesday in January. Therefore, if you are interested in a

position on the Board, please contact one of the members.

6. To Burn or not to Burn? Part 1

By Emily Nicholson, Evergreen Middle School

In the winter of 2000, Evergreen Middle School had Bowman Volunteer Fire Department and CDF control burn the northwest section of their school campus. Part of this section is mapped as a fresh water seasonal wetland. This led to the question of whether or not we could control burn that part of the campus, so Fish & Game was contacted. Was it okay to burn our fresh water seasonal wetland? According to Fish & Game it is a great way to allow new vegetation to grow back. Burning will eliminate many of the non-native noxious weeds and allow native vegetation to grow back. Even though it allows new vegetation to grow again you still need to spread seeds or re-plant new vegetation.

Why did Evergreen decide to control burn their school campus? For many years students have wanted to do a control burn on the campus to eradicate the non-native invasive star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*). The weed made the campus look ugly and it invaded the entire campus, crowding out the native grasses that once grew on the land. In the spring of 1999, 8th grade students eradicated a non-native noxious weed called Klamath Weed (*Hypericum perforatum*); also known as St. John's Wort. This invasive weed is harmful to animals, including potentially fatal. If an animal has no other source of food it will eat the Klamath Weed. Students found the best way to eradicate this type of weed is by pulling it up by the roots. Other wise the weed will grow again. By the end of the school year the students had completely eradicated the Klamath Weed. Or so they thought. **Stay tuned for the rest of the story in the NEXT NEWSLETTER!**

7. News From the Past

Excerpts from Dottie Smith's book, History of Cottonwood, Now and Then. Enjoy!!

"1934: William Peterson came to town to operate the Cottonwood Feed Store which he eventually purchased. 1943: William Peterson, owner/operator of Cottonwood Feed Store (the building still stands behind Higby's Feed Store at 20825 Front Street) closed on July 22nd due to gas and feed shortages caused by the war. The store reopened in May of 1944."

This building is currently the home of Cottonwood Creek Watershed Group @ 3233 Brush Street. Stop in and say hello! We are always interested to hear from you as to speakers you want to hear from, as well as goals you would 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

October 23rd Watershed Actions in Tehama County--Vicky Dawley and RaeAnn Dubry, Tehama Co. RCD

November 27th Bill Burrows with Environmental Heritage

No December meeting (would have been Dec. 25th—Merry Christmas!)

FIRST Fire Safe Council Meeting: Nov. 1st, 10 am at CCWG office

ANNUAL MEETING OF CCWG: January 22, 2002—mark your calendars!!

Newsletter prepared by: Tricia Bratcher and Viena Swearingen. **Thank you to the following authors for their article and/or input:** Emily Nicholson, Dottie Smith, Phil Grossberger

