



RUSSIAN RIVER URBAN PESTICIDE MONITORING PROJECT

In the Russian River First Flush of 2002 we found the pesticide Diazinon exceeding concentrations that cause acute toxicity (mortality) for macroinvertebrates in 33 of 81 samples. Wanting to follow-up on these troubling results, your Keeper applied for a State Water Board grant and in 2004 a \$108,928 grant was awarded for the volunteer-based Urban Pesticide Monitoring Project. The project will survey the 18 pesticide products most likely to threaten our water quality during water and sediment sampling events in April/May, July and again with the first rains of Fall. We are employing some of the lowest detection limits ever used in our watershed to examine 26 urban creeks and to develop a comprehensive baseline picture of pesticide presence in urban waterways. Urban stormwater run-off is likely the largest source of pesticides in our watershed due to paved and hardened surfaces coupled with outdated stormdrain systems which efficiently carry any pesticides applied to the urban landscape.

We have many volunteer opportunities and provide training for you to work on field sampling teams, nutrient analysis, event center, data entry, reporting and data presentation, field kit preparation, transportation and other tasks. For more information on the Urban Pesticide Monitoring Project or to sign up visit our "Get Involved" page on our website – russianriverkeeper.org



RUSSIAN RIVER FISH SAMPLES CONTAIN ELEVATED MERCURY

Your Keeper participated in a Waterkeeper Alliance study of mercury levels in fish tissue catching six fish in August of 2004. The Russian River fish contained the second highest mercury concentrations among 60 Waterkeepers collecting samples in their waters across the US. Five smallmouth bass from the river near Wohler Bridge and one largemouth bass from the Benoist Pit in Riverfront Park all exceeded the 0.3 ppm EPA fish consumption advisory level for Mercury. Mercury sources include former mercury mines, geothermal vents, natural/man-made erosion of mercury rich soils and probably channel disturbances such as bank erosion and gravel mining. Mercury that enters the Russian River is exposed to high levels of organic material and nutrients and is converted to Methyl-Mercury an organic form that efficiently accumulates in tissue up the aquatic food chain to predatory fish such as bass.

Russian Riverkeeper is seeking additional funding to collect a larger sample set and survey the fishing population to determine the level of sustenance fishing and potential health risk. While the sample set is very small, 6 of 6 fish over EPA limits should warrant caution to people consuming fish from the Russian River. Women of child bearing age and children face increased risks so precaution suggests limiting consumption to one meal a month if possible.

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Friends of the Russian River is a non-profit coalition of river and conservation groups whose mission is to preserve, restore and enhance the natural systems of the Russian River, its tributaries, riparian corridors and uplands through citizen action, scientific research and expert advocacy.

Russian Riverkeeper is a project of Friends of the Russian River.

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"This is a struggle between short-term greed and ignorance and a long-term vision of building communities that are dignified and enriching and that meet the obligations to future generations."

— Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
President, Waterkeeper Alliance



WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE

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FIRST CREEKKEEPER ACADEMY GRADUATION IN JUNE

At press time, the first class of twenty-four selected volunteers has entered the inaugural Creekkeeper Academy and will graduate on June 28th as trained Creekkeepers! Creekkeepers will be working with Russian Riverkeeper and are committing to adopt a section of river or creek for two years. Volunteers will learn watershed dynamics, resource protection laws, violation documenting and reporting, biology, water quality monitoring and wildlife identification from local agency officials and watershed experts. The goal is to have local experts who will be the eyes and ears to document baseline conditions and changes as well as violations of river and wildlife protection laws. We are very fortunate to have Sharon Marchetti as our program director. Ms. Marchetti is well known for her community advocacy for clean and safe water in low-income neighborhoods of Sonoma County. In spring of 2006 we will host the next Academy for interested volunteers. We are grateful for program funding provided by an anonymous grant from the Community Foundation of Sonoma County.

5 ACRES BETWEEN GUERNEVILLE BRIDGES DONATED FOR PARK

The Horn Family has donated the 5-acre riparian parcel between the new and old Highway 116 bridges in Guerneville to the Russian Riverkeeper. "We sincerely thank Bertram and Steve Horn for the donation," said Riverkeeper Don McEnhill. "This property fills a need for a public river park in Guerneville and improves the visual gateway into town." The property has been overrun by invasive plants and is often used as a garbage dump, shooting gallery and homeless encampment. Plans for the parcel include removal of invasive plant species, restoration of native plants, a walking path with benches and some parking spaces using innovative methods to reduce stormwater pollution. An educational component will be developed showing lower river residents how to remove invasive plants and restore various native plant species. The benefits to property owners of natives over non-natives and exotics will be highlighted. We will be looking for volunteers to help with invasive plant removal later this summer. Training and equipment will be provided.

FOSS CREEK COMMUNITY RESTORATION PROJECT LAUNCHED WITH TROUT UNLIMITED

Foss Creek is almost entirely contained within Healdsburg city limits and is a typical urban creek suffering from polluted urban run-off, past channelization, culverting and general neglect. Foss Creek was a good Steelhead tributary that, as recently as this year, still has Steelhead trying to use the creek for spawning. The Foss Creek Community Restoration Project goal is to turn Foss Creek into a community asset from its present condition and is intended to parallel the development of the Foss Creek bike and hike trail. We were fortunate to be partnered with Trout Unlimited and their Redwood Chapter President (& FORR supporter!) Kent MacIntosh, a Healdsburg resident, who brings along many TU volunteers. The focus this summer will be on invasive removal and native plant restoration in the downtown portion of Foss Creek. All interested volunteers are invited to attend monthly meetings and join our e-mail group to keep up on meetings and volunteer workdays.

SONOMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS BREAKING OWN GRAVEL REGULATIONS

In February and again on May 10th, the Supervisors voted 4-1 to approve two Syar terrace mining pits that will set a new record for the number of violations to the county's own gravel regulations. Gone are setback requirements, the 2006 sunset of terrace mining, separators between pits, terrace mining acreage limits and other protections that resulted from years of litigation. It is likely that the Westside Association to Save Agriculture will file a lawsuit to stop further degradation of their wells and we will likely join the lawsuit to hold the four supervisors accountable for breaking their own rules. In

anticipation of litigation, the spinmeisters are working overtime with claims that we are going to run out of gravel. This is a position that displays a childish understanding of the economics of commodities such as gravel. If a shortage of gravel occurs, the price might rise temporarily and in response supplies will increase from non-river sources including imports. When supply increases again, the price falls. If claims of high transportation costs dooming imported gravel were true, it wouldn't be economical to export gravel to Solano and Marin Counties and beyond as occurs today. If the Press Democrat and the four Supervisors are so concerned about preserving local supplies they might start by restricting gravel exports out of our watershed!

VINO FARMS PROJECT ON HOLD

We are grateful to the County and Vino Farms for stepping back from the brink of a costly legal battle for all sides over the Vino Farms bank stabilization project. In October, Riverkeeper and Trout Unlimited presented a geomorphic evaluation of the Vino project, prepared by Philip Williams and Associates, to the Board of Supervisors. The presentation showed that the proposed project would create erosion up or downstream of the site as we had contended since 1999. The Board was not swayed except for Supervisor Reilly, who commented that he heard a clear "fair argument" under CEQA that the project had significant unmitigated impacts. As we prepared for litigation we received a call from the County that Vino Farms was interested in rethinking the project. We hope that soon a redesigned Vino Farms project will be coming forward that we can all agree on. We'll keep you posted.

SAVE THE DATE FOR THIS YEARS

RUSSIAN RIVERFEST!!

SEPTEMBER 18TH 4-7PM



Guest Speaker: Terry Tamminen, Cabinet Secretary for Gov. Schwarzenegger, former Santa Monica Baykeeper

BBQ Dinner, Sushi Tasting - Wild vs. Farmed Salmon

Great Live Music, Silent Auction

All down by the river at Burke's!



Photo: George Zastrow

Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey, Marty Griffin and Joyce Griffin were all "crowned" at our 2004 River event!

YES! I WANT TO BECOME A MEMBER OR RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP!!

PLEASE SEE YOUR ADDRESS LABEL TO SEE WHEN YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES!!

I would like to renew my FORR membership!!

Student \$15

Individual \$25 (includes spouse)

Family \$35 (please list all)

Guardian \$100

Advocate \$250

Defender \$500

Hero \$1000

Super-Hero \$2000

As a member, I will be joining and supporting the effective efforts of Friends of the Russian River and the Russian Riverkeeper to preserve, restore and enhance the Russian River. I will receive the regular Newsletter with information about upcoming events/issues and a variety of Member Benefits such as free river tours with the Riverkeeper!

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ _____ (Donations are tax deductible!)

I'd like to volunteer! My interests/skills are: _____

You may use my name for sign-on letters in our river advocacy efforts! (Please sign below.)

Signature _____

I'd like to donate equipment/supplies: _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Please write checks to: FORR & Mail to: FORR, PO Box 1335, Healdsburg, CA 95448

Friends of the Russian River
Russian Riverkeeper
PO Box 1335
Healdsburg CA 95448

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ADVOCACY UPDATES

SANTA ROSA IRWP

Discharge relocation studies underway to move wastewater discharge from Laguna to the Mainstem Russian somewhere between Cloverdale and Forestville.

MIXING ZONES

The Regional Water Quality Control Board is moving ahead with an EIR for developing a Mixing Zone policy for the Russian River. This is a possible prelude to mixing zone allowance for wastewater not currently meeting the California Toxics Rule to be discharged into our water supply.

LOW-FLOW

NOAA Fisheries hopes to have the draft Biological Opinion out later this fall. They will lay out their opinion of the flow regime they think is best for our Steelhead and Chinook Salmon.

WATER SUPPLY

SCWA recently gathered scoping comments on their new Water Supply and Transmission Project. The centerpiece of the project is a 24,000 acre-foot increase in SCWA's rights to water in Lake Sonoma.

FUTURE DATES

July 16th – Urban Pesticide Monitoring Project dry weather monitoring event

September 18th – Russian Riverfest at Burke's Canoe Trips!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

SIGN-UP AT RUSSIANRIVERKEEPER.ORG - "GET INVOLVED" PAGE!

Water Quality Monitoring: Foss Creek, Urban Pesticide Project, Russian River First Flush

Creek & Riparian Restoration: Foss Creek Community Restoration Project, Guerneville River Park Project

Events: Russian RiverFest on September 18th and prep work prior to the event