

Ridge Reporter

NEWSLETTER OF THE INVERNESS RIDGE ASSOCIATION

JUNE 29, 2014

President's Message

- Richard Blair

Greetings,

It is a honor and a pleasure to serve as president of the Inverness Ridge Association, as I feel that we live in one of the best places on earth. We have access to a great National Seashore, clean air and good water, very low crime, a highly educated population, and are blessed with gourmet food... I could go on, but you get the idea-it's amazing here. Upon becoming the president of the IRA, I thought about what further could be accomplished. I hope to invite IRA members to a beach parry or hike this summer. After all we live in a paradise and we should all be enjoying it together. Neighbors 'working things out' is a better policy than bringing disputes before the county planning, fire and police depts. (See David Wilson's essay).

The IRA seeks to both protect our neighbors through working on safety issues and to facilitate social interaction through the annual meeting and party. The IRA Board is made up of volunteers who attend regular meetings to discuss matters concerning Paradise Ranch Estate matters. These meetings are open to any members of the IRA who wish to attend. If you want to be informed where and when a meeting will be held, please contact me for details.

We work with another volunteer organization, the Paradise Ranch Road Advisory Board (PRERAB), which maintains our road system, including removing easily flammable roadside vegetation, clearing sight lines and removing hazardous trees. The head of PRERAB is now John Levy, who has a report within the newsletter.

The IRA board also maintains the siren to provide some warning in case of emergency (although it might not be heard by everyone) and getting other emergency systems improved, such as emergency liaisons. Our steep and curvy roads require good driving. Some drivers go too fast, others risk head on collisions by taking blind corners on the left. Please do what you can to make our road safe for ourselves and our wildlife neighbors, and tell your guests and contrac-

tors to be cautious as well.

One of the current issues that the IRA board and PRERAB is concerned about is dust from the dirt roads. They are going to try the application of a chemical compound which suppresses the dust, to a test section of a dirt road. The board has gotten approval from the county to test this on 1000 feet of road.

A safety concern is the use of fire to do vegetation burning. A board member, Robert Lundstrom, a retired professional fireman, has written a report about an event where lots of material was burned this March, with the permission of the fire dept and the Bay Area Air Quality Control Board. While the activity was allowed and legal, the board unanimously feel that the rules governing vegetation burning are

far too lax, and that more oversight from the fire department is needed. They directed me to write fire and county officials to tighten rules about such burning, which I did. Our forest is highly flammable, upslope and no place for poorly supervised burning.

I hope to put questionnaires in future newsletters to find out what IRA members feel about various community issues and perhaps include our *minutes* on a website or in emails blasts such as this newsletter. Please write me at my email address below if you have ideas or concerns that you would like to share with the IRA board, and I will read those emails at the next board meeting.

My email address is r@pointreyesvisions.com and my phone number is 415 663-1616 (answering machine).

I want to thank Diane Harley for her work on the previous issues of this newsletter, which was very timely and effective.



FOX ON MY BIRD FEEDER



Broadband & Cellular Update

-Bruce Baum

Recently George Lucas contracted with Zayo Communications to install a 22 mile fiber optic loop. Fiber allows data to travel up to about 1 gigabit per second (1 billion bits). The loop travels underground, using AT&T right of way underground ducts, from downtown San Rafael through Woodacre to Lucas Valley Rd. then Skywalker ranch and back to San Rafael. The Nicasio Neighborhood Association is currently in negotiations with Zayo, and a third party for fiber to the home, to connect to this loop for their Internet requirements. It appears that it will cost about \$2,200 per house for "the last mile" connectivity. IRA's problem is to get fiber out to Point Reyes/Inverness.



On another front, Steve Kinsey is leading Marin's efforts to bring high speed broadband Internet to West Marin. Marin has joined the North Bay/North Coast Broadband Consortium of Sonoma, Napa and Mendocino Counties. The Consortium has applied to the state Public Utilities Commission for a grant to fund further study and develop a plan to help bridge the digital divide of rural under served and underprivileged communities. Supervisor Kinsey formed Marin's North Bay Broadband Task Force to strategize our plan. Part of the plan would hopefully use FCC E-Rate grants for the underprivileged to help pay for schools connectivity. This will be a long process.

Horizon Internet Update:

Kevin Daniel, President of Horizon, informed me that Horizon Internet subscribers should upgrade their cable modems. Whether you're renting monthly from Horizon, or own, you need DOCSIS 3.0 models. This will increase throughput and solve many video buffering problems that we are having. Horizon in Point Reyes will make the free exchange for you or you can buy from them, or online a replacement cable modem. I updated mine, at 2 locations, a few years ago and it was a noticeable improvement.

He also mentioned Horizon is planning to roll out faster Internet service in the 4th quarter of this year. He anticipates that it will be an approximate 50% improvement over the current 4 tiers of service (2MB, 10MB, 15MB or 25MB). All good news for IRA members.

Verizon Antenna Update:

The proposed cell antenna for Pt. Reyes Hill is still crawling through the Federal Environmental Review pro-

cess. Don't cut the cords on your land lines yet!

For more information feel free to call or write Bruce Baum 415.459.5859 or b-baum@comcast.net

Wilson's Warbler

-Ed Stetson



Photo: Ed Stetson

Spring has passed but the joy of an April morning stroll through the Bear Valley Trail lingers. Its a refreshing stroll toward the big meadow next to the soothing sound of the small cascading trail side creek; the large Dogwood tree in bloom, and the tweety sounds of Wilson's Warbler, a small bird, mostly hidden in the thick creekside brush. Its soft somewhat rambling tweet permeates the air all long the creekside up to Divide Meadow, and beyond. A pause and after a few moments a bright yellow darting bird may be seen, just a glimpse. It's a Wilson's Warbler, a small plentiful songbird announcing the arrival of spring.

PRERAB report

- John Levy

Planned projects:

1. Summer (unpaved) road maintenance – grading, filling potholes, cleaning ditches; expect to start work in May or early June.
2. DVD patching of potholes – not much required this year; will fill a few spots.
3. Flashy fuel removal – cutting roadside vegetation. Inverness Garden Service has been awarded the bid for the flashy fuel project. Work is scheduled to start July 1st.
4. Clearing sight lines along the roads – cutting vegetation that is in the way of a clear view around corners – planned for August or September this year.
5. Test of "dust palliative" treatment of up to 1000 ft. of road. We will circulate a fact sheet about the material and the treatment before initiating this test.

Other activities:

We are starting planning for a renewal of the parcel

tax that pays for vegetation management along the roads; the current parcel tax expires in 2016; this means we need to have an election in 2015 among current voting residents in PRE to approve a renewal of the parcel tax. More information will be provided in a newsletter article.

We are looking into the differences between the names of the roads as we have posted on signs and what the Fire Department, County of Marin, and delivery services (UPS & FedEx) understand them to be. There may need to be some adjustments.

Budget for the next 6 months:

Unpaved road maintenance	\$15,000
Pothole patching	2,000
Flashy fuel cutting	9,000
Signs & miscellany (reflectors)	1,000

Water: Where Does It Come From...

-Ed Stetson



As of May 6th my seasonal rain gauge measurement totals just 24 inches and I expect vary little rain, if any, to close out our season ending June 30th. Our normal

rainfall is 37 inches. This drought condition prompted me to do a little research about our water sources.

Nearly all of us of here in Paradise Ranch Estates depend upon the North Marin Water District for water supply. A few of us use well water.

Paradise Ranch Estates water originates from the Mt. Tamalpais watershed and is transported by the Lagunitas Creek (also known as Papermill Creek) roughly twenty miles in length terminating at Tomales Bay near Point Reyes Station. A series of reservoirs are utilized along the way to collect and store water including Nicasio Reservoir.

There is a treatment plant at Point Reyes Station where our water is treated. Filters remove iron and manganese. Also, chlorine is added to keep the water pure in the pipeline. Then the water is pumped to a 100,000 gallon tank in Inverness Park, and then on up to our PRE subdivision storage tanks. We have four large tanks all situated along Drake's View Drive: Tanks #1 and #2 have a capacity of 25,000 gallons, tank #3 a capacity of 38,000 gallons, and tank #4 a capacity of 50,000 gallons. It is planned to expand tank #4 to a capacity of 82,000 gallons. All tanks are kept at three-quarters to one hundred per-cent capacity. A

pump system allows water to be pumped uphill from tank #1 to tank #4 when necessary. During emergencies water can also be pumped downhill.

Interestingly, the community of Inverness just north of us does not share our water system. It is not a part of the North Marin Water District. Inverness water is self sustaining and totally independent of Inverness Park water. Its water is collected in seven small catchment basins, about mid-slope, gravity fed to filter plants and distributed through two systems supplying different areas of the district and Seahaven. Additionally, there are two "low intakes" one each in First and Second Valley. These are like a subterranean dam, not surface water, in the bottom of those canyons at the lowest point possible, but above any housing.

Sources:

North Marin Water District web site.

Michael Meszaros, former Inverness Fire Chief.

Robert Clark, NMWD

"It's perfectly legal..."

-David Wilson

How often do we hear folks defending bad manners with this old bromide? Whether it's a wolf of Wall Street whose lawyers tell him just how far he can go without crossing the line, or the guy who studiously ignores what his dog leaves behind as they take their evening stroll, the theme is the same. If it's not clearly against the law, some folks simply do whatever they want.

Happily most of us on the ridge are more civilized. Nonetheless, it may not hurt to remind ourselves that some things, while perfectly legal, can make life much more challenging for our neighbors.

A few examples:

1. Fire Prevention: Few things are more annoying than spending thousands to cut and chip dead vegetation on one's own property, while adjacent owners allow their land to become a tinderbox. It's now nearly twenty years since the last fire storm, and we're told that the fuel build-up is now worse than it was in 1995. The fire department is enforcing defensible space rules, but says it can do nothing about trees and brush that are more than 100 feet from a building. It may be legal for owners to ignore this stuff, but it is hugely dangerous.

2. Noise: we're all annoyed by the roar of the motorcycles cruising Highway 1 on the weekends, but we can do little about it. What about our own self generated noise? Do our contractors have to saw and chip on weekends? When venturing outdoors to enjoy the warmth of spring, do we have to play music, or talk loudly, or let our dogs bark at every passing animal or person?

3. Traffic Issues: we all know that our roads are narrow,

dusty, twisty, and steep. And they are private, which means no one patrols them. This is where what's "perfectly legal" must take a backseat to common sense. We who live here (or our contractors) may know the roads and may feel safe taking them at supersonic speeds. Others do not, and can easily be creamed on a blind curve. As summer approaches the dust issue also becomes very real on the side roads. Finally there is the parking question. Too often visitors and contractors park in places where larger (especially emergency) vehicles cannot pass.

IRA is not a policeman, and we don't want to encourage people to rat on each other. These and similar issues are best handled by neighbors talking with each other, and with their contractors, renters and guests.

After all there are lots of things which are perfectly legal, but not very nice.

An Ingenious Way to Help West Marin's Non-profits

-Allan Bortel

Have you heard that we have our own currency? It is the brilliant idea of Point Reyes Station resident Richard Kirschman, husband of chronicler of Dogtown author Doris Ober.

I recently bought my 25 coins (worth \$3.00 each) for \$75 at Flower Power in PRS. I plan to give the plastic container to a local nonprofit such as West Marin Senior Services, CLAM or KWMR - and that organization will turn it in and receive \$40.

While the coins may be spent in many West Marin stores for \$3.00 each, visitors may take them home as beautiful souvenirs--and thus out of circulation.

You can spend them or ask for them in change from many merchants, including Perry's, Palace Market and Toby's.

Bill Carlin: In Memory

The Board of the Inverness Ridge Association is saddened to learn of Bill's passing. He was truly a wonderful asset to both the board as a director and officer and to our community as a whole. His wisdom and intellect were valued by all who worked with him on the board of the IRA.

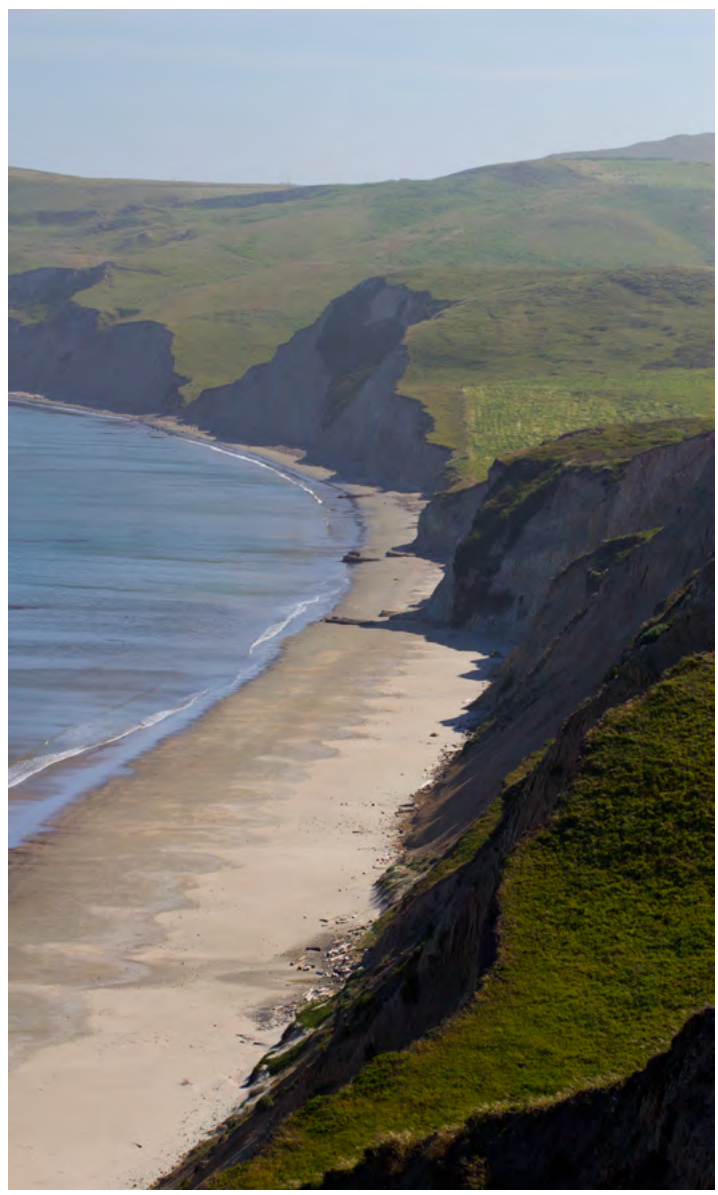
Roster Now Available

The Association continues to gather contact information for all PRE residents (special thanks to Richard Blair, Laurie Stetson and Bob Lundstrom, among others). This not only makes it easy for neighbors to communicate, but it is a critical part of emergency preparedness. Because websites are so easily accessible by the outside world, we decided

that contact information would not be posted to the web (other than for directors and others who have consented). However names, addresses and telephone numbers (most of this is publicly available) will be provided to residents who request them. E-mail addresses (which are not generally available to the public) will not be included.

If you would like a copy of the roster, if you would like your name to be kept off the roster, or if your contact information changes (especially your e-mail address), let us know!

contact: robertlundstrom@horizoncable.com



Drakes Beach -Photo Goodwin & Blair

Richard Blair: Photography & Graphic Design
Kathleen Goodwin: Editor
Robert Lundstrom: Roster Database