



Bennett Valley VOICE

VOLUME 30, NUMBER 6 BENNETT VALLEY HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION (BVHA) NOVEMBER, 2007

Public Review: North Slope Sonoma Mountain Ridge Trail Project A 4.25-mile public trail; Jack London State Park to Jacobs Ranch, with access to views, habitat, and landscape features of the Sonoma Mountain Region.

This proposed multi-use trail would provide a connection between an existing trail at Jack London State Park and a new public parking/trail staging area at Jacobs Ranch, including improvements to the existing driveway to Sonoma Mountain Road. This 4.25 mile trail will cross six different Open Space properties and 11 or 12 "wet" creeks, and will be for hikers, bikers, and equestrians, but not dogs.

The District has been designing the trailhead, access road improvements and trail corridor for the past year. The District General Manager has determined that with the mitigation measures proposed in the Initial Study there will be no significant adverse effect on the environment. When the District Board approves this proposed Initial Study, the project will be sent out to bid for construction. The District has submitted a proposal to California Coastal Conservancy to help fund trail construction. The plan is to match funding with private sector support and district funds. They hope to begin trail and trailhead construction in June 2008.

The proposed Initial Study is available for public review at the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District office (747 Mendocino Avenue, Suite 100, Santa Rosa, CA 95401), www.SonomaOpenSpace.org, Santa Rosa City Hall and the Sonoma Valley and Santa Rosa Central Libraries. This study contains 96 pages, plus 14 Appendices. Written comments on this Initial Study are to be addressed to Kim Batchelder, Natural Resources Planner, at the District office address (see above) by November 15th.

Kim Batchelder has agreed to make a personal presentation about this proposed trail project at the BVHA meeting, on Wednesday, November 14, at the Bennett Valley Grange Hall, the day before comments are due. Your comments may be given directly to Kim Batchelder the meeting. The meeting starts at 7:00 pm, but Kim will arrive about 8:30 pm, following another meeting.

BVHA Board Elections

Every year, three of the nine directors on the BVHA Board are up for election for a three-year term, with the results of the election counted and announced at the October "Annual Meeting", which was on October 17th. In this year's BVHA elections, there were four candidates running for the three positions, with only one of them, Frank LaCombe, being an incumbent. Both Tim Murphy, past President, and Helen Bates, past Treasurer, did not run for re-election. The nominating committee counting the votes at this last BVHA meeting were Jean LaCombe, Michael Cronin and Terry Lockwood. At this same meeting, President Tim Murphy announced that BVHA director Dan McCaskle was resigning for personal reasons. For this reason, all four candidates running for election are now on the Board: Fay Blair (by Board appointment, for the two-year vacancy), James K. Cobb, Frank LaCombe, and Richard Lukasko. (See Page 7 for the telephone numbers and email addresses for our new BVHA Board of Directors.)

BV WILDLIFE CALENDARS ARE HERE!!

The 2008 Bennett Valley Wildlife Calendar is truly a remarkable photo collection of wild animals and birds "caught in the moment" by our neighbors with quick shutter speeds.

They are now available for \$15 at Ace Hardware and Long's, (Bennett Valley Center on Yulupa) or by calling Sherry Parker at 528-6176. These Wildlife calendars may also be purchased at the Bennett Valley Fire Station every Saturday from November 17th through December 29th. We're talking to Whole Foods and Bennett Valley Cottage Gardens about possible calendar sales, too, but these have not yet been finalized.

Proceeds from the sale of these calendars go to the BV Volunteer Firefighters and the BV Grange.

Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee

By Karen Sommer

Goal: To help residents prepare themselves for unforeseen disasters or emergencies through:

- Information, classes, on-going education and preparation
- Helping neighbors establish groups organized for emergencies
- Identifying and establishing emergency entrance and evacuation routes to Bennett Valley in conjunction with BVFPD and establishing conditions under which their use may be restricted.
- Assisting neighborhood groups in locating sites for temporary shelters, identifying needed emergency equipment and supplies, then outfitting storage units with those supplies.
- Establishing emergency communication protocol to be used during a disaster.
- Establishing procedures for safe evacuation of people and animals, including large animals.
- Disseminating safety procedures to be used in the event of utility hazards and/or limitations to service

Organizational Structure:

- **BVEP (Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness) Steering Board reports to the BVHA (Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association) with technical oversight from the Bennett Valley Fire District personnel.**
- BVEP Steering Board would be made up of residents that have been CERT trained, representing different neighborhoods in the Valley. In addition, the BV Fire Chief or his designated representative would sit on this board in an advisory capacity.
- The Steering Board would keep account records for all funds raised and expenses, as authorized by and reported to BVHA.
- The Steering Board's primary functions would be to oversee standing committees that would:
 - 1.) *Provide information and outreach within the Bennett Valley area.*
 - 2.) *Define the geographical boundaries being included.*
 - 3.) *Raise funds to support its activities.*
 - 4.) *Coordinate training classes with the support of the BV Fire District,*
 - 5.) *Organize Emergency Preparedness Communities in BV*
 - 6.) *Organize Emergency Communications within BV with the Guidance of BVFPD*
 - 7.) *Establish safety procedures with the guidance of BVFPD.*

CERT TRAINING IN BENNETT VALLEY

At the last BVHA meeting, Karen Sommer gave a report about CERT training in Bennett Valley. There were 25 graduates last year and 12 graduates this fall, so the BV CERT team is now made up of 34 people. Jim Bray, through FEMA, the Red Cross, and the Volunteer Center, funded the BV CERT training in 2006, but the BV CERT team funded the training in 2007, using the \$25 fee from the CERT trainees, some approved emergency funds from BVHA (including funds raised from the sale of Bennett Valley t-shirts), volunteer help and a grant to pay for the CERT gear, through Super Urban Area Security Initiative (SUASI), a Bay Area organization.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) concept was developed and implemented by the City of Los Angeles Fire Department in 1985. They recognized that citizens would very likely be on their own during the early stages of a catastrophic disaster. Accordingly, CERT training was developed to give people the decision-making and practical skills to offer immediate assistance to those around them, while waiting for help. While people will respond to others in need without training, the goal of the CERT program is to help people do so effectively and efficiently without placing themselves in unnecessary danger. CERT trainees are expected to **hand over responsibility as soon as the First Responders arrive.** As a part of this, **one line of emphasis throughout the CERT training is participant safety.** A person who has taken the CERT course will be more inclined to make intelligent, informed decisions when faced with a disaster situation than someone who has not been trained and rushes in without adequate preparation or caution. Over time, it is hoped that Bennett Valley will have about 100 CERT trainees, to cover all the different neighborhoods and geographical areas.

At this meeting on October 17th, Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA) moved to adopt the Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness (BVEP) Committee as a standing committee of the BVHA Board. All finances would flow through the BVHA Board treasury, and the BVHA Board would authorize any BVEP activities, in advance, but would not run the program. At the next BVHA meeting, the BVEP committee will be presenting more clearly defined information on their basic structure and goals, their mission and the geographical boundaries they will cover (Bennett Valley "Study Area" vs. the Bennett Valley Fire District boundaries).

To supplement the BVEP goals delineated in the previous article, BVEP also wants to arrange for additional BV CERT training classes and more updated CERT training for those who are already certified, including CPR and first aid.

Bennett Valley Firefighters In Recent Southern Calif. Fires

By Bennett Valley Engineer Steve Gritsch

The San Diego, Ventura, and Los Angeles Counties were stricken with numerous fires, some accidental, some arson, all pushed by extremely fast winds and hot, dry weather. The Santa Ana wind event, a seasonal flow of wind that is a very fast, warm offshore flow originating as winds are pushed down from the mountains in a westerly direction, fueled the fires with gusts of up to 96 miles per hour, and sustained winds averaging 30 to 40 miles per hour.

In response, Sonoma County sent out four strike teams of engines, with about 90 Sonoma County firefighters and 23 local fire engines – a record number. “This is the first time I can remember ... four strike teams, wholly from within Sonoma County, being deployed out of the county at the same time”, said Rincon Valley Fire Chief Doug Williams, who coordinates the strike team efforts. “It’s a function of the fact we had three inches of rain.” he said. “If we had any inkling of us still being in fire season, we would not *(have been)* quite as generous.” *(Press Democrat, 10/23/07)*

Bennett Valley was part of the Strike Team led by Santa Rosa Battalion Chief Jack Piccinini and comprised of five Type 1 structure fire engines, including Bennett Valley’s Engine #7882, along with Santa Rosa Fire Department’s Engine 1, plus Type 1 engines from Bodega Bay, Sebastopol, and Schell-Vista. Staffing the BV Fire Engine was Lt. Matt Tognozzi, Engineer Patrick Tognozzi, and Firefighter Russel West. Engineer Steve Gritsch met up with the Strike Team Tuesday night after flying down to San Diego. The Strike Team left Sunday night (10/21) at midnight, and was staged in Riverside on Monday at 10:30 am. They stayed there until 3:00 pm, when they were dispatched to the Witch Fire base camp at 5:30 pm. At 6:00 pm, the Strike Team was sent out to Rancho Santa Fe, and was immediately in the middle of a firefight. They worked until 3:00 am Tuesday morning, and ended up saving 7 homes, fighting two structure fires which they stopped quickly in the attics before destroying the houses, and preserving two goats -excellent saves! They had a break from 3:00 till 5:00 am, when the winds picked up again, and they had to work to secure the small fires starting around them as the gusts blew embers everywhere.

Their first sleep came Tuesday, 10/23, as the team was able to sleep in a church for 3 hours, their first sleep in over 48 hours. The rest of the week was spent overhauling the remaining burning structures to eliminate the large number of 911 calls for smoke, and hitting hot spots and flare ups. The strike team

was released Sunday, 10/28, at 3:30 pm from base camp in Escondido, and arrived home at around 4:30 am Sunday morning.

Firefighter Ronnie Lakin and Engineer Danny Connelly, two other Bennett Valley firefighters, were also a part of another Sonoma County Strike Team, with a Gold Ridge fire engine Type 3 (wildland engine). This strike team was led by Windsor Battalion Chief David Cornelssen and included fire engines from Gold Ridge, Occidental, Rancho Adobe, Two Rock Coast Guard and Sonoma Valley fire districts. On Thursday, 10/25, most of the firefighters on this strike team were able to shake the hand of President Bush, but not all of them. Danny Connelly, one of the Bennett Valley firefighters with a Gold Ridge fire engine said, “He skipped me. I was back a little bit.” *(Press Democrat, 10/26/07)*

As a side note, everyone here wishes to thank San Diego as a whole, but especially the Village Church (Presbyterian) in Rancho Santa Fe on Paseo Delicias Street. The pastor there opened up a large hall, and secured cots, pillows, showers, and hot meals for several Strike Teams of firefighters. We called that place home for several days. Their generosity and hospitality were unreal, and even people who didn't know if they had lost their homes brought us supplies, like toothbrushes, toothpaste, bug spray, chapstick, and other things that are great to have. We met a large number of very grateful people down there, many who wanted to give us food, bring their kids by, and personally thank every firefighter. In base camp in Escondido, a kids’ tutoring group brought us all cards that their kids had made for us. It was really a special experience for all of us.

From the accounts in the newspaper, each of the Sonoma County strike teams had similar experiences of very grateful people in different areas. “During their time in Southern California, (Dan) Northern said firefighters have been overwhelmed by greetings and support from area residents thankful for the help. When his uniformed firefighters gathered for dinner in a restaurant close to their hotel, he said they walked in to a standing ovation from other patrons, deflected at least six offers to pay their dinner bills and walked out to a second ovation. “Citizens have been great down here. They can’t do enough for you.” *(Press Democrat, 10/28/07)*

Bennett Valley Cell Phone Tower

Verizon Wireless has not yet filed an application with Sonoma County Permit Resource & Management Department (PRMD) for their proposed BV Cell Phone Tower, but they’re telling people they expect to file the application in November. The PRMD permit approval process, including public hearings, takes about 12 to 18 months.

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

6161 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa
578-7761 (Non-Emergency Business Phone)

Board of Directors

Mark Richardson, President; Joseph Mazeau,
Vice-President; Marilee Jensen, Secretary;
Arnie Tognozzi, and Don D'Avanzo, Directors
*Board meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday
each month, 7:00 pm, at the BV Fire Station. .*

BENNETT VALLEY PAID FIREFIGHTING STAFF

Fire Chief: Andy Pforsich, 823-1084

24-hour Shift Personnel: Lieutenant Gabe

Stirnis, Engineers Kevin Burris, Matt Tognozzi

Daytime Firefighters, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm:

**Engineers Danny Connelly and Steve Gritsch,
Firefighter Ronnie Lakin**

*Supplemented and supported by many trained firefighting
volunteers. Three volunteers are paid to sleep overnight
at the Fire Station, for improved coverage and safety.*

One Auto Accident & Extrication on Grange Road/ BV Firefighters (From Press Democrat, 9/19/07)

“Two Bennett Valley firefighters arrived at a crash scene Tuesday morning to find a driver trapped in the wreckage of his burning car. “It was a grim situation.” Bennett Valley Fire Lieutenant Gabe Stirnis said. Firefighter Steve Gritsch crawled inside the car and covered the driver with a heat-resistant blanket to protect him from flames, which were going inside the passenger compartment. Gritsch also put an air mask over the man’s face because of the thick smoke, Stirnis said...CHP attributed the accident to excess speed. Stirnis and Gritsch, at their station about a mile away, were first to arrive...As Gritsch went in to help the driver, Stirnis tried unsuccessfully to pull the man through the window. Then, using extrication equipment from his truck, he began working to remove the driver’s door. When Santa Rosa firefighters...arrived, they put out the fire and helped Stirnis remove the door ...and begin medical treatment. “It was a good team effort...” Stirnis said.” [Editor’s note: Because of the heroic actions of Engineer Steve Gritsch and Lt. Gabe Stirnis, the accident victim lived for nearly a week, allowing his parents to travel here and be with him before he passed away.]

BV Firefighter Activities; Sept./October by Engineer Steve Gritsch

*Medical Aids/Rescues-13 *Structure Fires-4 *Vehicle Fires 1;
*Vegetation Fires – 3 *Vehicle Accidents/Extrications-12
*Strike Teams 2 (1 to Big Bear, 1 to San Diego) *Other-22
(public assist, hazardous conditions, etc.) **Total Runs: 57**
Fire season for Northern California was officially over two weeks ago, which is a good thing. At the same time, there was too much going on in Southern California, as reported on Page Three.

OUR GALLANT BV FIRE CHIEF, Andy Pforsich

“SR Man Saved From Fire, Neighbor, firefighter credited with rescue from smoke-filled apartment” (Press Democrat, 10/19/07)

“(Ernest) Bode, 57, was semiconscious by the time neighbor Brian Stibi observed smoke coming from an open window in the rear of the ground-floor apartment....When Stibi...opened the apartment door, great plumes of choking smoke billowed out, through they could see through the cloud that flames were spring up inside...Stibi used a fire extinguisher to douse the burning futon couch, then dropped to his hands and knees and covered his face with his shirt as he crawled to the rear of the apartment, feeling around for Bode...He found him seated kind of cross-legged on the floor. Though Bode was making groaning and grunting sounds, he did not respond to Stibi’s efforts to coax or drag him to safety. “He wouldn’t budge at all.” Stibi said... (Andy) Pforsich, the first firefighter on scene, quickly climbed into his gear. Practiced in fire rescues, he dragged Bode outside. The battalion chief, honored in 2005 by the Red Cross for pulling a 65-year old woman from a burning home, said Bode apparently had been smoking on the front couch at some point, perhaps starting the fire that smoldered for a period of time before it was discovered. He appeared to have suffered oxygen deprivation and smoke inhalation, and was taken by ambulance to Memorial Hospital. Stibi, a software engineer, also received treatment for smoke inhalation at the scene, Pforsich said.”

“Another Save!”

(Press Democrat, 10/21/07, Chris Smith column)

“Only in Hollywood do firefighters routinely venture alone in the burning buildings and carry fire victims to safety.

“Andy Pforsich, a battalion chief with the Santa Rosa Fire Department and chief of the Sebastopol area’s Gold Ridge Fire District [as well as chief of the Bennett Valley Fire District], may have set a record when he arrived ahead of the engines last week and pulled a man from a burning Santa Rosa apartment.

“This makes three saves for Pforsich, who once was commended by the governor for entering a burning house in Sebastopol off-duty and in his civvies, and rescuing a boy.

“Pforsich vows that if he gets any recognition for this latest save he will share it with the victim’s neighbor, Brian Stibi, who put the rescue in motion...”

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District really appreciates having Andy Pforsich as our Fire Chief, for these actions plus a great deal more, including his excellent administrative abilities and organization of personnel!

Marilee Jensen, VOICE Editor & BV Fire Board Director

CONTROLLED-BURN GUIDELINES

Bennett Valley Fire Protection District

Burning of residential or backyard waste, garden trimmings, leaves, landscape (tree branches, plants and grass) debris and cuttings is strictly prohibited and subject to enforcement and a fine from Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD). BAAQMD has a full-time inspector in Sonoma Co.

In the interest of public safety, Bennett Valley Fire Protection District provides the following information/guidelines:

- Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) regulations require that they be notified on an approved notification form prior to burning. Notification must be sent by Fax, mail (postmarked at least 5 days prior to burning), or electronically. Note that verbal notification to BAAQMD is no longer an acceptable compliance option..
- Burn only on permissive burn days, when weather conditions make it safe to do so. *(To determine if it's a burn day, call 1-800-792-0787. You are in the Northern Zone of the BAAQMD, east of Hwy. 101. Notify County Fire Dispatch prior to burning, at 565-1700.)*
- No burning is allowed before 10:00 am, and you may not add anything to the fire after 3:00 pm. All fires must be completely extinguished by sunset. Allowing materials such as stumps or trees trunks to smolder after sunset is prohibited.
- **Do not** burn if there are winds in excess of 10 mph or the heat is above 90 degrees.
- You may burn *only* the byproducts of your agricultural business, e.g. dry prunings, vines, etc. You may not burn stakes, trash, etc. Materials must be dry and arranged to promote rapid combustion. It is **strictly prohibited** to burn treated/painted wood, household garbage, plastic materials, shop waste, wood waste, demolition debris, oil filters, tires, or tar paper.
- Fires must be under the control of an adult at all times until the fire is dead out, with shovels and other tools nearby.
- Have at least five gallons of water at the burn site; a hose connected to a water supply is preferable.
- Keep fire small and manageable—maximum allowed pile size is 4 feet in diameter.
- Keep fire a minimum of 50 feet from combustibles, property lines, structures, overhead wires, vehicles, etc.
- Failing to follow regulations and guidelines and/or an escaped controlled burn may result in your having to pay one or more of the following: A hefty fine (minimum \$1,000), cost of damage to anyone

else's property, costs incurred by all agencies responding to the fire, including but not limited to equipment and labor costs, damaged equipment repair/replacement.

- **Hazard permits for materials exceeding 5 cubic yards and inaccessible by automobile or chipper, leaving no other disposal option other than burning, will be issued by Bennett Valley Fire Protection District,** following their inspection for fire safety and air quality compliance prior to the burning.
- **If you have trees with Sudden Oak Death which need some resolution and/or change, be sure to contact the BV Fire Protection District before taking any action.** These trees should not be moved to any other location.

Helpful Resources; Sudden Oak Death

(From the Press Democrat, 10/27/07)

- **Sudden Oak Death Task Force:** Maintains a comprehensive Web site, including photos, to help identify the pathogen in various plants.
www.suddenoakdeath.org
- **Fire Safe Sonoma:** Maintains a Web site with a lot of information about managing properties with sudden oak death. www.firesafesonoma.org
- **For information about SOD by phone:** Lisa Bell, SOD coordinator for the UC Davis Office of Cooperative Extension, at 565-2050.
- **For fire risk issues or information about grants:** Caerlon Safford at 565-6070 or email cstafford@sonoma-county.org.

How Safe Are We, in BV/Sonoma Co.?

By Sidne and Blaine Goodwin, 5732 Bennett Valley Road
We wanted to share the news that we were burglarized at 9:00 am on September 4, after we left for work. The guy who broke in was seen by our neighbors, the Warwicks, as he tried to figure out their gate keypad - I guess they were next on his list. The Wagners, across the street noticed a vehicle parked in their driveway for too long and wrote down the license number. We were able to give the sheriff a description of the guy, his car, and his license number, thanks to our neighbors! Apparently he's a known criminal who lives in Sonoma and our combined info may help the sheriff pick him up. The sheriff who responded to our 911 call said that we needed better security at our house, such as a locked gate, which we're implementing. But the best thing we have going is neighbors who pay attention to who is out there! I was advised to call the sheriff any time I saw a suspicious vehicle parked near our house. Possibly an article in the BVHA VOICE would be helpful to those in our community who still feel "safe." As the sheriff pointed out, Sonoma County is not what it used to be.

CHANGE YOUR LIGHTBULB. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

By Sierra Club (sierraclub.org/twopercent) Distributed at *Wild Birds Unlimited*, 71 Brookwood Ave., Santa Rosa.

Replacing your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents (CFLs) seems like a small thing. But it can have a major impact. If every American household replaced just one standard bulb with a CFL, we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, cut annual energy costs more than \$600 million, and prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to 800,000 cars (www.energystar.gov).

But changing your lightbulb is also a symbol of the changes that must be made at every level—by individuals, government, and industry—to solve global warming. Scientists say we can stabilize the climate if we cut carbon emissions 80 percent by 2050, or 2 percent a year, by increasing the energy efficiency of cars, buildings, and appliances, and generating more of our electricity using wind, solar, and other renewable power.

Ultimately, the CFL coil is the shape of the future, a sign of energy independence, a new economy fueled by clean energy, and proof that taking individual action and responsibility can make a difference—especially when it's multiplied by millions demanding change. And once you've changed your lightbulb, or better yet, replace five commonly used bulbs to compact fluorescents, there are many more ways to help.

1. Drive Smart Check your tire pressure monthly and keep your tires properly inflated. Americans driving on under-inflated tires waste 4 million gallons of gas a day. When you can, walk bike, or take public transit. And make your next car a hybrid.

2. Turn down the heat. For every degree you lower your thermostat during the winter, says the Department of Energy, you can save 3 percent on your bill.

3. Eat locally grown food. The food you eat travels an average of 1,500 miles from field to plate, so eating food grown close to home burns less fuel.

4. Button up your house. Start with caulking and weather-stripping on doorways and windows. And check to make sure you have adequate insulation.

5.) Eliminate vampire power. Many electronic devices, like TVs and computers, are on standby and consume electricity even when they're off. Unplug them or use a power strip that you can turn off and on.

6. Support clean, renewable energy. Renewable energy sources like wind and solar can reduce our dependence on coal and oil. Call your power company and urge them to generate more renewable energy.

7. Monitor your carbon footprint at climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/. Calculate your emissions and pledge to reduce your carbon footprint.

Bennett Valley Mountain Lions

(From Press Democrat, 10/11/07)

This newspaper article stated that after 10 years without incident, the Sheehan family on Crane Canyon Road had lost 10 sheep to mountain lions since May, five of them in October. "While no one witnessed the attack, game officials are certain it was by a mountain lion...More often than not, permits to hunt mountain lions (*only when they are endangering domestic animals or people*)...do not yield results..."

Lights For Stargazing

(From the Press Democrat, 10/28/07)

From an article by Dorie Turner, Associated Press "Sharon, GA –The most important rule at this remote vacation spot is simple: no white light. Even a sliver of the pupil-dilating rays coming from the window of a cabin at Deerlick Astronomy Village could ruin a neighbor's view of the Milky Way. The 96-acre village...in eastern Georgia is designed for amateur stargazers looking for total darkness and wide-open spaces...There are only two other similar communities...one in Florida and one in Arizona...the demand for dark skies is soaring as suburban sprawl produces more light pollution...Deerlick property owners are vigilant about white light, which dilates pupils for about half an hour and makes it tough to see anything in the dark. Homes only have outdoor lights that are a dim red—a color that doesn't affect the eyes the same way as white light..."

Sonoma County Rural Roads;

Strategic Planning, by Helen Bates

The short-term and long-term projections for the maintenance of rural roads, which include all roads in BV, are not good. In late September, Town Hall meetings were held by the County in 5 cities to inform the public of the **Sonoma County Strategic Planning process**. The Analysis Phase Final Report, Summary of Findings, dated 11/1/06, was distributed, which included an assessment of County Roads & Bridges, as follows: "*The average "pavement condition index" (PCI) rating for minor roads is approximately 37, or "poor", with over two-thirds reported as poor or failed. Over the five-year planning horizon, annual expenditures for road repair and maintenance need to more than double just to mitigate further decline.*" Sonoma County is struggling to establish priorities as the cost of providing services are outpacing revenues. The largest amount of expenditures (Public Safety, Health & Human Services) use up almost 70% of the total. Public Ways & Facilities, which includes roads, is about 3% of the total. BV needs to stay involved as this **Strategic Planning** process continues.

**Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association
(BVHA) Board Of Directors**

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 - **BVHA VOICE Editor** – Marilee Jensen, 576-0405
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 - **BVHA Nominating Chair, 2007** – Jean LaCombe, 585-3482, spinningsnake@peoplepc.com

Brief Summary of BVHA Meetings

September 12

At this meeting, Valerie Brown, our First District Supervisor, and Phil Demery, Public Works Director, made presentations to an audience of around 100 people. Supervisor Brown started the meeting by talking about the General Plan, then turned the meeting over to Phil Demery, who just recently started as the Public Works Director for Sonoma County. One major concern, the Sonoma Mountain Road closure, was discussed in a letter from Supervisor Brown, printed in the September VOICE. What follows is a quote from the last paragraph of that letter, *"We are extremely frustrated and disappointed to find ourselves in the position of being unable to move forward with the reconstruction project [for Sonoma Mountain Road]. However, without the [State] funding from Prop 1B we have no way to pay for the project. I want to assure you this remains a high priority for me..."* Apparently, the Prop 1B funding is still not available. A rough road for emergency fire access has now been installed in this closed area of Sonoma Mountain Road, as a temporary solution. Three other new things of interest which came out in this meeting concerned 1.) an audit the county recently had done on the Public Works Dept., to help identify needed changes, 2.) the considerations necessary for maintaining 1,400 miles of county road without sufficient funding, and 3.) Phil

Demery's agreement to personally come out to examine the Bennett Valley roads during the rainy season, along with Rob Silva, the Public Works Maintenance Coordinator for this area. The presentation went on long enough and people had a number of individual questions for both Supervisor Brown and Phil Demery, so the decision was made to not have a follow-up business meeting .

October 17

- President Tim Murphy announced the next BV Road Clean-up Day, November 3, 8:30 am. A coordinator is needed for this BV clean-up effort, twice a year.
- The successful BV T-shirt fundraiser had about \$1,500 in expenses, \$2,700 in income, and thus \$1,200 in profit, for BV Emergency Preparation. Thank-you Bobbie Blair & Suzanne Dougherty!
- BV Calendar 2008 received 90 photo submissions of BV Wildlife. A team of judges chose the 14 final photos. See Page One for more calendar detail.
- All of the Board members were in favor of the Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee being a standing committee of the BVHA Board. See Page Two for further detail.
- President Tim Murphy received a letter from First District Supervisor Candidate David Reber, asking for an opportunity to speak to the BV community. It was noted that the election will be in June, 2008, so the March meeting was selected as a good time to invite him and possibly Supervisor Valerie Brown. Tim Murphy will respond to his letter, accordingly.
- Tim Murphy stated that next month would be better to work on the BVHA bylaw revisions, after looking at specific areas and other non-profits' bylaws. Eric Burns mentioned a particular attorney whom he thinks would be very useful, and volunteered to pay him for a few hours of initial review of the bylaws. It was decided that the Board would make the first effort to revise the bylaws.
- See Page One for the BVHA Election results and the director update. None of those elected or appointed were present at the meeting, consequently account signature cards, handouts and selection of officers will take place at the November meeting.

Board of Directors' Tentative Agenda

November 14th, 7:00 pm, BV Grange

- Selection of Officers, Distribution of Handouts
- Presentation by Bennett Valley Emergency Preparedness Committee (BVEP) on Their Mission, Structure and Goals of the BVEP Committee and Sub-Committees, Geographical Boundaries and Communities Within That Area.
- Bylaws Revisions
- Future BVHA Meetings; dates/speakers/themes
- Speaker, Kim Batchelder, 8:30 pm, Sonoma Co. Open Space District, re: Review of Proposed Trail Project.

BENNETT VALLEY COMMUNITYCALENDAR

Remember to Mark Your Calendars.

- 1.) **Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association (BVHA):** Next meeting, Wednesday, Nov. 14 7:00 pm, BV Grange Hall. See Page Seven for tentative agenda.
- 2.) **Bennett Valley Fire Protection District:** The Board of Directors meets the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00 pm, at the Bennett Valley Fire Station. Please call 823-1084 to verify meetings in advance.
- 3.) **Taylor Mountain Exploration, LandPaths, Sunday, December 2nd, 10:00 am-2:00 pm.** Moderate hiking; uneven footing; 3-4 miles; BYO picnic lunch; call 524-9318.
- 4.) **Sonoma County Board Of Supervisors meets every Tuesday (except on weeks when there is a legal holiday)** at 575 Administration Drive, Santa Rosa. Valerie Brown is the Supervisor for our First District. You may call her or Lynn Morton-Weil, her Aide, at 565-2241, if you have any questions or concerns.

Thanks For Helping With BV Clean-Up Roads Day!

Dave & Sandy Sandine, Bob & Karen Andersen, Bobbie Blair, Norm Boling, Mike & Patty Hickey, Darryl & Linda Huismann, Frank LaCombe, Tim & Janice Murphy, Lu Schultz, Ron Simpson, Bob & Sharon Sorani, and Mike & Maggie Treinen were the residents who came out on November 3rd, at 8:30 am, to pick up the BV litter along the roads. **Jim Alfieri** took care of picking up signs and trash bags at the Sonoma County Public Works yard on Airport Blvd., after **Tim Murphy** provided Public Works staff with the BVHA permit # for our clean-up day. Jim asked us to also give a **BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE to Valerie Kneit**, who works for Sonoma Co. Public Works and is always very helpful in arranging for these litter pick-ups. **Sandy Sandine** had the unusual unexpected task of changing the date on our BV Clean-up Day sign, at the last minute, which she did with great commitment and innovation. **THANKS SO MUCH TO ALL OF YOU!**

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Bennett Valley Homeowner's Association
P.O. Box 2666, Santa Rosa, CA 95405

Website: www.bennettvalley.org

SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF BVHA: *"To promote and preserve the rural character and natural environment of Bennett Valley, serve as an open forum for Bennett Valley community participation and provide a bridge for communication between government agencies and the Bennett Valley community"*

Get Your Wildlife 2008 BV Calendar!
Support Proposed 4.25 Mile BV Trail