



## **A Word from the Riverkeeper**

Dear River Friends,

I'm sitting in my office, it's mid-July and it's cloudy outside and I'm freezing cold – did summer take a vacation? Two days ago a few thousand of us were at Veterans Memorial Beach in Healdsburg at the Healdsburg Water Carnival. We all had a great time and it was a picture perfect sunny day on the River. I don't think foggy weather would have dampened the enthusiasm of the crowd celebrating the Russian River, as anytime is a good time to celebrate the River!

Thanks to our members donations, we had some recent wins for a healthy Russian River to celebrate that I would like to share with you. In the past few months Riverkeeper:

- Launched the CA Swim Guide smart phone app in partnership with Waterkeeper Alliance to keep beachgoers informed about the cleanliness and safety of recreating at local beaches that you can download from our website
- Settled a major lawsuit with Granite Construction in Ukiah that will generate up to \$400,000 for river restoration and pollution reduction projects in the Ukiah reach of the River
- Worked closely with California Coastkeeper Alliance and other California Keepers to get authors to pull a horribly written Recycled Water Act of 2012 bill that would have weakened protections regulating the use of treated wastewater
- Educated another group of high school students at two schools on polluted urban run-off culminating in the students building two rain gardens and a bioswale to actively reduce pollution

These victories and many others would not have been possible without your support. We thank our recent donors and encourage you to renew your membership, make a contribution, be a sponsor for the Riverfest, volunteer for river restoration projects or make an

ongoing monthly contribution to Riverkeeper.

At Riverkeeper our job is ensuring that there are endless summers filled with fun and celebration in a healthy Russian River. Strong community support is vital to our work, so your support ensures Riverkeeper will continue to succeed in our work for a healthy Russian River and strong community.

Thank you for your continued support and on behalf of everyone at Russian Riverkeeper – Have a wonderful summer and see you at the River!

Warmest Regards,

*Don McEnhill*  
**Russian Riverkeeper**



*Group paddle with Rivers for Change during their "12 Rivers in 2012" campaign. They paddled 12 critical California rivers from Source to Sea to engage communities in stewardship and conservation of the state's rivers*

## Gravel Mining Update

### *Riverkeeper Settles on Granite Kunzler Pit Mine Project*

It's not public news yet but Riverkeeper has reached a settlement with Granite Construction in Ukiah in our lawsuit that challenged Granite's 65-acre Kunzler Ranch open pit gravel mine proposal at the confluence of the Russian River and Ackerman Creek. Riverkeeper was concerned about potential impacts on endangered fish and increased sediment pollution in the River. In January, Mendocino Superior Court Judge Benke ruled against Riverkeeper and co-plaintiff Masonite Corp. Riverkeeper attorney Stephen Volker appealed that decision and Granite and Riverkeeper agreed to a mediation process. The mediation process yielded a positive result for the River as Granite will set aside a per ton fee that will generate several hundred thousand dollars for river restoration in the upper Russian River in Ukiah. To Granite's credit they have also committed to actively work with NOAA Fisheries to ensure the project design addresses any impacts to endangered salmon or steelhead. We appreciate Granite's willingness to work through our differences and the settlement will reduce project impacts on the Russian River and our fish and provide for a large restoration fund to improve conditions for our fish. We continue to work through the settlement process with Syar Industries on their Alexander Valley mining proposal and hope to have good news to share with you soon on that project.



### ***Hanson Gravel Pit Restoration Project***

Last fall Riverkeeper met with Michael Beck from Endangered Habitats Conservancy (EHC) who was working with Hanson Aggregates to investigate methods to restore rather than just reclaim the old Kaiser gravel pits along Eastside Road near Healdsburg. The Hanson property includes almost 220 acres of former pits and 130 acres of are surrounding the pits. These pits, if restored properly, could restore a major missing habitat element for endangered salmon, off-channel habitat. After decades of in-stream and open pit mining the middle reach from Healdsburg to Wohler Bridge is less than 25% of it's former width with every former meander, creating habitat that flooded each winter and provided an abundance of food for salmon. Today this missing habitat has been cited as one of the most critical "limiting factor" in Russian River salmon recovery, far greater than flows! Despite Riverkeeper's long history of opposing gravel pits, these pits offer the only major means to restore off-channel habitat so Riverkeeper has partnered with EHC to guide this project and provide project information to the public and bring community feedback to EHC. The first step is an in-depth feasibility study to look at a range of alternative restoration designs, we will keep you posted as this project moves ahead.

## Riverkeeper Stewardship Park Update



Riverkeeper Stewardship Park is very busy preparing for construction later this summer on this model of river stewardship and interpretive educational facilities. Final adjustments are being made to plans that will guide the creation of 10 interpretive stations to educate the community and students about river ecology and stewardship. Later this summer the Park will be temporarily closed and fenced off during construction for security and safety.

Work will proceed in accordance with the plan developed by the highly-regarded landscape architects Lutsko and Associates. There will be several interpretive stations, a river overlook and a young steward's interactive watershed model. A bioswale has already been built that will filter runoff from the county parking lot so that pollutants will not reach the river. The Park's paths will be rebuilt to enhance usability by people with disabilities while using environmentally friendly paving. Our current wood chip surfaces will be replaced using decomposed granite bound with natural pine resin rather than petroleum based asphalt.

We have seen substantial success in our invasive weed eradication efforts. We have eliminated Bermuda grass in several sections, and we are removing ivy, vinca, weedy grasses and Himalayan blackberries, which we are replacing with the delightfully tasty native blackberries. Even though it is native, we are removing poison oak for the safety of visitors and volunteers. We use straw for mulch in the planted beds – it is attractive, retains moisture, suppresses weeds and enhances the soil as it breaks down.

In their fourth year, the Sonoma Youth Ecology Corps crews are working to clear the last areas of invasive plants and sheet-mulching the areas to prepare for planting and suppress new invasive plant growth. This fall will be fun and interesting – we will plant thousands of native plants that have been grown specifically for the Park, mostly from native Russian River plant seeds. We are always looking for additional volunteers and you can learn a lot about native plants and our river at the same time.

Wednesday mornings from 8:30-11:30 remains our regular volunteer time. Please come to visit so we can give you a tour. Or, if you like, visit self-guided – the park is open to the public during daylight hours. 16153 Main St. Guerneville, located on the north bank of the Russian River directly upstream of the pedestrian bridge. Email Park Manager Victoria at [VictoriaWikle@usa.net](mailto:VictoriaWikle@usa.net) for more information or visit our website.

## Harry and Maggie Wetzel Native Plant Garden

On May 26th, after hundreds of Riverkeeper volunteers worked for almost three years to create it, the Harry and Maggie Wetzel Native Plant Garden was dedicated! The Wetzel Garden features over 80 species of local native plants attractively grouped to encourage residents and businesses to bring native plants into their gardens and landscaping. Katie Wetzel, one of Harry and Maggie's children, came up with the concept of a memorial garden in her parents honor. Supervisor Mike McGuire, then Healdsburg Mayor, introduced your Riverkeeper to Katie and they decided a native plant garden would provide a new resource to local gardeners, benefit native wildlife and serve as a very fitting memorial to the Wetzels, who were great philanthropists and community supporters and were gardeners of community spirit and giving. Along with providing food and shelter for native wildlife, native plants do not need fertilizers, often don't need irrigation or regular maintenance and can save you both time and money in your garden—all while helping the River!



### Volunteer to help restore Foss Creek

Help to improve wildlife habitat and the watershed!

We meet at 8:30 a.m. in Healdsburg at the location noted on the schedule and work until 11:00 a.m. Riverkeeper provides tools, gloves and equipment and volunteers need to wear sturdy shoes and long pants. All Saturdays unless noted. More info on website.

August 18th - Meet at Matheson St and Railroad tracks

September 1st - Meet at West Plaza behind the Bear Republic

September 15th - Meet at Wetzel Native Plant Garden at 3 North

October 6th - 6th annual Foss Creek Cleanup - Meet behind Bear

Republic Brewing Co



## What a Great Russian River Race!

Our 2nd Annual Great Russian River Race was a great success



There were over 350 racers, over 800 at the post-race party and the event brought out one of the biggest crowds in years to Veterans Memorial Beach to open the summer season on the River. Thank you to all the Racers, Sponsors, Donors, Volunteers and Party-Goers for another successful Race! We look forward to producing the 2013 Great Russian River Race and holding an even better community event next year – thank you for your support!

**Save the date for next year: May 11, 2013**



### Clean Campus Clean Creeks

Thanks to Healdsburg & Cloverdale High Schools for participating in our second year of the Clean Campus Clean Creeks program! The goal of this project is to educate students and school officials on the issue of stormwater pollution and empower them to address the issue on their own campus through building several rain gardens to intercept and clean up stormwater. The students analyzed their campus using the Clean Campus curriculum, found pollution sources and fixed them by constructing rain gardens and bioswales. At Cloverdale High a hybrid concept the students came up with and named "drain gardens" is now employed which is a smaller scale rain garden surrounding a stormdrain.

←To the left is the Rain Garden in action. By cutting the curb, the dirty water that would normally flow into the storm drain flows into the garden and is naturally filtered. This is low-impact development in action!

## New Riverkeeper Staff & Board Member

Russian Riverkeeper is pleased to announce our newest staff member, Jordan Senia, and Board member, Michael Volpatt.

**Field Program Technician** - Jordan Senia first became interested in rivers upon learning about the plight of the Mekong River Delta while studying abroad in Southeast Asia. Since then, he has worked to restore habitat along multiple rivers and creeks throughout California. Prior to joining Russian Riverkeeper, he sought out experiences that would provide him with a sound background in restoration ecology, curriculum design, organizational strategy, fundraising and volunteer management. He plans to use these skills to find innovative ways to bring people closer to the Russian River.

**Board of Director**- Michael Volpatt lives in Guerneville and is the co-founder of Big Bottom Market, a unique gourmet deli and marketplace. He is also the owner of Larkin/Volpatt communications, a full-service public relations firm serving clients in the technology, publishing and healthcare industries. Somewhat “new” to Sonoma County, Michael has gotten very involved in working to make his town even more beautiful than it already is. While he splits his time between Guerneville and New York City, he is an advocate for the Russian River and loves living and working in Sonoma County.

We're thrilled that they are committed to sharing their experience with us and helping us grow our organization!

### Are you a member of Russian Riverkeeper?

Do you care about clean water? Do you enjoy swimming and fishing in the Russian River? Do you wish there was a group out there that was a voice for the River, ensuring our agencies enforce the laws to keep our River clean and safe, with enough water in it for recreation and fish?

As a non-profit, we rely on our membership and donations from the public to help fund the important work we do. Renew or become a member today!

### We Need Your Donations!

Riverkeeper needs donations more than ever to focus on protecting the River. In today's financial climate, funding sources for non-profits are drying up and we rely on our members so that we can keep up this important work. Please donate to keep us looking out for your River!

### Russian Riverkeepers New Website and Facebook Page

Please have a look at our comprehensive new website at [www.russianriverkeeper.org](http://www.russianriverkeeper.org). Join our Facebook page for up-to-date announcements and interesting links to all things water!

### Volunteers Needed for the Riverfest!

Each fall we host the Russian Riverfest - a day of food, music & wine under the redwoods. We couldn't do it without our volunteers, who help with everything from set-up, take-down and everything in between! If you'd like to volunteer, please contact Kate at 433-1958 or email [kate@russianriverkeeper.org](mailto:kate@russianriverkeeper.org).



SAVE THE DATE!  
SATURDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 22, 2011  
4:00- 7:00

Riverfest tickets on sale at [www.russianriverfest.eventbrite.com](http://www.russianriverfest.eventbrite.com)

### Board of Directors

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### Staff

Don McEnhill Jr.  
*Executive Director  
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Kate Wilson  
*Executive Assistant*

Victoria Wikle  
*Park Project Director*

Jordan Senia  
*Field Program Technician*

Russian Riverkeeper  
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Fax 433.1989

[www.russianriverkeeper.org](http://www.russianriverkeeper.org)  
[info@russianriverkeeper.org](mailto:info@russianriverkeeper.org)

## THANK YOU!

The generosity of Russian Riverkeeper's supporters makes it possible to continue our vital work in the Watershed. We thank all of the individuals & organizations who contributed from June 2011-July 2012. We could not do this work without you!

\*These generous supporters have made a multi-year pledge to Russian Riverkeeper

### MAJOR BENEFACTORS

\$20,000 +

Anonymous Donor of  
Community Foundation  
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Dawn Ranch Lodge, Fitch  
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Hafner Vineyard, Inman Family  
Wines, Jabbar Law Firm, PG &

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River Getaways, Russian River  
Watershed Clean-Up, Santa  
Rosa Community Market,  
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Russian Riverkeeper  
P.O. Box 1335  
Healdsburg, CA 95448

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### FUTURE EVENT DATES

Riverkeeper Park Volunteer Workdays Every Wednesday 8:30 -11:30 a.m.  
Foss Creek Community Restoration Project - see Volunteer Dates inside  
September 22nd - Russian Riverfest - tickets on sale online!  
For information on weekly workdays visit our website  
Questions? Call 433-1958.

### RIVERKEEPER WISH LIST

We are in need of the following items in good working condition:  
Auction items for Riverfest (Wine, Vacation rentals, tours, etc.) • Newer PC computer or laptop •  
Paddles, life vests • Digital Cameras • First Aid Kit • GPS devices  
*Donated items are tax deductible!!*

### ADVANTAGEOUS WAY TO SUPPORT RRK

The Russian Riverkeeper relies on donors' support to sustain our commitment to the Russian River Watershed. Gifts of appreciated stock are an easy and beneficial way to make a donation. You receive credit for the full market value of the gift, and you avoid capital-gains tax. If you would like to make a donation please call or have your broker call us at 433-1958.

**Please consider making a gift of stock today!**