

# SALT RIVER WATERSHED NEWS

Restoring a historic waterway while preserving an agricultural heritage

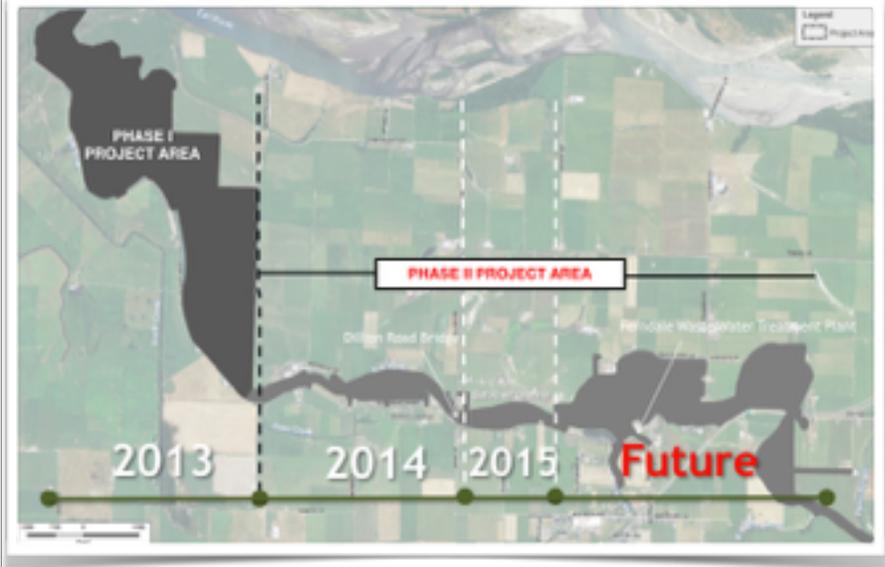
## Who are we?

The Salt River Watershed Council (SRWC) board includes: Dennis DelBiaggio (chairman), Denver Nelson (vice chairman), David Carr (treasurer), Carol Lee (secretary), Ann Barbata, Don Hindley, Jay Parrish, Jay Russ, Joe Russ and John Vernon.

## What is our purpose?

Once the restoration project is completed, it is the SRWC's responsibility to:

- achieve a balance between agricultural use and environmental concerns
- encourage stewardship for the preservation of the Salt River Watershed, its habitat and wildlife
- educate the community on the importance of this watershed
- collaborate with local watershed groups and government agencies
- obtain funding to monitor and maintain this vital resource.



## Phase 2 of the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project for 2015 winds down

The main goal of the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project's (SRERP) 2015 construction season was to reduce flooding this winter on Port Kenyon Road. The project began just east of the Dillon Road bridge and continued 2,200 feet upstream below the Ferdale waste water treatment plant. Over 72,000 cubic yards of sediment were removed from the Salt River channel and deposited on approved locations owned by the Cahill and Mobley families. In addition, a shallow, but wide pilot channel was developed which should alleviate high water levels from "Lake Vevoda." Re-vegetation work which includes planting native trees and shrubs will occur from December through February. The estimated cost for work done during the 2015 construction season was \$3 million.

The project design for the 2016 construction season is 90 per cent completed and will begin in June. The Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD) is the lead agency on the project and will go out to bid in the spring time frame. The 2016 construction goal is to restore the connection from the Salt River to the lower portion of Francis Creek. This goal is dependent on obtaining the necessary funding and land owner coordination.

## Keep the Salt River Alive!

On Saturday, October 24, the Salt River Watershed Council held its second community event to share the progress being made on the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project. Over 150 people attended to hear presentations by Jill Demers, executive director of the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District and Michael Bowen of the California Coastal Conservancy. In addition, attendees boarded buses donated by the Humboldt Transit Authority to tour two sites along the restoration project.

A complimentary lunch was provided to all attendees. GHD consulting and Sweet Basil Catering donated a delicious meal. Humboldt Grassfed Beef provided beef for kabobs and Humboldt County Supervisor, Rex Bohn and friends handled the BBQ chores. Music was provided by the Bridge Band.

Artwork created by Ferndale Elementary and High School students adorned the Ferndale Community Center walls. The students artwork reflected the theme of restoring the Salt River and its habitat. Lydia DeZordo coordinated the effort.

A short film telling the Salt River story was shown with a contributed soundtrack by Hugh Gallagher. The film and more photos from the event can be viewed on the SRWC website: [www.saltriverwatershed.org](http://www.saltriverwatershed.org).



## Dick Hooley's "Hooligans" Make a Difference in Francis Creek

During the month of August this year, a dedicated group of volunteers from the city of Ferndale and beyond worked tirelessly to clear Francis Creek of debris, brush and trees. The impetus for this project came from Ferndale resident, Dick Hooley, who worked with the City of Ferndale and the Department of Fish and Wildlife to secure the necessary permits and identify elements in the creek that could possibly lead to blockage from winter storms and heavy sediment flows.

The "Hooligans," the unofficial name given to the cleanup crew by Ferndale residents, began their work at Van Ness Avenue and continued through town until they reached Firemen's Park. By the end of August, the crew had cleared the final stretch from Van Ness to the city limits behind Nilsen Feed and Grain Company. The Hooligans met three to four times a week from 9:00 am until the early afternoon chainsawing, lopping and hauling an estimated 150 cubic yards of debris and vegetation from the creek bed and banks. At the October 15 meeting of Ferndale's town council, Dick Hooley and his Hooligans were formally recognized with a plaque that is now on display at Ferndale City Hall.

### Next Up: Williams Creek Planning

Although the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project will probably not reach the confluence of Williams Creek and the Salt River for another 2 to 3 years, some funding has been obtained to begin the lengthy planning process to restore the lower reach of Williams Creek. Residents along the creek will be contacted by the HCRCD in the coming year.

The Salt River Watershed Council encourages residents throughout the Salt River watershed to attend its monthly meetings and become familiar with the restoration project, its objectives and timeline. The SRWC meets the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 2:00 pm upstairs at the Ferndale firehouse.

### Keep the Salt River Alive!

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## Port Kenyon Receives a New Bridge

The Humboldt County Department of Public Works delivered an early holiday present to Port Kenyon in October: a new bridge over Francis Creek.

In early August, the removal began with not one, but four plastic culverts along with two more concrete culverts. The oldest concrete culvert located about four feet below Port Kenyon Road was inscribed with the date 1932. Next, the site was excavated and concrete foundation units were set in place. On October 27, eight flatbed trailers delivered the interconnecting pieces of the new bridge. Five bridge span segments were placed by crane and bolted down on the foundation. Each segment measured six feet wide by 38 feet in length and weighed 22 tons. By the end of the day, all five spans were in place and adjoining sides were attached.

The contractor for this project was Mercer Fraser from Eureka. The bridge sections were manufactured by Contech Conspan at a plant in Redding, CA. The total cost for the project was \$747,680.

By October 31, Francis Creek was reopened and flowing under the new bridge (see below). Weather permitting, Port Kenyon Road should be reopened by early December.



