

San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association

Autumn News

October 2013

Volume 2, Issue 2



- Landowners within 2 mile radius, sign up with Cranmer Engineering for well monitoring program
- Volunteers tabled at the Nevada County Fair, Ridgestock, and other local events
- A former Ridge resident and business made a very generous contribution
- Become a member
- Thank you to all our volunteers and donors

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Community Turns Out to Stop the Mine!

Tremendous community support was displayed this summer to stop the San Juan Ridge Mine from re-opening. Hundreds of community members attended and/or volunteered for two fundraising events for SJRTA: the second annual Sunset Farm to Table dinner held at Double Oak Vineyards & Winery on August 17 and the Stop the Mine! BBQ Bash, held at the North Columbia Schoolhouse on September 14. Together, the two events netted close to \$7000!

Debra and Tom Weistar, who live about a mile from the mine, are making a documentary film about our community, water issues and past impacts of the mine. See page 2 for details.

Ridge resident Kalyanamaitri Algrabeli dedicated an epic bicycle trip from Washington to Mexico to the theme of "Water is More Precious than Gold", and raised some \$350 for SJRTA. Read her story on page 3.

Many thanks to all who participated in these efforts. While fundraising has been very successful, we estimate that some \$40,000 is still needed to hire expert consultants to analyze and critique the Draft Environmental Impact Report that will be issued sometime in the next few months. The release of the DEIR will be a time for mobilization and response. Stay tuned, we'll keep you posted.

Thank you, thank you! (with apologies to those we've missed)

Shawn Donnille, Eugene, OR (and co-owner of Mountain Rose Herbs) for a very generous donation. Special thanks to Wendy Boes & Ralph Henson for their help.

Sunset Farm to Table Dinner, August 17

Coordinator Jaimie des Tombe, **Chef** Amy Klingelhofer, **Farms** Mountain Bounty Farm, Artemisia Farm, Dancing Pines Farm, **Flowers** Little Boy Flowers, **Music** Dylan Sherwood McConnell Jazz Duo, **Hosts** Ginny & Bob Hilsman, Double Oak Vineyards and Winery **Kitchen and Wait Staff** Gary Parsons, Shana Maziarz, Cedar Hennings, Beverly LaFae, Jolene King, Azriel LaMarca, Megan McCollam, Julie des Tombe, Gary Logan, Sol Henson, Alexa Wondergem, Jake Freydon-Attie, **Parking** Louis Blue Cloud, Theo des Tombe

Stop the Mine! BBQ Benefit Bash, September 14

Coordinators Chanell Canfield, Alexa Wondergem, Sara Greensfelder, **Chef** Ethan Hunter (with Jacob Hunter & Spencer Nervig), **Host** Jeff Adams, North Columbia Schoolhouse Cultural Center **Volunteer & Raffle Coordinator** Barbara Reed, **Performers** Doc Dachtler, Mohawk Singers (Lawrence Laughing, Maizie White, Annie McCann, Mika Green), Jim Bratt & Friends (Jim Bratt, Beth Moore, Ludi Hinrichs, Randy McKean, Pat Paulsen, Jeff Wax, Glen Smith), Wonderfunk (Jon Wondergem, Thomas Spellman, Jesse Churchill, Makila Wind), **Sound** Rich Mead, **Stage Manager** Shelby Snow, **MC** Theo des Tombe Killigrew, **Food Donations** Ridge Café, HollyTornheim, **Watermelon Sales** Shawn Olson, Kissa Alston, **Flowers** You Bet Farms **Raffle Donations** Zeno Acton, Amigo Bob, Rick Berry & Ramsey Demeter, Chanell D Canfield, Carol Cator, Expanding Light, Extasia, Turiya Hill, Karen Hinrichs, Sam Hinrichs, Ike's Quarter Café, Douglas Keachie, Song Kowbell, Pat Leach, Mona Lovere, Mandala Massage, John Mayfield, DC, Marjorie McDougal, Masters Market, Olala Farm, Paul Racko, David Reed, Re-store, Sweet Arrivals Midwifery, Sweetland Garden, Penny St Claire, Tom Wade, Debra Weistar, Rowen White, You Bet Farm, **Volunteers** AE Stewart, Chuck Weiderholt, Clearwater & Thia, Dolly Oliver, Hank Meals, Hojji Firemaker, Jeff Purcell, Jerry Tecklin, Karen Hinrichs, Lisa Greenway, Mark Sherwood, Marsha Stone, McFinn Lovere, Melanya, Mona Lovere, Ivy Lovere, Pascale Berardi, Penny St Clair, Pete Greenway, Samantha G, Paul Moore, Sol Henson, Stefanie Freydon, Tanis, Tom Wade, Sarah Phillips, Gary Parsons, Nancy Lorenz, Kurt Lorenz, Lars Ortegren

Collaborative Monitoring Efforts to Protect Spring and Shady Creeks

Sol Henson

Recently the SJRTA has been involved in setting up monitoring measures on Spring and Shady Creeks to help prevent impacts to these streams as a result the San Juan Ridge Mine. In September of 1995 as a result of breaching an underground fault in their mining operation, Siskon Gold pumped millions of gallons of water every day directly into Spring Creek. This resulted in multiple violations of the discharge permit issued to them by the Regional Water Quality Control Board. Unfortunately the impacts of this discharge remain largely unknown due to the fact that the mining corporation failed to implement appropriate measures to monitor discharge and water quality as was laid out in the Remedial Water Supply Plan agreed upon the corporation, the county, and the SJRTA.

A rich diversity of animals and plants live along the Spring and Shady Creek corridors. Among these are the Foothill Yellow Legged Frog which is listed as a species of special concern. Now, in partnership with several local organizations we are taking matters into our own hands to insure that monitoring conducted by the mining corporation is being double checked to protect these streams. The goal of the program, funded by grants from the Rose Foundation (awarded to SYRCL) and The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (awarded to Yuba Watershed Institute) is to monitor stream discharge, total suspended solids, and mercury on Spring and Shady Creeks.

On September 8th an unprecedented group of organizations

Documentary Film Examines Water Issues, Mining Impacts

Debra Weistar

My husband and I have lived and worked on the San Juan Ridge since 1985. We dug our first well that year, in October. Rarely had I seen Tom as excited as when we were told that the flow was between 60-80 gallons per minute. Our family homestead was off to a promising start. If your water is pure and relatively abundant, you can pretty much make do on just about everything else. We were close to broke, but we had the land and we had water. We were rich.

Fast forward ten years to 1995. When the F5 and F6 faults were breached by the Siskon gold mining operation about a mile from our home, we were lucky that, unlike close neighbors, our well continued to produce. But the water quality was severely compromised. We lived with sub-par water until 2010, when we decided to dig a new well. While the output is not close to the original well, the water is abundant and clear. In the years since 1985 we have started two non-profit organizations and established a solid outdoor education and traveling semester program for youth. We teach filmmaking to young people, producing films in support of land conservation and social justice issues.

Now it is 2013 and our community is facing yet another proposal to reopen the mine. With our filmmaking skills a bit

and Ridge community members came together to visit stream monitoring sites and discuss a community wide effort to monitor Spring and Shady Creeks. Representatives from SYRCL, the Sierra Fund, YWI, SJRTA, Synergia, and many concerned San Juan Ridge residents discussed the potential impacts to the streams. These include:

- A reduction of stream flow by up to 50% as a result of mine dewatering.
- An increase in stream flow by several million gallons per day.
- A significant increase in erosion and total suspended solids as a result of high discharge.
- A significant change to the temperature of the streams.
- An increase in the amount of mercury transported down the streams as a consequence of the hydraulic mining legacy of the area.
- And the list goes on...

All of these impacts threaten the health of these beautiful stream corridors. The creeks contain a multitude of sensitive and endemic species that contribute to a healthy ecosystem that is treasured by the San Juan Ridge community. Let's keep it that way. Ridge community residents in collaboration with local and county-wide organizations are contributing their time and energy to insure we do!

more developed, we are engaging our students and our neighbors to document this unique place we call home: the San Juan Ridge community. Tom and I have spoken with neighbors, business-people, archeologists, hydrologists and hydrogeologists, educators - many of the characters that make up the human landscape of this place. We are still in production and will move to post-production later this month. The purpose of this film is to bring attention to an issue that is not just "close to home", but right in it. And more -- the Sierra is still full of old gold mines that someone, somewhere far away will try to exploit. Other Sierra communities may not be as well informed or well organized as this one is. If we can share our real wealth -- the wisdom and knowledge that resides in a community determined to protect the natural systems on which it depends -- then maybe we can start truly conserving and restoring this gold-rush ravaged land.

We welcome support on this project. We are looking for an experienced and savvy editor to help with post-production. As with our other film projects, most of the funding comes from our pockets and the pockets of those who support Synergia and the work we do with youth. Stay tuned for announcements of community screenings this winter.

A Summer Cycling for Water

Kalyanamaitri Algrabeli

During this past May Day's festivities, Erin Noel called for our action as a community to support the SJRTA's continued fight against the Mine. I heard it as a personal call to champion a cause close to my heart and community as I cycled the Pacific Coast from Canada to Mexico this summer.

Armed with some whimsical business cards featuring a link to the indiegogo campaign I created to collect funds for the SJRTA, and a picture of me on my bike, I set off into the wild blue yonder early June.

As I rode from north to south, I spread word on the issues of ore mining, water rights, and corporate usurpation of natural resources as a way to connect with people living in the places I passed through. Sharing our Sierra foothills mining story led to people sharing their own local stories of the environmental challenges affecting their communities.

I encountered many MANY types of resource and water issues along the way. From the ginormous Gateway Pacific Terminal threatening the delicate waterways of the San Juan Islands (not

to mention being built on sacred Lummi land) to siltation from unregulated logging roads affecting salmon habitat, to the just plain SCARCITY of water as I got further and further south. Some places I couldn't even fill my water bottle because there was NO water in the whole town. I finished my journey using my LifeStraw Emergency Water Filter on the poisonous tasting water coming from a tap in San Diego.

My trip from the San Juan Islands to the Mexican border helped me to understand just how interconnected all our water systems are, and how precious are ALL our natural resources, as they are all connected to water as well. It reinforced my view that fighting to save our water from corporate misuse here in the Sierra Foothills is as important an endeavor as any we've ever faced. I hope my campaign helped to spread a little awareness, raise some money for our efforts, and help a lot of folks realize they are not fighting in solitude, but that the whole world's communities are fighting together for what should be rightfully stewarded by the people, not the corporations.

Call to Action!

We need your help. If you are a Nevada County resident, please contact your planning commissioner or supervisor to voice your concerns about the mine (contact info can be found at our website.)

Some of you have not renewed your membership for 2013. Check your mailing label for expiration date. Please join or renew now (it's only \$5), and consider making an additional contribution. We gain our strength from an organized response backed by a strong membership.

We estimate that we will need to raise about \$40,000 to hire the experts needed to best make our case when the Draft Environmental Impact Report is released.

We need volunteers for fundraising and organizing activities. If you can help in any capacity, or have some experience with tabling for SJRTA in the past, please email info@sjrtaxpayers.org or call (530) 292-3592. to volunteer.



We Need You!

RENEW OR JOIN THE SJRTA, help make our voice strong!

Voting membership in the San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association is open to San Juan Ridge landowners, residents, and non-resident landowners. All others may lend support by becoming a member of Friends of San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association. **Annual membership: \$5 per person. Please consider an additional donation of \$25, \$50 or more.**

Name

Address

Email

Phone #

"We are here, we are here, we are here! Help make our voice strong!"

Please Circle One: San Juan Ridge landowner/resident/non-resident landowner OR Friend of SJRTA

Mail payment and membership form to SJRTA, PO Box 421, North San Juan CA 95960

San Juan Ridge Taxpayers Association

*Serving the Greater
San Juan Ridge
Since 1975*

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(530) 292-3592

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STEERING COMMITTEE

Gary Parsons – President
Kurt Lorenz – Vice President
Nancy Lorenz – Treasurer
Sara Greensfelder – Secretary
Sol Henson
Alexa Wondergem
Lars Ortegren

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

www.sjrtaxpayers.org

Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/sjrtaxpayers

Sign Up for the Well Monitoring Program

SJRTA recommends that you DO sign up for the Baseline Groundwater Monitoring Plan as outlined in the Nevada County Planning Dept's letter, dated Sept. 5, 2013. SJRTA has reviewed all of the water monitoring plans proposed by the mine owner, multiple hydrology reports and critiques, and has made numerous comments on all of these since the San Juan Mining Corporation applied to re-open the mine in February 2012. With this plan, the County has responded to most of our criticisms and recommendations. This is THE plan that the

County has adopted, and we recommend that you sign up! If you've received the letter, or have not received it and own a parcel with a well within a two mile radius of the mine, we recommend that you sign up for the monitoring plan. Contact Cranmer Engineering at (530) 273-7284 or lab@cranmerengineeringinc.com with your name, address, phone number, parcel number (if known), and email if you have one.

DEIR Update

The Draft Environmental Impact Report, (DEIR) for the mine is still being researched and written. It is hard to predict when it may be issued, but it could still be a matter of months. Once the DEIR is published the clock starts ticking for submitting commentary on what it says, and what it omits (normally a 45 day period, but this

could be extended.) This will require input and testimony from various experts in several fields. SJRTA is engaged in identifying experts to fill these roles. Anyone may submit comments during this period, and your eyes on the DEIR and input are important. We will alert all members when the DEIR is issued.



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