

## Watershed Partners

Many Ross Valley communities, environmental and volunteer organizations worked together during the past year to develop the Flood Protection and Watershed Program.

- County of Marin
  - > Board of Supervisors
  - > Department of Public Works
  - > Flood Control District Zone 9
  - > Marin County Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program
- City of Larkspur
- Town of Ross
- Town of San Anselmo
- Town of Fairfax
- San Anselmo Flood Protection Technical Advisory Committee
- Friends of Corte Madera Creek Watershed
- California State Coastal Conservancy
- Kentfield Planning Advisory Board
- Coalition for Corte Madera Creek
- Sleepy Hollow Community
- Ross Valley Watershed Flood Mitigation League
- Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Weather Service
- State of California Office of Emergency Services
- US Army Corps of Engineers

## Your Proposed Fee

006-083-08  
 711 SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BLVD  
 SAN ANSELMO, CA 94960-1949

Proposed Storm Drainage Fee:  
 \$ 287.46 a year  
 (\$ 23.96 a month)

Dear Ross Valley Resident and Property Owner,

As a community, we have made tremendous strides toward flood protection solutions in the year since our creeks overflowed their banks. We'd like to thank the hundreds of you who volunteered your time and those who joined us at four community meetings since last winter. We'd also like to thank the Board of Supervisors of the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, and the members of the town councils of Fairfax, Larkspur, Ross and San Anselmo for their guidance and support.

Working with a broad range of environmental and citizen groups, County staff, engineers, the cities and towns of Ross Valley, and community members like you, we now have a first list of flood protection solutions that could contain a flood similar to last year. We have more work to do, but we've made a very significant start with your help and support.

Our goal is to both reduce damage due to flooding *and* enhance the natural creek environments we all value, restoring habitat and improving fish passage—a Ross Valley that's safe, prepared and beautiful.

Now, we as a community must find ways to fund those solutions. We're in a unique position right now because last November, Californians passed Propositions 1E and 84, which make billions of State dollars available for flood protection. However, many California communities are struggling with similar flood protection issues and there will be much competition for every bit of State and Federal money available. A local source of revenue, such as a storm drainage fee, could allow Ross Valley to successfully compete for millions of dollars that would otherwise go to other communities.

As a property owner, you may soon be asked to vote on the proposed storm drainage fee. The amount you would be asked to pay is shown on the left as "Your Proposed Fee." Thank you very much for taking the time to read the information provided here. For more information, please visit the website at [www.RossValleyWatershed.org](http://www.RossValleyWatershed.org).

Sincerely,



Farhad Mansourian, Director  
 County of Marin Public Works

**RECEIVED**

**MAR 23 2007**

Ford Greene's Hub Law Office

# ROSS VALLEY

## FLOOD PROTECTION and WATERSHED PROGRAM

### NOTICE TO PROPERTY OWNERS OF PUBLIC HEARING

The County of Marin Flood Control District Zone 9 is proposing to establish an annual watershed-wide, storm drainage fee to fund the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program. Flood Zone 9 encompasses the City of Larkspur, the Towns of Ross, San Anselmo and Fairfax, and the unincorporated County areas of Kentfield, Sleepy Hollow, San Anselmo, and Fairfax. The proposed storm drainage fee would be collected on the County of Marin tax roll each year, beginning with tax year 2007-2008.

The California Constitution requires that the proposed storm drainage fee go through a two-step approval process: first, a public hearing and protest procedure and second, a property owner vote.

The Board of Supervisors of the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District will hold a Public Hearing on:

May 1, 2007 at 11:00 AM  
Board of Supervisor's Chambers  
Marin County Civic Center  
Room 329  
3501 Civic Center Drive, 3rd Floor  
San Rafael, California

The Board will hear public testimony and receive written protests about the proposed storm drainage fee. Any prop-

erty owner may file a written protest about the storm drainage fee with the Clerk of the Board at any time before the start of the public hearing. The protest must identify the property and the property owner and be signed by the owner of the property or an authorized representative of the owner of the property. It may be mailed to:

Clerk of the Board  
Board of Supervisors  
P.O. Box 4186  
San Rafael, CA 94913-4186

Or hand delivered to:

Clerk of the Board  
Marin County Civic Center Room 329  
3501 Civic Center Drive  
San Rafael, CA 94903.

If a majority of property owners do not protest, the Board will order a mail-returned, property owner vote on the proposed storm drainage fee.

### Calculating the Storm Drainage Fee

In the Ross Valley Watershed, creeks and streams are part of the natural drainage system that sends stormwater runoff to the Bay. A storm drainage fee would be paid by properties that contribute runoff to the storm drainage system.

The fee for your property is related to the estimated amount of stormwater runoff it generates (your exact proposed fee is on the first page). Land that is developed (for example, with a house, commercial building or parking lot)

creates "impervious areas" where water cannot soak into the land, resulting in stormwater runoff. A storm drainage fee would be based both on the size of your property and how heavily it is developed (its impervious percentage).

The vast majority of single-family residential properties in Ross Valley would pay \$125 or less per year. Virtually all condo owners would pay about \$33 a year. And the fee is capped at \$180 a year for all residential properties. Adjustments for inflation will be limited to no more than 3 percent a year as determined by the Board of Supervisors and the fee will end in 20 years unless it is extended by a vote of property owners.

Analysts developed a table that groups properties into four types of land use (single family residential, condominiums, multi-family buildings and commercial/industrial property) and then into five size categories, with a flat fee for each size category (see table).

In Ross Valley, the median residential lot is 1/5 acre and is about 38% impervious—the fee would be \$125 annually and all other fees are developed in proportion to that. Larger residential property rates are modified by a lower impervious percentage because they have proportionally more open space. For example, in Ross Valley a 1-acre residential lot is about 16% impervious. However, large parcels still produce more runoff than do small parcels and thus would be charged a somewhat higher fee, capped at \$180. **On the other hand, commercial properties are usually more heavily built on than residential properties. As a result, they have a high impervious factor and would usually be charged a higher fee than would a similar size residential lot.**

All multi-family and commercial properties over 1 acre will be reviewed individually to determine their impervious factor and fee. The full storm drainage fee report will be available at Clerk of the Board's office and at Department of Public Works offices in Room 304 at the Civic Center. The report will also be available at the project website at [www.RossValleyWatershed.org](http://www.RossValleyWatershed.org).

## The Return-by-Mail Ballot Process

If the Board of Supervisors of the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District determines that the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program and storm drainage fee should proceed with a vote of property owners, ballots will be mailed in early May. Your ballot will have the exact fee for your property for 2007-2008.

In conformance with California law, ballots are mailed to the property owner of record, which is not always the person living in or conducting business in a building on that property (renters do not vote because they don't pay the fee directly). There is one vote per property and you do not need to be a registered voter. Passage requires a simple majority of returned ballots. You may return your completed ballot by mail or in person to the Clerk of the Board at the address given above on page 2. Ballots must be

received by the deadline set forth in the ballot, which will be at least 45 days after the date the ballot is mailed to you.

## About the Flood Protection and Watershed Program

The flooding Ross Valley experienced last winter occurred during a 100-year storm. Engineers use that term to describe a storm that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year (not a storm that occurs only once in 100 years). In fact, Ross Valley has experienced three 100-year storms in the past decades (1982, 1986 and 2006). Much of the Ross Valley storm drainage system currently provides only about 5-year flood protection, meaning that it can be overwhelmed by a storm that has a 20% change of occurring in any year.

Engineers are now developing a series of flood protection solutions. Removing constrictions that block creeks could quadruple flood protection—and contain floods during 20-25 year storms (those with a 4-5% chance of occurring). Adding detention basins upstream to hold water and release it slowly, could provide 100-year flood protection.

Projects will be designed to:

- Reduce damage due to flooding
- Maintain natural creek functions
- Reduce pollutants entering the Bay

- Incorporate habitat enhancements
- Improve fish passage

All projects will go through a public review process and comply with all environmental requirements.

This is the first phase of solutions. With additional funding, engineers will continue to analyze creek constrictions farther into Fairfax, Sleepy Hollow Creek and other tributaries. In addition, large sections of Corte Madera Creek in Larkspur require intense dredging to ensure water quickly reaches the Bay. The full program will consist of five major elements: Capital projects, operations and maintenance, environmental preservation and restoration, financing, and program administration.

### Phase 1 Locations

Increasing flow capacity at these locations, plus upstream detention basins that hold storm water and release it slowly, could contain a flood of last year's magnitude.

- 1 Redesign/replace Lagunitas Bridge fish ladder
- 2 Replace/enlarge Lagunitas Road Bridge (in design phase)
- 3 Madrone Avenue Bridge
- 4 Building Bridge #2 (private property in San Anselmo)
- 5 Downtown Fairfax culvert
- 6 Nokomis Avenue Bridge
- 7 Sycamore Avenue Bridge
- 8 Building Bridge #3 (private property in San Anselmo)

Further solutions for Fairfax, Sleepy Hollow and other tributaries would be developed, with sufficient funding.

### Single Family Residential PROPOSED STORM DRAINAGE FEE

| ACRES      | ANNUAL FEE | MONTHLY FEE |
|------------|------------|-------------|
| 0 – .15    | \$107.69   | \$8.97      |
| .151 – .25 | \$125      | \$10.40     |
| .251 – .50 | \$147.84   | \$12.32     |
| .501 – 1   | \$180      | \$15.00     |
| >1         | \$180      | \$15.00     |

The vast majority of single-family residential properties in Ross Valley would pay \$125 or less per year; the fee is capped at \$180 a year for residential properties.

# ROSS VALLEY FLOOD PROTECTION and WATERSHED PROGRAM



## County Vote on Flood Protection Program

On January 1, 2006, a flow of about 763,000 gallons per minute broke creek banks and flooded our streets. Engineers have now identified first-phase flood protection solutions for the Ross Valley that could contain a flood of last year's magnitude. Projects can only be undertaken with sufficient funding, which will come from local, State and Federal sources. Property owners may soon be asked to vote on a storm drainage fee to help fund the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program.

### More Information

You'll find complete information about community meetings and possible flood protection solutions, as well as the full storm drainage report on the project website: [www.RossValleyWatershed.org](http://www.RossValleyWatershed.org)

## Official Notice to Property Owners

GREENE AYLSWORTH C  
711 SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BLVD  
SAN ANSELMO, CA 94960-1949

County of Marin  
Department of Public Works  
P.O. Box 4186  
San Rafael, CA 94913



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