FMWW Backyard Wildlife Camera Program
Support the FMWW Wildlife Camera Program so we can all learn about wildlife in our backyards.

Our Goals
• Identify species in the area
• Identifying areas of high wildlife value
• Identify movement of animals to understand location of high value wildlife corridors in the watershed
• Engage the community in learning about the riches of our watershed

How It Works
1) Donate $75, and with the help of a matching grant from a watershed supporter, FMWW can purchase one wildlife camera per donation.

2) If you live in the watershed, you get to place that new camera on your land for a minimum of 6 months from the start of the program.

3) We’ll train you on how to mount the camera, replace batteries, and download pictures.

4) If you are interested in having a camera on your land, but don’t want to be the one who maintains the camera, we can probably find one or two volunteers to do the work. You still get to see what wildlife is on your land! Let us know if you’re interested in this option.

5) Pictures (but not exact camera locations) will be shared online so we can learn which animals are traveling throughout our watershed.

How to Sign Up
Send an email to info@markwestwatershed.org indicating how many cameras you would like to buy and whether you want to sign up for the training yourself or whether you’d like volunteers to take responsibility for the camera on your land. Please include your name, address, and phone number. First come, first served.

Our matching grant allows us to purchase 13 cameras at the $75 rate, so ACT QUICKLY if you want to buy one. At the time of this printing, there are only a few more cameras left at the reduced rate. After the initial 13 cameras, there will be an opportunity to purchase more at $150 each.

If you would like your donation to be tax deductible, there will be more information about this included in the instructions for payment.

Future Plans
• Later on in the program, we may work with scientists to develop a camera grid that will enable us to gain scientifically valid data. The data can then be shared with those that are studying our watershed.

• The FMWW cameras may then be used to fill in the camera grid for our watershed. Landowners within the grid will be asked if they would like to place cameras in designated locations in accordance with the grid.

Donations Gladly Accepted
Support our Wildlife Camera Program, Hike & Hoot, Road Clean-Up and other FMWW activities. Tax-deductible donations payable to “WSI/FMWW” & mail to 6985 Saint Helena Rd, Santa Rosa, 95404.
Now in conjunction with LandPaths, the Hike & Hoot is better than ever! Please join us for all or part of the festivities:

1:30 PM  Begins: meet your neighbors & sign-up for hikes:
- Native Wildflowers & Plants Hike (strenuous) with Sue Smith; 15 max.
- Kid’s Creek Walk with Sarah Ganas & Jessica Holloway
- Creek Walk with Dana Riggs
- Owl Camp's Garden Tour with Dolores Barrett
- Nature Walk with Greg Damron

4:15-5:15  Meet back at Oval for live owls, hors d’oeuvres, drinks and music

5:15-6:00  Potluck Supper: please bring a side dish, salad, appetizer or dessert; Zero-Waste—bring your own cups, plates, utensils

6:00-6:20  FMWW’s Watershed Volunteer Awards

6:20-6:40  Raffle — bring cash, preferred, or a checkbook — proceeds go to cover H&H costs

6:40-7:00  Potluck clean-up

7:00-9:00  Fire-circle (weather permitting) with storytelling, music jam, and s’mores!

8:15-9:15  Hooter Hike, while fire circle continues (sunset is 8:06 PM)

9:15 PM   Close down and clean-up

Directions & Instructions

Directions to Rancho Mark West, 7125 St. Helena Rd, Santa Rosa CA 95404. Car-pooling encouraged. From Calistoga Rd, 2.6 miles east, on south (right) hand side of road. Look for the Hike & Hoot signs. Parking attendants will help you park.

Rancho Mark West Rules: No smoking, no pets. All guests sign a release form when checking in.

ZERO-WASTE EVENT! Bring side dish, salad, appetizer, or dessert for potluck, folding chairs, utensils, plates, bowls for chilli, water bottles, hiking shoes/boots, sunscreen, sun hat, fanny or daypack for hikes, flashlights. Optional: walking stick, camera, musical instruments.

FREE but space is limited.


Questions? Contact Harriet at hbuck@sonic.net or call 538-5307.
Our Tree Frog Friends
by Penny Sirota

It seemed to be instantaneous: once the small depression in the meadow filled with welcome February rain, the tree frogs returned! We stood bathed in the silvery light of the full moon and listened. How can such tiny creatures create so much noise? How do they fit into the intricate puzzle of life in our little watershed? It turns out that our tiny tree frog friends have a number of elegant, adaptive tricks — expressed in their behavior, skin, and toes.

Pacific Tree frogs (Pseudacris regilla), 2 to 4 inches long, are noted for their distinctive toe pads and for the dark eye-line that stretches from snout through their eye to their ear. They are color-shifters: changing their skin coloration from brilliant green to a golden brown in a matter of hours or weeks by contracting or expanding pigment cells in their skin. Those cells respond to changes in temperature, humidity and/or background brightness. The green coloration absorbs more solar radiation at times when conditions are cool and moist. During times of heat or extreme cold, tree frogs will dig down into the soil to hibernate until things get a little more comfortable. In fact, these frogs were some of the few survivors in the Mount Saint Helena blast zone as they had burrowed into the ground!

Typically, the male frogs live a short distance upland from their mating site. The males seem to appear out of nowhere once water has soaked the landscape, lining the pond shores and singing their love song to attract females. Their throat sac can swell to three times the size of their head as they call in the girls. And the females are impressed! Females, slightly larger, will travel as far as two miles in response to the males’ love call — think about that in the middle of the night, when the cool winter air is a buzz with frog song! Apparently, the female will chose the male with the most frequent, persistent chorus.

Once the pair has been united, the male will crawl on the back of the female while she attaches multiple clusters of eggs to submerged sticks or vegetation. These egg clusters, containing up to 75 eggs each, are fertilized externally as the male releases a blanket of sperm over the newly laid eggs. The parents then leave the eggs to fend for themselves.

There are no end to the dangers awaiting these little frogs. Small vernal ponds are great places for the young to hatch as there are fewer established predators, but it is a race between dry weather and death. If a vernal pond dries up too quickly, all the tadpoles die. Eggs hatch faster in warmer water and the process of metamorphosis will speed up in response to warmer temperatures.

Other than their loud mating season, these frogs are solitary and quiet. They tend to live 2 to 4 years upland in the forest where they are an important link in the web of life. These little guys are mainly nocturnal when they are moving about in search of food. Their tongues are sticky and long, capable of catching insects. They detect the movement of insects through sight, sound and smell. They eat a huge amount of flying insects each night. In return, tree frogs are fare for snakes, other frogs, and birds.

These frogs have a useful secret to tell — one found on their tiny toes. On close study, scientists found the toe pads, with their amazing climbing ability, work in two ways: architecture and surface tension. The toe pads are constructed of hexagonal cells covered by tiny pegs. The tiny nanoscale pegs are topped with a small dimple, which generates a powerful friction force against the surfaces they touch. The hexagonal cells are also lined with tiny fluid-filled spaces. The fluid has a very strong surface tension. These two design features create a powerful friction force. Engineers are applying this breakthrough discovery to design tires with better traction, brake pads with greater stopping power, non-slip shoes…and even surgical tools!

As an indicator species, tree frogs are sensitive to environmental pollutants. Their presence, however loud, is an indication of good water quality and a healthy environment.

Here are a few suggestions to continue to make our home a place where tree frogs and their clan can flourish:
- Protect vernal (seasonal) ponds and wetlands
- Protect buffer zones around these ponds
- Protect movement paths between ponds and upland forest areas
- Avoid mowing grasses in areas near vernal pools until tadpoles have had time to develop and leave area
- Leave areas with large woody debris on forest slopes (ideally, place debris horizontal to slope) to create habitat that collects and protects deep moisture in the accumulated soil
- Mosquito fish will prey on tree frog tadpoles; time your introduction of mosquito fish to ponds after juveniles have dispersed

Sources: sfzoo.org; eol.org; web.uvic.ca; rsif.royalsocietypublishing.org (pictures of toe cells); scientificAmerican.com
Make A Difference
In Public Agency Actions

When we approved our FMWW Strategic Plan, we included a Public Policy Committee (PPC). The committee follows developments and changes in Public Agency rules and regulations that govern how we live on and use our properties. These included the zoning and land use plans and regulations administered by the Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) as well as the rules and regulations of the multiple State and Federal agencies that share responsibility for protecting our air and water and fish and wildlife.

Several agency proposals for new regulations and pubic challenges to current regulations are now under active consideration. PRMD recently proposed new rules to protect stream banks and riparian corridors. The Ag Commissioner is discussing changes in the rules that govern the development of new vineyards. And the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board is proposing rules to limit discharges of pollutants generated by farming and ranching into our area streams as required by the Federal Clean Water Act. Also coming up in the near future will be the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District decisions on the ultimate disposition and management of Saddle Mountain. And maybe we can all learn something about how our public agencies work along the way.

FMWW can and has made a difference in the outcomes of these Public Agency actions and now is an important time to get reengaged. We have a separate email list for the Public Policy Committee so we don’t burden others with our information exchanges. The PPC formulates recommendations for the full membership’s consideration and approval. The PPC routinely operates by email and only convenes if and when special circumstances so require.

To join the PPC and get on the group email list, contact Harriet Buckwalter at hbuck@sonic.net or me at rkrauss@sonic.net.

New to the watershed?
Sign up for Emergency Phone Alerts. Read more at https://sites.google.com/site/alpineclubsite

If you’re on either the Alpine Club or FMWW’s listserv, you receive email notices of upcoming EPC events and meetings. To join either listserv, just email Harriet at hbuck@sonic.net.

“Bird Language,” “Medicinal & Herbal Plant Walk” & More!
April, May and June workshops; visit heirloomtechnologies.org or call Joan at 707-335-6260.