



Caspar News
 Caspar Community
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August 2009

News and Events from the Caspar Community

Volume XII, No. 2

Notes from the President

We're rediscovering the meaning of "community" in this economic downturn. Neighbors are getting together to share ideas—and recipes. We need each other. Let's all gather at the Caspar Community meeting on Sunday, August 2, at 4 p.m. to talk about the progress on the kitchen plans, the garden, the proposed playground, and of course CasparFest. This last-weekend-in-August party combines those dearly loved Caspar traditions: listening to music, eating food and drinking beverages. Speaking of food, stay after the August 2 meeting for a potluck. Bring recipes....

—Susan Juhl, President of the Board

Community Meeting Agenda

- Budget/Financial Statement
- Infrastructure Improvements
- Kitchen Update
- Playground
- Restoration of voting in Caspar

Announcing The Caspar Commons Bulletin Board

As an experiment, the Board has created a web-based Bulletin Board for community input and discussion. This Bulletin Board provides a place where people within the Caspar Community can post ideas, share information, and comment on matters of interest to the Community.

We have set this up as a loosely moderated site. It is also very much under development, and its ultimate structure will in large part depend on input from the community. If you'd like to help test it out...or want to jump right in and voice your opinion...go to <http://casparcommonsbulletinboard.pbworks.com/> and explore. To get the ability to leave comments on the site, simply click on the Request Access Link at the top right of the screen and follow directions; the moderator will authorize you (as soon as he gets the message.)

This site is potentially a great way for members of the Caspar Community to communicate, and—especially—to provide input to the Board on various matters of Community interest. It will only work if people participate, so hopefully we'll see you there.

—David Alden, Board Member

CasparFest August 29 and 30

The date of CasparFest has been moved up this year by a month to avoid any chance of early fall showers and to enjoy the slightly longer days of late summer. Once again, the Noyo Food Forest and CELL (Coast Economic Localization Link) are joining forces with the Caspar Community to bring a fun-filled, educational and community-spirited event. The indoor workshops will focus on permaculture, soil building/composting, water saving/storage, seaweed harvesting, simple Japanese cooking, and fall planting. We are lucky to again have Joe Craven to lead the parade and perform on Sunday. Other local entertainment includes Foxglove, The Groovinators, Trillium Tribe, The Blushin' Roulettes, Aliou Diouf, The Lavender Grace Band, and Kevin and the Coconuts. From inland Mendocino and north we will have Rootstock, Lost Coast Marimbas and The Bayou Swamis. An expanded children's area and activities are planned, as well as great organic food, beer and wine.

All of this fun will be only better with LOTS of volunteers. This is the Community Center's single largest fund-raising activity and its success is crucial to our ongoing financial stability. Please volunteer. We will need lots of help with set up, the front gate, the food booth, the bar, organization of the recycling, and breakdown and clean-up the day after the fest. Please email me at caspar@mcn.org or call 964-4997 if you would like to help.

—Dalen Anderson, Community Center Manager

Water in Caspar?

Over the past several years, a number of people have expressed concerns over the availability of water in Caspar. This concern has grown as regional concerns about water also have grown. But we know relatively little about water in Caspar. There is some information set out on the new Caspar Bulletin Board, which you can find at <http://casparcommonsbulletinboard.pbworks.com/>, but we need details! Has your well gone dry? What do you know about your well construction? Where is your well? We are hoping we can piece together a water map of Caspar and get a sense of the current status of our water.

Please let us know about your water situation. You can do that by posting comments in the "Water in Caspar" page on the bulletin board. Or you can email me at dalden@mcn.org with information that I will then attempt to organize.

—David Alden, Board Member

Mining Eucalyptus



Greg Valles and Michael Potts survey the project

Photo by Sienna Potts

You will have noticed that Caspar got a big chunk of its ocean view back this year. Several heroic days by a group of fellers—really! Tree fellers—from Cal Fire. For them, it was a training session on safely dropping lots of big trees with precision in a hurry, something firefighters sometimes need to do. Some of our trees were so squirrely the master fellers wouldn't let the trainees drop them, so they came back on a Saturday to fell them themselves, just for the fun of it. Thank you, fellers!

Dedicated teams from Parlin Forks bucked up the limbs and trunks, some of them three feet in diameter (and barely 30 years old), stacked the slash, and got ready for the fellers...and then the Parlin Forks crews again. So most of the Eucalyptus along the north fence line of Caspar Headlands is nearly ready for restoration of native habitat.

The whole effort has been choreographed by State Parks' incomparable Angela Liebenberg, with assistance from Parks ecologist Renée Pasquinnelli and District Superintendent Morgan Zeitler.

Eucalyptus is a nasty invasive and an unwelcome neighbor. Dirty! And explosively flammable. Noisy in storms. Worst: cancerously fast growing, leggy, and obtrusive, standing between us, our sun, and our ocean. From the standpoint of hummingbirds and hawk, native blackberries and ninebark, these trees are more like a toxic chemical refinery than a place to live. (For more on the evils of Eucalyptus, see Peter Warner's impressive Indictment of Eucalyptus globulus at casparcommons.org/Press/News0305.php#indict.)

As the Eucalyptus came down, several warm partnerships built up, with a number of breakthroughs in the relationship between community, Parks, and county to get the trees

gone with the good will of friends and neighbors intact. So far, it's been a great collaboration, and the debulking of our town's Eucalyptus infestation has been a great boon.

Please do not misunderstand. Despite their poisonous, dangerous, and obstructive habits, these trees were beautiful...just not the right trees in the right place. They were a constant fire threat, they shaded gardens and houses, and they practically cut downtown Caspar off from our ocean. What we want—we believe we can speak for the hummingbirds, hawks, blackberries, and ninebark, and their kin, too—is native habitat like other pockets of shore pine and low-growing native coastal thickets. Helene Chalfin, Jughandle Creek Farm's experienced Education Director, has pledged to help with our native plant restoration program.

Every Monday since April, three stalwart miners have headed out for the Eucalyptus mines. At least one of us being of a certain age, quarrying Eucalyptus logs for a couple of hours is plenty. The aforementioned 3-foot diameter round, 16 inches deep, weighs over 400 pounds. So far, 40 truckloads of Eucalyptus branches and rounds, something like 20 tons, or 10 cords, of wood have been removed from Parks land for bucking and splitting. There remains another 10 cords' worth, not counting the heroic but unmanageable 3-foot rounds and a few uncut trunks that weigh a ton. Access is complicated by our agreement to drive only on existing roads, and for liability reasons we have not been able to use power equipment (except the truck) on Parks land without a staffer present, and Parks has its hands full in a budgetary pinch.

Firewood mining rights were given to Caspar community, and the miners hope that good homes will be found for all this wonderful firewood. Getting the wood off the land is good for the frogs and lesser biota that have been suffering from the

Eucalyptus's chemical assault (called allelopathy, the capability of a plant or animal to poison everything but itself). Those who know firewood consider Eucalyptus to be one of the top three burning woods, up there with madrone and live oak, because it is hard and oily. For best results, firewood has to be dry, and this wood won't burn to its best advantage until it's a year old—March 2010. But because it's been cut and split and has been drying, it already makes a good fire. There's an urban legend out there that Eucalyptus is bad firewood; if you prefer the truth, see mastersweep.com/wood.htm. One more thing: the purchase of ten or fifteen cords of Eucalyptus firewood will pay for some serious revegetation on the Headlands and put a chunk of change into the community coffers—a classic case of taking lemons and making lemonade.

To reserve your \$250 cord of Eucalyptus firewood, visit the Caspar website (casparcommons.org) and click on "Eucalyptus Firewood Information." At the bottom of the page you will find a form; fill it out, send it in, and you're in the queue. Deliveries will begin in September. After September 30, the cost of a cord (if there are any left) will go up to \$300. You can come get your own wood by arrangement, or the miners will deliver for \$20/cord.

One condition placed by members of the Caspar community on the Eucalyptus cutting was that State Parks' preferred method of resprout control—immediate painting of the stump's cambium with a small amount of glyphosate—was unacceptable, and that resprout control was a project the community would take on. The stumps are already resprouting enthusiastically, and it is time for the anti-chemical forces to go to work. One Eucalyptus miner describes the circumstances thusly: "I think

the Eucs themselves are poison. I just want to see them gone, gone, gone... Something needs to be done about the resprouts, and it needs to be done now, and it needs to be kept up so that those evil trees don't return."

Judy Tarbell is the organizer of the Resprout Abatement Team and has called for a workday on Saturday, August 8, from 10 a.m. until noon. Hatchets, froes, pruning clippers and pruning saws, long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and stout shoes are suggested. For more information and for help in signing up as a State Parks volunteer (necessary for working on the Headlands), email Judy at tarbell@mcn.org or phone 964-1323. —Michael Potts



Photo by Sienna Potts

Walking in the Rain, Crossing the Caspar Divide and Seeing the Clear Blue Sky—Local Officials Review Infrastructure Improvements with Caspar Board

Director of the Department of Transportation (DOT) for Mendocino County, Howard Dashiell, and Fourth District Supervisor Kendall Smith recently met with the Caspar Board. They came to review potential physical changes to the Caspar community, and discussed sidewalks, trails and underground utilities.

Most of us are familiar with the large puddles after a storm. They make walking in downtown Caspar an ankle-deep experience. Boots are needed to walk on the Shul's pathway and the driveway to the Community Center, or to cross to the MTA bus.

"Drainage has been an issue along Caspar Road as long as we've lived here," says Jim Tarbell. Mr. Dashiell says there is a solution—if we want it! Working with a \$19,000 grant from Mendocino Council of Governments (MCOG) for a pathway along the east side of Caspar Road, DOT is proposing to expand the scope of the project to include the construction of a permeable concrete sidewalk from the north end of the Shul property to the Caspar Street/Road intersection, and the laying of 850' of new, 18" dual-wall plastic storm drain from the Shul to the south end of Caspar Road, sending the water off to Caspar Creek. This project might be possible with Transportation Enhancement Funds, which enhance pedestrian pathways, trails, and bike paths.

Guided by the foresight of Supervisor Smith and her access to Proposition 40 funds (State bond money), there is also the possibility of constructing a pedestrian, bike and equestrian pathway between east and west Caspar which might go under Highway 1 at the north end of the Caspar Bridge, linking up with the California Coastal Trail. The Mendocino Land Trust (Tamara Jones) has met with the Caspar Community in the past and is currently in the process of laying out a segment of the Trail from Caspar to the Point Cabrillo Lighthouse. Another east-west link would be a trail along Caspar Creek on Jackson State Forest-owned property. Neither the drainage nor the east-west trail projects are certain; both will take more planning, but they have reached the stage of possibility.

And finally, the prospect of undergrounding electrical and telephone lines in downtown Caspar and the Caspar Headlands is resurfacing. In December 2000 the Board of Supervisors voted to begin undergrounding utility lines in Caspar upon the completion of the Gualala undergrounding project. While there is some pressure from inland areas to have a project begun elsewhere, the possibility exists that in the foreseeable future we could look up and see just trees, birds and the sky. Now wouldn't that be lovely!

If you are interested in these issues, contact any Caspar Board member, and be sure to come to the Community meeting on August 2 when they will be discussed with Howard Dashiell, DOT Director, and Kendall Smith, our Fourth District Supervisor.

—Ray Duff, Jim and Judy Tarbell

Garden Report

The Caspar Community Center Garden and Greenhouse are thriving. The project, turned over to me by Paul Garvin and Judy Tarbell, is manifesting abundantly and bringing in a lot of good energy and generosity. Just today, Gunter, of Philo nursery collective Lovin' Blooms, came by the garden. I responded to his offer of help by expressing my fear of the new rototiller, generously donated to the garden by Carrie Durkee. He immediately offered to give us a little hands-on demo. Thanks to such serendipitous generosity, we will finally get the last four beds underway and planted before too long.

Laura Maione has been working with me and is an inspiration. I want to thank the Board of Directors for listening to me, Laura and Gerry York as we discussed a future vision for the garden—including a hedgerow, an orchard, and a labyrinth. We also imagine food production more integrated with the new kitchen. We look forward to creating an environment of beauty and abundance.

We welcome Noyo Food Forest—a great group of people, including Susan Lightfoot and Sakina Bush—who have inherited the widest bed for their pumpkin patch. Starts were nearly lost due to a watering system error. Happily, Susan noticed it in time, and now the pumpkins, as well as their adjoining Orrick (purple perennials) and sunflowers are all glad too.

As you stroll around the garden, you will first notice strawberries the size of a child's fist, and maybe Bernie's squash beds exploding just eastward. East of these is yet another strawberry patch, with an older variety of strawberries,



not so large but tasty and distinct in flavor. There are snow peas and beans and Rebecca and Alexandria's medicinal herb bed. Laura and I put up a fence at the northeast corner, which the beans are struggling to climb while suffering the wind chill. Gerry (soil guru and all-around helpful guy) and Laura put a nice large redwood box in the center of the greenhouse where we are continuing our basil extravaganza (three types), tomatoes (six varieties), and Goldstar and Habañero peppers.

An anonymous donor left a little Mantis tiller, which may still need some minor repairs. I have been using my noisy 4-stroke Honda weed whacker when no one else is around. The fight with the weeds is a war. Our main bug problem is spotted cucumber beetles. So far, they have not bothered the cucumbers in the greenhouse. They and the earwigs got to most of the sunflowers. I didn't religiously follow old-timer Larry Spring's advice—put a ring of motor oil around them. Earwigs, he says, won't cross the barrier. However, you need to keep replenishing your oily surface.

In the garden, it's always blessings, and tragedies—just like in life.

Hare Creek Nursery donated perennials to Gunter, who double-dug the children's bed and covered it with black cloth. It is showy and educational and doing quite well.

Linda and Sandy planted a beautiful bed with the best-looking potato plants in the garden. Alexandria and Doug recently planted some greens; it was such a beautiful



sight to see them planting the bed together—the backlighting, the nearby flowers, and the way their hands crossed as they each planted their seeds was a photo in my mind I only wish I could display here.

CasparFest
c a r r o t s ,
o n i o n s a n d

greens, including chard, lettuce, parsley, dill and spinach, are in the northwest beds. There you will also behold the Purple Collard Tree. We encourage growing this elsewhere and keeping it alive, as it is a substantial, delicious, non-bolting, perennial delicacy.

We have had numerous workdays, mostly on Sundays, but Tuesdays and Wednesdays seem to be popular if the weather allows. The garden gets very cold, even in July, when the winds pick up. For this reason, and the advent of fall and winter, I would like to acquire half-round white tents to cover some of the beds. They could be made and used in sections. I wonder if anyone has ideas and/or supplies for this purpose.

"ABC Group," an activity for developmentally disabled adults, is interested in helping out in the garden once a week. They would like their own bed and want to make their own worm bin as well. Thanks, Gerry York.

We continue to get organic compost from Café One, but it is problematic. We need more volunteers who drive that way anyway. Anyone? Also, are you skilled at setting traps and retrieving and disposing of gopher carcasses? (Hmm.) If you are and you are willing to do this for the Caspar Community Garden, come on down! SOMEONE had the audacity to dig a hole last night—right in front of the greenhouse door!

Finance Report: I put in the first \$80 or so to get the garden up and started, paying for potting soil, seeds, start containers and tags. The first plant sale at the Sunday Breakfast brought in about \$90. The second, at the Flea Market, brought in about \$260. The last Sunday Breakfast brought in \$56. We currently have just over \$60 in the till.

We have received several donations from the community: numerous pots, all sizes; two bales of straw (Sam and Kay); wood for the greenhouse box (Paul Schulman); the large rototiller and the small Mantis tiller; various types of seeds and plants. Thomas Dodd, off to Connecticut from Caspar Road, helped with the weed whacking and donated some great gardening supplies and amendments.

Thanks to everyone who has shared in this endeavor. If you want to work in the garden, you will be welcomed. Please feel free to call me at 964-1674. —Liz Haapanen, Garden Coordinator

Treasurer's Report

A comparison of the first six months of this year with the first six months of 2008 shows that we are generally doing about the same financially as last year, thanks to management of costs, ongoing rentals of the Community Center for private events, and successful fund raising events. But there is one disturbing trend—general pledges and donations are way down.

All special projects, such as the mail pavilion and the proposed kitchen, are fully funded based on expectations and previously-reported goals. The mail pavilion was paid for by donations to the Jerry Juhl Memorial Fund and community donations. Funding for the kitchen includes community donations and a \$200,000 USDA loan.

We are a bit behind last year in the net operating area—the funds used to keep the Community Center open and operating on a day-to-day basis. Expenses are up in certain areas and down in others but are higher than last year. Rental income for the Center is up for the period through June 30, but one-time donations are down. Fund raising events have raised almost as much as in 2008.

Where we note a glaring discrepancy from prior years is in the amount of monthly donations made through pledges, which is about one-half of what we experienced in prior years. In absolute dollars,

our shortfall year-to-date is only about \$3,000 below what was contributed by the community in the first half of 2008—but that is a lot of money for us.

We know times are tough and that this economic slump has hit everyone a little bit and some of us very hard. But we ask that you look seriously at what you might be able to give each month and call Dalen with a new or increased pledge for the Center. Forty, thirty or even twenty dollars a month is something most families can find and put to a use they believe in without extraordinary pain; collectively, a number of such pledges could make a world of difference to the Caspar Community! If you believe in the Caspar Community Center, please find a way to help make it work.

—David Alden



Join the Board

All are welcome to attend the Board meetings which take place every other Friday at the Community Center from 9 to 11. (See Calendar for upcoming dates.) If you might be interested in serving on the Board but cannot come at this time or would like to place an item on the agenda, please contact Board President Susan Juhl at 964-4997.

Here's My Contribution to the Caspar Community

- I'm making a donation of \$_____ to the work of Caspar Community
- I'm making a donation of \$_____ in memory of _____
I understand a card will be sent to the family.
- I am pledging a monthly donation of \$ _____
 - Paypal -- Please sign up on line at <http://casparcommons.org/Pledge>
 - Please charge my credit card each month.
 - VISA or MasterCard _____ - _____ - _____ - _____ expires ____ - ____
 - Signature: _____ Name printed: _____
- Check (please make checks payable to Caspar Community)
Name: _____ Address: _____
Town: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Please mail to Caspar Community, 15051 Caspar Road, Box 84, Caspar, CA 95420

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CCC Calendar

Friday, July 31, 9 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, August 2, 4 p.m.

Community Meeting and Potluck

Friday, August 14, 9 a.m.

Board Meeting

Sunday, August 23, 9 to 11:30 a.m.

Fourth Sunday Breakfast

Friday, August 28, 9 a.m.

Board Meeting

Saturday and Sunday, August 29/30

CasparFest

In the interest of economy and wise use of resource, we're also sending out a digital newsletter. Please contact us with your email address so we'll be sure to reach you with Caspar news. If you don't use email or want to receive the newsletter as a paper copy, please let us know.

New Caspar Residents

Lila McMurtry reports the arrival of Eurasian Collared Doves in downtown Caspar. A non-native species, the doves have been spreading across the U.S., but this is the first time they have established residence in Caspar



This is a medium-sized dove, buff grey with a darker back and a blue-grey underwing patch. It is substantially larger than the common Mourning Dove and may exceed six ounces in weight and fourteen inches in length from tip of beak to tip of tail, with a wingspan that occasionally exceeds 18 inches. The tail feathers are tipped white. It has a black half-collar on its nape from which it gets its name. The short legs are red and the bill is black. The iris is reddish brown, but from a distance the eyes appear to be black, as the pupil is relatively large and only a narrow rim of reddish-brown eye color can be seen around the black pupil.

This is a gregarious species, and sizable winter flocks will form where there are food supplies such as grain. The song is a coo-coo, coo repeated many times.

The males have an unusual mating display, consisting of a rapid, nearly vertical climb to height, followed by a long glide downward in a spiral.

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Random Notes

Library

The Community Center Library has many new books, movies and CDs available for checkout. Come by and take a look.

Food Bank

Thanks for all the donations in the Food Bank Barrel in the Postal Pavilion. The Food Bank is serving more people than ever and all donations are appreciated.

Highway litter

Some alert Caspar residents saw Styrofoam, plastic bags, and paper flying out of the Waste Management trucks on Highway 1 in Caspar. We are trying to get the garbage haulers to solve this problem. If you see flying garbage, please note the date and place and contact Bette at 961-1683 or betteg7@comcast.net

Jackson State Forest

The Jackson State Forest Advisory Committee is developing the principles of a long-term management plan. A recreation users task force has been formed. Some timber sales are currently open to bidding. To find out more or to participate in the decision-making, go to <http://www.jacksonforest.org>

Caspar Beach Trail

The Mendocino Land Trust is in the process of creating the Caspar Beach Trail. It will go from the Pt. Cabrillo Light House to Caspar Beach. The website is http://www.mendocinolandtrust.org/Coastal_Trail:The_Caspar_Beach_Trail or contact Tamara Jones at 962-0470 tjones@mendocinolandtrust.org

—Bette Goldfarb