

Caspar Community News

March 2015

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wednesdays

Winter Farmers Market
BOOKMOBILE

March 20, April 15, 29, May 13

Fridays, 9:30am

March 20, April 3 & 17, May 1

Caspar Community Board
All Welcome

Friday, March 13, 6:30 - 9 pm
Caspar Pub Night

Monday, March 16
Environmental Potluck

Tuesday, March 17
Pierre Bensusan

Thursday, March 19th 11am: CasparFest Planning

Friday, March 20th 5pm: League of Women Voters Meet & Greet

Sunday, March 22, 9 - 11 am
Caspar 4th Sunday Breakfast

Saturday, March 28th 10AM-2PM
HEADLANDS WORK DAY

Friday, April 10, 6:30 - 9 pm
Caspar Pub Night

Sunday, April 12, 10am - 2 pm
Canning Workshop

Ukelele Fest Friday-Saturday
April 17-18

Sunday, April 19, 4-6 pm
Community Meeting

Sunday, April 26, 9 - 11 am
Caspar 4th Sunday Breakfast

A complete schedule can be found at our website.

also in this issue... **Walkin' Caspar**
Center & Outages **President's letter**
Canning Classes **Resiting the Dump**
Headlands Workday **Sidewalks**

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

Wednesday, March 25th, 6:30pm
Upper Fern Creek neighbors
at Eric and Deb Freeman's

Thursday, March 26th, 5pm
Lower Fern Creek neighbors
at Lisa Weg's

Sunday, March 29th, 3pm
North Caspar neighbors
at the Fortunate Farm

Tuesday, March 31st, 5pm
Downtown Caspar neighbors
at the Tarbell's

Wednesday, April 1st, 4pm
West Caspar neighbors
at Mike and Ruth Dell'Ara's

Last summer Caspar neighborhoods gathered at four lovely Caspar homes to welcome new neighbors, to stop & talk to folks we wave to in passing, & to find out what issues concern or inspire us as neighbors. Addresses are hard for First Responders to find in some areas, and resiliency in the face of emergency could improve. Meanwhile, "security" lights disturb sleepers & stargazers in others. Water worries unite us all and we are all grateful for our wild spaces.

What have we been doing since then? What's next? Things may seem to happen slowly but we have seen the quality of life in Caspar improve so much over the years that our faith in gathering is strong. It must be time to gather again. All Caspar residents are encouraged to join in the neighborhood gatherings happening over the next month.

One more (*important*) thing: **Invite your Neighbors!** Our resiliency and, we seem to agree, the quality of life in Caspar, improves when we know and care for our next door neighbors.

—Sienna
Dalen's assistant

News From the Center

The Community Center and Power Outages

During the major storm and resulting power outage in early February we were able to experience the new emergency power system at the community center firsthand. It was during a Friday morning board meeting, with the wind howling that the lights first went out. Within three seconds the back up system kicked in and kept us fully powered throughout the three days in which the grid power was on and off again.

That same Friday evening, we were able to proceed with an inspiring concert and dance featuring Joe Craven and his group, Mamajowali, made all the more inspiring by the knowledge that we were running entirely on solar power. The following morning an impromptu breakfast came together at the center for the band and volunteers. It was becoming apparent what an asset this independent power system is to the community.

Throughout the weekend I would stop by to check in to see if anyone was at the center, needing to store a few items in the refrigerator, cook a hot meal, plug in a rechargeable device, but no one showed up. In that the internet and phone lines were down I could not get the word out at that time, so I am spreading the word now. I encourage everyone to come make use of the facility during future outages.

—Dalen

Caspar Community Center manager

Caspar Headlands Work Day

All lovers of our headlands are invited to join us at 10 am on Saturday, March 28th at the Caspar Headlands trailhead (at the end of Caspar Road by the old Company Store). Skye Nickell of State Parks will help us tackle some of the many invasive plants on the headlands. We will provide a picnic lunch at noon for a rest & a chance to talk about our ongoing stewardship of our beautiful park. We will have tools & tasks for all abilities, from easy weeds like heather to prickly gorse for any hardy souls with thick gloves. After lunch we'll work until 2 pm. Please join us at any time, for one hour or all four.

Presidents letter

Over the years that I have been on the Caspar Community Board we have struggled to find an effective way to engage issues beyond the Center and the little piece of Caspar land we own. We have repeatedly looked at the issues of land use and the community water system, and while we have had plenty of ideas and enthusiasm and even some funds we have failed to make much real progress.

Once again we are venturing into these complex issues and I believe it is time to look at developing an institution more appropriate to the task than the Caspar Board. Don't misunderstand me, the Board structure is working well, the Community Center is thriving, we have good ongoing relationships and we enjoy a strong level of support from the community. However to tackle the complex legal problems involved with water and land use we need a new model, one whose governing board is elected by the community and has the legitimacy and accountability that comes with elected office.

I am not suggesting that we replace the Caspar Board but rather that the Caspar Board and community work to facilitate the development of a new and parallel organization that can venture more securely into the greater issues we face. It is my hope

continues →



On Sunday April 12th, the monthly canning classes will resume at the Caspar Community Center. The class covers all aspects for preserving food: pressure canner, water bath, fermentation and asian style pickles. The only thing you need to bring is a good knife, cutting board, apron, and something to share for lunch. Marty provides the jars and ingredients. The class begins at 10 and finishes around 2. Cost is \$20. Mark your calendars for the following dates: April 12, May 3, June 7, July 5, August 16, Sept. 6, and Oct. 4.

—Marty Johnson



The Pledgin' Pauls photo by Annie Lee



Walkin' Caspar

Where in Caspar are we standing to see this?

President's Letter concludes

that a part of the current investigation of our water issues will be an examination of the range of forms this new body could take, and move toward creating that organization so that it will be in place by the time it is needed to implement whatever solutions to the water and land use issues are proposed and supported by the greater community.

There is a wide range of cooperative, progressive models to choose from and our community includes people with the knowledge and experience to start this process. The Caspar Community Board will lend whatever support it can to those that are willing to take this project on.

—Paul Reiber

Caspar Community Board president

Caspar's Vanishing Sidewalks

Compared to many rural villages, have you every noticed how wide the margins of Downtown Caspar's roads are? According to native Casparado Stuart Tregoning, it got started when City founders who didn't want



A Caspar Sidewalk

their children run over by highway traffic built boardwalks where students walked along Main Street to Caspar Schoolhouse. Many remember boardwalk remnants along the village square. Little Caspar was thinking big thoughts about comfort and safety even then.

Along Pacifica and Seadrift, later developers honored the pattern by deeding a wide roadway,

continues →

A recent Caspar Questionnaire ranked Caspar's Nature as the most shared reason we have for living hereabouts. We are gifted with two stellar State Park beaches, and miles of wonderful trails – some say, the best concentration of diverse trails on the West Coast.

Jughandle's Ecological Staircase trail, a Registered Natural Landmark, is one of the best walks anywhere. From white beach sand up past 600,000 years of subduction history to the Pygmy Forest, it's a lesson in sense of place.



Pygmy Forest boardwalk

Our hard-won Headlands is criss-crossed by trails, only some of them traveled by *Homo sapiens*. Dozens of people (and their dogs) use it every day, rain or shine, exactly as we hoped we would when we



continues → 'Shroom under Cypress

Sidewalks *concludes*

a ditch to discourage on-street parking, and a grassy walkway. Back when the County had a little sidewalk money, they reworked sidewalks from Central Caspar almost to Jughandle, and partway out Pacifica.

Broad margins beside roads have many uses, but mostly they get parked on ...unless a ditch discourages wheels. Caspar's founders used ditches well. When exotic invaders from over the fence squeeze the walkway, residents who appreciate the common nature of these walkways keep them trimmed back.

To stay useful, sidewalks, like trails (and many other things) need to be used. The Blackberry reclaims the Headlands trails unless someone clips them; our arch enemy and avatar Gorse reclaims anything it can.

City Planners like sidewalks, and the UC team admired Caspar's. Walkways make a statement about who the town belongs to: the people, who mostly move about with their feet. Cars aren't the top predators here, but are invited guests, and are meant to move about respectfully. Since outsiders sometimes forget, best to use the walkways where they exist. Watch for them. Walk 'em. Care for 'em. All life in Caspar benefits when we do.

—Michael

Walkin' *concludes*

worked so hard to persuade State Parks to acquire them. We made a deal, back then, to be our Headlands' stewards, to try to restore native habitat while controlling Eucalyptus, Gorse, Blackberry, Broom, and Heather, all of which think they've been transported to the Promised Land.



Invasive Exotic: Heather

It's Stewardship Time in Gorseland, friends and readers! We hope to see you and your gloves, loppers, and weed wrenches on our Headlands on March 28th, 10am to 2pm, rain or shine.

—Michael

For more on Caspar's Battle with Gorse, start here

This edition of
Caspar Community News
was laid out by Michael Potts

The Late Spring edition will appear soon. Submissions of activities, events, or information of interest to Casparados is invited. Send them to lists@casparcommons.org



409 and the Caspar Dump

The following was received after this newsletter was published, and is added here in solidarity with our Southeast Caspar neighbors. We have always acknowledged that the "Caspar Dump" is ours to worry about, and that the broadest definition of Caspar includes territory drained by Jughandle, Caspar, Doyle (geologically the South Fork of Caspar Creek), the slope south of Mitchell Creek and the northern side of Russian Gulch.

409ers are working together to improve the quality of all life in their corner of Caspar, and we want to support them.

Hello Fellow 409ers,

This is a reminder about next Thursday's very important Transfer Site meeting (Thursday, March 19, 6:00pm, Ft Bragg Town Hall – Main and Laurel Sts). It will be a presentation of the draft EIR for building the new Coast Transfer Site on Hwy 20. Both the County Board of Supervisors and FB City Council will be hearing the summary and receiving public comments. There will probably be only one more meeting after this (May-ish), when the BOS/City Council actually vote on this Hwy 20 Transfer Site. We've been told these two meetings are critical, politically, to show support for this; because if Hwy 20ers create enough objections to make the BOS/City Council nervous about proceeding, "doing nothing" will be the likely default result and that will mean 409's self-haul operations will continue on here indefinitely.

We've been advised to attend and speak! during the public comment period to offset the many Hwy 20 people who'll be speaking against its location there. Just attending and sitting won't help at all, unfortunately. If you know of others who live elsewhere who'll come to support this, then please invite them, - because Hwy 20 will be a major benefit to all Coast residents --- so this won't appear like two NIMBY groups just protecting their own neighborhoods.

There are many compelling reasons for creation of a new Hwy 20 Transfer Station, some of which are listed below. Each speaker will be given three minutes, but what works

best is keeping it short and simple (we've been advised that "numbers" of people speaking in support of it matters most). Suggestion: just let them know you think the Hwy 20 project is good for the Coast for many reasons, one of which is _____.

Points that can be made at Transfer Site hearing:
Hwy 20 site was selected by City Council and BOS (Board of Supervisors) among 25 sites investigated as the best alternative. This decision was made back in 2007 and reconfirmed in 2012 when an EIR to evaluate Hwy 20's suitability was voted on – i.e., this location decision was thoroughly investigated and made! Only new information uncovered in the EIR saying this isn't a good place should be considered now. That EIR confirms that, yes, it is an excellent location – with no serious drawbacks and the few minor problems easily mitigated.

The County has spent 9 years and \$260,000 on siting and EIR studies to move forward on Hwy 20. It would be foolish to waste all that time and money and start all over now looking another location (which probably doesn't exist anyway).

Part of the lengthy time spent to get Hwy 20 available was having the State Legislature vote to transfer 17 acres of Jackson State Forest to the County to enable a transfer site to be built. This was a very unique and remarkable accomplishment – done only to help improve the Coast's dysfunctional garbage situation.

There is no perfect Transfer Facility site obviously (unless it's built 100 feet underground and/or no one creates any garbage). But given the need for some facility somewhere, Hwy 20 was chosen as the best location because it has the fewest and least-impacting (and/or more easily mitigated) problems than any other on the Coast. Some of the reasons are:

It is on a State Highway – where these facilities should be, not on county rural roads. It also reduces both self-haul and garbage truck traffic on Hwy 1, along with eliminating that huge problem Caltrans identified of having trucks "far too large for the turn-off" at Road 409/Hwy 1.

409 and the Caspar Dump *concludes*

It will not be seen from the highway. The building has been purposely sited behind roadside trees what will completely screen its presence.

Because some think pygmy forests are unique and should be preserved, the 17 acre transfer site will require cutting down of only 5 woodland acres, with less than one acre being pygmy. The rest of the clearing will be ordinary Bishop pine forest.

Hwy 20 was chosen because its location was in the most rural of areas. There are no adjacent neighbors – the nearest home is more than ¼ mile away.

Additional truck traffic on Hwy 20 will be negligible. The EIR estimates there will be less than a 1% increase in traffic.

Although some have raised concerns about possible impact to Ft Bragg's water quality, this location is not in any of Ft Bragg's current or possibly future drinking water's watersheds.

The EIR states that all potential environmental impacts regarding noise, odors, traffic safety, and water table effects are either non-existent or can be easily mitigated to being "less than significant."

Because the Hwy 20 site is closer to the "weighted population/garbage-producing center"(which is about ½ mile from Hwy 1 and Hwy 20), the average self-haul driver will be driving considerably fewer miles – in fact, the combined annual mileage savings for Coast residents will be 162,000 miles. This translates to an \$81,000 reduction (@ \$.50/mile) in driving costs for Coast residents; and most of these fewer miles will translate to reduced traffic on Hwy 1 between FB and Rd 409, an added bonus

The new transfer site will result in a net reduction of 110,000 annual "garbage truck miles" driven from the Hwy 1 transfer site to the ultimate landfill in the Bay Area. This is huge! This will reduce our greenhouse gases by 140 tons annually (a large amount needed to comply with the State's required greenhouse gas reduction requirements). These fewer truck miles will save \$330,000 in garbage hauling costs – 20% of the transfer site's total operational costs! There will also be additional large savings from the

new transfer site's improved efficiencies (handling garbage only once instead of two or three times) – so we can realistically expect these savings to wind up reducing garbage costs to all Coast residents. Note: I'll be presenting a detailed analysis of this, but others reinforcing these large savings will be helpful!

Remember, if Hwy 20 does not move forward (because the City Council/BOS respond to Hwy 20 residents' worries), it's highly likely that, politically, no other site will then be promoted, another expensive EIR ordered, etc. By default, the "do nothing" solution means current operations on Rd 409 will continue on – and likely, we've been told, continue indefinitely.

Please [contact me](#) if you have any questions or additional thoughts that we can use in our presentations.

See you there –

— *Rick Childs*

PS: Last Spring we had a great Road 409 Clean-Up Party – got rid of all the roadside litter! 12 of us participated. Let's do it again. Details in a few weeks.

If you hunger for meetings...

Our friends at the Noyo Headlands Unified Design Group (NHUDG) want us to know that there's a Department of Toxic Substances Control workshop on Wednesday, March 18th at 7pm in the Town Hall. They tell us it's important to let DTSC know that we are eager that the mill site cleanup proceed to healthy completion with the long-awaited daylighting of Fort Bragg's "lost creeks." NHUDG can be found [online here](#).

And there is considerable ferment and disagreement about the "strip mall" proposed for west of the intersection of Highways 1 and 20. This may be considered at the City Council Meeting slated for March 23rd at the same time and venue. Petitions and information are available from Daney Dawson: 964-2486.