

# *The Naked Fish*



## **MVEEC Launches Newsletter**

The May Valley Environmental Council is proud to announce the first edition of *The Naked Fish*. This newsletter will be dedicated to the naked truth and devoted to dispelling the environmental myths surrounding May Valley. The staff promises to publish objective information intended for the residents of the May Valley Basin area by providing well researched and scientifically sound articles regarding the environment including basin stewardship, fish habitat, stream restoration and wetland management.

## **Basin Plan Passes!**

*by Rod McFarland*

After months of wrangling with the King County Executive Staff, MVEEC has prevailed in obtaining significant changes to the May Valley Basin Action Plan. The King County Council passed the MVEEC-endorsed plan on Monday, April 23, 2001 by a vote of eleven to zero.

Major changes to the recommendations affecting May Valley include strengthened retention/detention standards, possible buyouts of flood affected homes, County-led pilot projects leading to the cleaning of the creek channel between 148<sup>th</sup> and SR900, and returning the flow from the quarry back into Tibbetts Creek. The Basin Steward's role was refined and minor changes were made to improve the monitoring of the plan.

Changes to the secondary recommendations redefined the role of County purchased property in Wetland #5 to protect adjacent properties. Long term projects now include replacing the bridges at 148<sup>th</sup> and 164<sup>th</sup> to

*(Continued on page 4)*

<b>Inside this issue:</b>	
<b>Flooding, Erosion &amp; Fish</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mine Shaft</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Brent Lackey</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Marvelous Plan</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Property Bought</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>From The President</b>	<b>6</b>

## Flooding, Erosion and Fish

by Rod McFarland



**Bert the Salmon points out the disastrous results of years of not cleaning the ditch.**

In the late 1970s, King County spent major amounts of money to put together a May Creek Basin Plan. That 1980 plan was never formally adopted but the recommendations that called for new regulation of land use were embraced by the

County Council and are with us today. The unintended results of those new land use regulations have been devastating for May Creek Basin.

The new regulations prevented us from maintaining our ditch. We had to let it fill in. In theory, the regulations should have im-

proved water quality, reduced erosion and flooding, and improved fish habitat. Did the regulations work? Instead of a cool, clean, flowing creek we now have silt-laden, warm, stagnant water. We now have erosion between 148<sup>th</sup> and Coal Creek Parkway where

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Mine Shaft Revealed

by Douglas Bandelin

Following last month's earthquake, there appeared a hole beneath Emma Redmonds' usual parking place. The hole grew and grew until it was over 12' in diameter and "bottomless". When King County knew of no history for the hole, Billy Redmonds contacted the Bureau of Mines which confirmed this was the shaft to the old Griffin Coal Mine.

But this was not the Redmonds' first contact with the Bureau of Mines. Sometime after they bought the prop-

erty at 15839 SE May Valley Road in 1971, a grazing horse broke through some old logs and almost disappeared into a water-filled cavern. BM came out and poured a concrete slab over the hole, which became Emma's new parking place. The last week of March, the Bureau of Mines made a steel plug 14'x14' which they placed in the maw of the old mine shaft. It was then filled with 45 yards of concrete. This shaft goes down 360' at a 60 degree angle and then travels south out under May Creek over

Original mine in 1932



800', complete with several side galleries. Following a coal seam, the mine had been open from about 1915 to 1935. It was finally closed after "they struck water"; not surprising seeing how they were 30' below the level of the sea.

The old Griffin mine was served by a railroad spur from the

*(Continued on page 5)*



**Welders finish the cap to the shaft.**

**The original mine shaft slanted down at a 60 degree angle travelling more than 330 feet.**

## May Valley Basin Steward

by Brent Lackey

Many in May Valley have already come to know Brent Lackey, who is the "Basin Steward" for the May Creek watershed. Actually his title is Lake Washington/Sammamish River Basin Steward, but that includes May Creek. The Basin Steward is to serve as a liaison and technical resource for residents, businesses, and other organizations in the watershed for issues related to water resources and their management.

Secondly he will spearhead the implementation of the newly adopted May Creek Basin Action Plan. He will work with residents of the entire watershed, and especially May Valley and MVEC, to pursue solutions to the flooding problems in the Valley. He also will be working on projects to improve water quality and fish habitat.

You may be asked to give him or other County staff brief permission to access the creek on your property in their current efforts to get the beaver dams

out of May Valley. However, he does not act in an enforcement capacity, and will not be coming onto property, public or private, for that purpose.

Brent is from Bishop, a small rural town in Eastern California and has attended many Bishop "Mule Days" celebrations. In fact Brent's family has been involved with mules and horses throughout his life, since his dad is a cowboy from west Texas. After graduating from the University of California at Santa Barbara with an Economics degree in 1990, Mr. Lackey moved to the Seattle area 10 years ago. He completed a Masters degree in watershed management and public policy at the University of Washington in 1996. He has been with the County for the past seven years and has been the basin steward for the last three.

He is a resource that is intended for our use as basin residents, so if you have questions or interests related to the

May Creek watershed you should not hesitate to call on him. His phone number is 206-296-8321.



**Brent Lackey**  
Basin Steward.

---

## The Marvelous Plan

*A Poem by Douglas Bandelin*

Flooding erosion and fish  
 Flooding erosion and fish  
 Oh, we're off to see Glenn Evans  
 and tell him about the plan

The plan... the plan... the plan... the plan .....  
 The wonderful MVEC plan

It's all about the little fish  
 And flooding, erosion too  
 It's all contained within the plan  
 That MVEC brought to you



*Douglas Bandelin, although known for his poetry, also has spent many hours on the Technical Team researching May Valley issues.*

### MEETINGS:

**Each Monday**

**7 PM @ Leonard's**

## The Plan

*(Continued from page 1)* provide increased floodwater conveyance and decreased backwater flooding.

The immediate priorities of DNR staff are removing the beaver dams this summer and finding a workable solution for Julianne Bruce. They

will also start designing the pilot projects for channel clearing. The plan is for the County to find a path through the labyrinth of governmental regulations that we can all use to clean out our portions of the creek. That will undoubtedly require

continued political pressure, particularly at the state and federal level, *so don't relax yet.* County staff will need all our help.

**Call MVEC for your copy of the 2001 Plan.**



*A track-hoe demolished the house and dug out the septic tank.*



*Project site as finished, with the former septic tank hole filled in with water from the creek. Will a child fall into this hole?*

## County Buys Creek Property

*by Kathy Jones*

During the month of April 2001 King County began work on demolishing the house at 164th and SE May Valley Road. MVEC met the project team at the site which included Glen Evans, County Engineer, Catherine Neal, Project Manager, Paul Adler, Ecologist and Brent Lackey, Basin Steward. Reasons for buying the property and demolishing the house were as follows: property owners were ready to put \$10,000 into upgrading the house so the County had to move quickly before the price of the house went up, the property was felt to be

a key place to hold storm flow storage according to Paul Adler; it was an opportunity to show May Valley residents that the County is ready and willing to correct problems in May Valley; the property is the parcel next to the bridge where the culvert needs to be enlarged, plus it holds a beaver dam which frequently needs to be removed. The County also wanted to remove fill that they believed had been dumped next to the creek. The fill turned out to be silt removed from the ditch in previous dredgings. The

material was trucked off the site.

Approximate costs for this project was \$160,000 for the property and \$140,000 to remove the house and restore the site.

MVEC questions allowing the septic tank hole to fill up with water channeled in from the creek because of concerns of contamination from drainfield residue.



## Flooding, Erosion and Fish

*(Continued from page 2)*  
we had none in 1980. Barbee Mill now must dredge annually instead of every 6 or 7 years. Unlike 1980, we now have neighbor's homes and businesses in the floodplain, not to mention wells, septic systems, and outbuildings. The fish are gone. Unlike this year's Mariners, those new regulations have battered zero for 4.

The 2001 plan that just passed finally has one recommendation that deals with the core problems of the basin – flooding, erosion and fish. It calls for pilot projects, designed by county experts, who

will attempt to weave through the quagmire of county regulation and figure out a way to let us maintain our ditch. The very health of our basin and the people and animals in it depend on their success. Rest assured that if they hit insurmountable roadblocks in the regulations, we will have to go back to the County Council to remove those roadblocks. One unfortunate side affect of all the regulations is that it now costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to argue the merits of even the most obvious of solutions to the regulators. Obtaining

those dollars is something the Council will have to commit to in the next budget for this plan to succeed.



*Rod has spent many hours on the Technical Team researching issues for MVEC.*

### May Valley History:

#### "The Rock"

- **The "Rock" at 148th Ave SE is actually a rock ledge over 500 ft. in width and of unknown length.**
- **This natural rock weir protects "The Canyon" from erosion**
- **Without this weir, all of May Valley would have been scoured by the rushing water making a canyon 300 ft deep!**

## Mine Shaft Revealed

*(Continued from page 2)*  
May Valley Logging Company. Part of the coal tipple still exists on the Redmonds' property. You can still see today the old log beams that were used to timber the air shaft.

### Join the May Valley Environmental Council

#### Benefits:

- **Protect your property by ensuring the implementation of the 2001 May Valley Basin Plan**
- **Monitor the activities of relevant governmental agencies**
- **Protect May Valley quality of life**

***Just \$40/year and all the Newsletters you can read!***

# A Message from the President



**“Be Vigilant!”**, says MVEC President Rick Spence. “We need to keep the pressure on the County to follow through with the Basin Plan *as passed*.

“The County has shown some interest already by requesting permission to enter

resident’s property to verify beaver dam obstructions. We need to keep their feet to the fire. One way to keep May Valley on the radar”, Rick continued, “would be to increase MVEC membership. The more members MVEC has, the more we’re a force to be reckoned

with. Talk with your friends and neighbors, explain to them about “The Rock”, show them how we’re going to get the ditch cleaned. Together we can get this project done!



---

## *May Valley Environmental Council*

15125 SE May Valley Road  
Renton, WA 98059  
(425) 656-9401  
Email: [mvec@mayvalley.com](mailto:mvec@mayvalley.com)



**Don't let our valley disappear!**

