



**new** Search Archives

### Letters

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

#### Why Watersheds?

5 O'Clock News »

Announcements »

City of Rohnert Park News »

Classifieds »

Columns »

**new** Community Calendar »

Contact Info »

Contact Us Form »

Health, Beauty & Fitness »

Home »

Home & Garden »

Kids & Pets »

Letters to the Voice »

Links »

Magnified »

News Articles »

Nightlife Calendar »

Order Photos »

Police Report »

Real Estate »

Special Sections »

Sports »

Last weeks editorial column pointed out the newly installed signs in the area that designates watershed boundaries and questioned their purpose. By acknowledging the signs you did exactly what they were designed to do, begin a public dialog about what watersheds are and educating people about why they are important.

The simplest definition of a watershed is all the land area that drains to a common outlet. For example, the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed is all the land area that drains out the Laguna channel into the Russian River. The Laguna is a sub-watershed of the Russian River watershed. To a smaller scale, Copeland creek watershed is contained within the Laguna watershed. A watershed can cover states, as the Colorado River does, or a small stream like Cotati Creek.

Who cares about watersheds? Anyone who cares about our drinking water supplies, flood control and the arrival of pathogens like West Nile Virus should be interested in the concept of watersheds. The science of hydrology uses watersheds as a natural unit of study, as there are very few naturally defined boundaries in the landscape. Hydrologists study watersheds to understand groundwater recharge and how to protect neighborhoods from flooding.

Why identify watersheds with signs? There is an old saying that I'll modify for the purposes of a family paper: "Excrement" rolls down hill. With watersheds, excrement washes down hill. Some portion of any fertilizer or pesticide that is used in your yard will wash off your property and further down the watershed, either ending up in a creek or in the ground water. We've all heard about the problem with invasive Ludwigia choking the Laguna and sheltering mosquitoes that can carry West Nile Virus. You may know that excess nutrients are contributing to the problem. If you know you live in the Laguna watershed, you may then think twice about dumping a 25 lb. sack of nitrogen on your lawn and consider other options.

Having a basic understanding of watersheds, which one you live in and how your everyday actions can have an impact will help us address our current and future challenges regarding that precious, life-giving substance - water.

**Wade Belew**

**Stewardship Coordinator**

**Cotati Creek Critters**

[Print this story](#) | [Email this story](#) |

#### Stocks Market Watch



Index	Last Trade	Change
NASDAQ	2547.42	22.13 ▲
S P 500	1514.14	12.95 ▲
Russ 2000	820.20	6.02 ▲
AMEX	2259.73	9.34 ▲
NYSE	9825.43	60.70 ▲
30 YR BOND	48.74	-0.10 ▼

May 16, 2007 10:16 PM ET  
ComStock 20 min. delayed

