



## DRAFT PRESS RELEASE

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### **Emergency Project to Repair Failing Green Valley Road Starts on Tuesday**

**Sebastopol, CA** – Heavy rain from the latest series of storms resulted in Green Valley Creek, a major tributary to the Russian River, jumping its banks and charting a new course over Green Valley Road. The creek’s passage has covered this highly traveled road in west Sonoma County with swiftly flowing water and damaged the pavement, creating a safety hazard for cars, cyclists and pedestrians (see photo, below). The new course over Green Valley Road also puts sensitive aquatic species, such as coho salmon, at risk as the creek flows out of its natural channel.

In response, the Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District (RCD), the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works (TPW), and the Sonoma County Water Agency (Water Agency) are working on an emergency repair that will begin on Tuesday, February 14. A community meeting will be held at 4 p.m., Friday, February 10, at the Sanchiotti barn, 10076 Green Valley Road, at the corner of Sullivan Road, to describe the project to neighbors.

“It’s amazing what can happen when government works with nonprofit agencies and neighbors to find solutions,” said Sonoma County Supervisor Lynda Hopkins. “This temporary fix will greatly improve the safety for people traveling through the area, and will allow us breathing room to continue working on a restoration plan for Green Valley Creek.”

The emergency repair will allow Green Valley Creek to remain in its natural channel by removing sediment that is clogging the creek channel in the area near Green Valley Road. Over the past decade the capacity of Green Valley Creek's channel has been reduced by sedimentation, to the point where the majority of flows are now forced outside the natural channel and over Green Valley Road.

Past high flow events have stranded endangered coho salmon, steelhead trout and California freshwater shrimp. These species are now at more of a risk of stranding as the majority of flows are now flowing outside of the natural Green Valley Creek channel.

The flooding also creates a serious public safety hazard, and has damaged both the road surface and a downstream vineyard. Because of damage to the road surface, TPW closed the road to traffic on Thursday, February 9. Due to the severity of this year's wet weather, the rate of sedimentation has increased to the point where most of the water in Green Valley Creek is going across the road, and the creek is abandoning its existing channel and establishing a new channel through the vineyard.

Due to the threat to both public safety and sensitive species, Water Agency crews will remove non-native vegetation and sediment to deepen and widen the channel parallel to the road to keep the water and fish in its natural channel. This effort will take approximately one week. Once the creek is no longer flowing over the roadway, TPW crews will begin repairing the pavement as soon as possible. The RCD, which has been coordinating an effort to identify a long-term solution to the creek flowing over Green Valley Road, is working with resource agencies to obtain the necessary permits and is coordinating community outreach and a restoration plan.

"The RCD and I are committed to the health of this creek. We'll continue to seek funding for a long-term solution that will preserve the road, preserve the creek, and protect our local salmonid populations," said Supervisor Hopkins.

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