

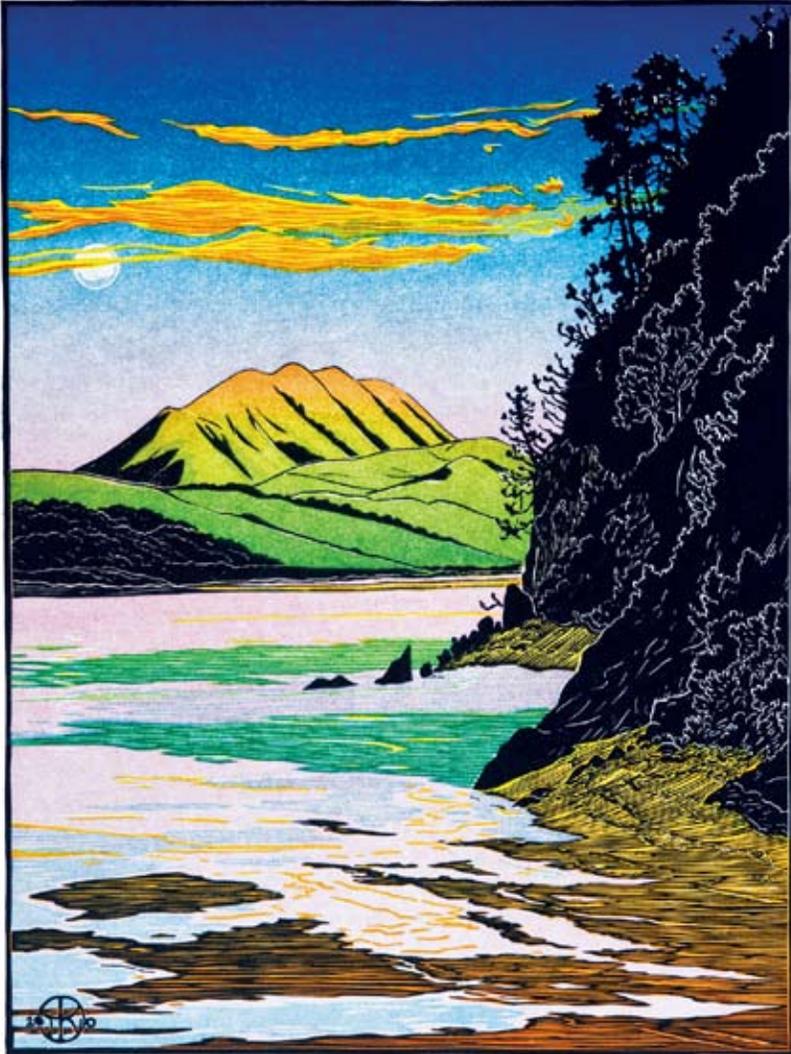
SPRING 2010

The Bagpiper

INVERNESS ASSOCIATION



**RENEW YOUR
MEMBERSHIP!**



Shell Beach, Tomales Bay

Woodblock print by Inverness artist Tom Killion

"This is a winter, low tide scene, just at sunset, when the alpenglow is coming over Inverness Ridge and lighting the top of Black Mountain."

Killion's limited edition Japanese style wood cut prints are available through his website, www.tomkillion.com, where you can also read a description of his craft.

SUMMER EVENTS

Fourth of July Races!

10 a.m. by the Firehouse

IA Annual Meeting

7 p.m. Saturday, July 10

Inverness Yacht Club

Presentation: The Chicken Ranch Beach
Restoration Project

Meet Your Friends and Neighbors at The Inverness Fair

10 a.m. Saturday August 14

[Pancakes at 8 a.m.]

Food! Games!

Music! Community Booths!

Flea Market! Art Wall!

Book Sale!

Dancing in the Street!

Plan Ahead: Tomales Bay Watershed Council

State of the Bay Conference

October 22-23



Chicken Ranch Beach in 1906. See page 3.

redirect	fill	maintain	reuse	enhance	lower
raise	retain	construct	realign	lengthen	
remove	install	excavate	re-vegetate	demolish	

THESE ARE THE ACTIVE verbs that jump out of the Chicken Ranch Beach Restoration Project Report prepared by the Kamman hydrology and engineering firm for the Tomales Bay Watershed Council. They pepper the overview of Alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 4 that are the heart of the proposal. As a statement in the introduction understates, "Historical disturbances and environmental impacts, primarily caused by human activities, have altered the natural characteristics of the site." This history includes several generations of owners converting marshland to pasture and finally to an expansive homesite.

The saga of the cavalier interference with natural drainage that occurred during a recent owner's tenure on the key property at the bottom of Third Valley Creek lives on in a tangle of litigation settlements that still charges the area like scattered landmines. State ownership of one piece, county ownership of another and the current for sale listing of the main private parcel (owned by the Keller family) further complicate the situation as nobody wants to set off liability issues embedded in those complicated settlements. Meanwhile, documented pollution from Channel B drainage into Tomales Bay via the public beach remains a concern and is the reason for the warning sign posted on the beach.

Nevertheless, the Watershed Council, with the enthusiastic support of the Inverness Association, has forged ahead as best it can in times of budget constraint. Generous donations from Inverness residents and the IA, plus several key grants*, enabled the hydrology report this spring. For the first time there are specific actions described in a viable sequence. The report itemizes budgets for mitigation options right up to the dream team vision of buying the Keller (formerly Cirincione-Coles) property for \$1.9 million and undoing all the berm work and channeling that occurred there.

More realistically, the report shows us that smaller steps can take place to start a process of restoration that will make palpable changes to the beach area for the benefit of humans, plants and wildlife. The IA encourages all of us who treasure the resource of Chicken Ranch Beach to take the time to become informed about the process that is now in motion toward eventual restoration. There will be a presentation this summer at the Inverness Association Annual Meeting on this topic and graphics and copies of the report are going to be available at the local libraries. The TBWC website will also have the report on line at www.tomalesbaywatershed.org.

Yes, Virginia [or should I say "Kay"?], there is good news at Chicken Ranch Beach.
—Elizabeth Whitney

* \$76,000 from the State Coastal Conservancy; \$25,000 from the Marin Community Foundation; \$20,000 from Marin County; \$3,700 from the Inverness Foundation and \$10,000 from local contributions.

**Bridger Mitchell
to Join IA Board**

LONG TIME SUMMER RESIDENT and recent full-time resident Bridger Mitchell has agreed to serve on the Inverness Association Board of Directors. Bridger has a background in economic consulting; his expertise is in telecommunication. Now retired, he has moved full-time to Inverness with his wife Katherine.

He traces his Inverness roots to the early 50s when his family took refuge from the valley heat of Stockton for summer vacations. Bill Bridger was involved in founding the homeowners association for Teacher's Beach where he and his wife eventually retired and built a home. Many locals remember his mother, Ruth Mitchell, as the piano teacher with the house overlooking Tomales Bay. Bridger claims he was in the first El Toro class taught at the Yacht Club class in the early 1950s.

A familiar face at many local meetings, he applies his analytical mind to the complexities of staff reports and nuances of political shifts. He looks forward to helping Inverness achieve the goal of preserving the essential values of generations of residents while changing with the times. He is willing to offer "guidance and thoughtful vision" and looks forward to working with the Board, which he admires already for its diverse in skills and background.

PAMPAS GRASS ERADICATION UPDATE

LONG RECOGNIZED as a severely invasive plant, pampas grass is spreading along the banks of coastal roads. The Inverness Association in cooperation with other local organizations is seeking to control the spread of pampas grass in a responsible manner, without the use of herbicides and with care for erosion on steep embankments.

In November 2009 the Inverness Foundation provided the funds (\$5,000) to cut back flowering stalks of existing pampas grass along Sir Francis Drake in the Inverness area. This was done

to prevent the spread of seeds from the flowering stalks. Cutting the plant back does not kill it; it will sprout again.

In the summer of 2010, the plan is to treat all the pampas grass along Sir Francis Drake from Drakes View Drive to Camino del Mar by cutting down the stalks, removing the smaller plants and tying plastic over the larger clumps. This will kill these plants. New plants will likely sprout the following year, but can be managed. The budget for this is \$12,500. The Marin Community Foundation has granted \$10,000 for the project. Other monies came from local organizations.

In addition to aggressively controlling pampas grass along Sir Francis Drake, the IA encourages local residents to be vigilant in removing pampas grass on their property. Cautious, limited use of herbicides can be used on private property. IA director Julie Monson, a master gardener and Inverness Garden Association member, has been spearheading this effort.

<p>Inverness Association Post Office Box 382 Inverness, California 94937 www.invernessassociation.org</p>	<p><u>Memberships</u> Family \$45 Individual \$30</p>
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The Chicken Ranch Beach Restoration Project

THE CHICKEN RANCH BEACH RESTORATION PROJECT moved one giant step closer to realization this spring with the release of the “Restoration Feasibility and Conceptual Design Report” prepared by Kamman Hydrology & Engineering for the Tomales Bay Watershed Council. The Inverness Association and individuals in Inverness have been solid supporters of the TBWC since its inception in 2000 and many locals have been following the progress of the Chicken Ranch Beach Restoration with interest.

Since a year ago, funds have been moving to support the preparation of the critical report with the alternative scenarios proposed for restoration of the lower end of Third Valley Creek and Chicken Ranch Beach. The goals of the project specifically are:

1. Reduce sedimentation and bacteria to Tomales Bay.
2. Improve wetlands habitats.
3. Restore a functional floodplain along the bottom reaches of Third Valley Creek.
4. Improve aquatic and riparian habitat.

The highlights of the report are the four alternative scenarios for the physical realization of the goals stated above. These options are presented as a sequence of mitigations to the situation that start simply but conclude with a vision of complete restoration of the area involving buying a developed parcel, removing its structures and undoing all of the dikes, berms and illegal channels that have occurred in recent years.

The final alternative has a price tag that includes purchasing the key property for \$1.9 million—a daunting thought to all concerned. Nevertheless, the vision of a completely restored wetland with naturally flowing water and lagoons that offer a fully restored habitat of land and water is a dream solution, one that models the wetlands at Indian Beach further down the bay.

Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 present options that begin the process and address the situation of Channel B, the drainage channel that was dug in 1998 on the Cirincione-Coles property opening up an outflow of water that continues to raise issues of health and safety for Chicken Ranch Beach users. While no specific sources of contamination have been identified for the failing marks this waterway continues to get, the most immediate action in the restoration scenario addresses Channel B.

At the simplest level, the recommendation includes diverting water that drains from the hillside of Camino del Mar away

from Channel B via culvert across to the main channel of Third Valley Creek. The next level of engineering in Alternatives 2 and 3 would be eliminating Channel B entirely in favor of a marsh created by redirecting Third Valley Creek itself.

These scenarios are depicted in four detailed maps that show the progressive complexity and range of the project. In addition, a budget analysis projects the costs of each of the alternatives. The bottom line for Alternatives 1, 2, and 3 range from \$212,000 to \$285,000. Alternative 4, involving purchase of the property and full restoration of the marsh, a “fish-friendly” culvert, extensive re-vegetation and a redirected Third Valley Creek, is projected at \$2,919,000.



Chicken Ranch Beach (top photo) and Third Valley Creek on Tomales Bay. The notorious Channel B (bottom photo). Courtesy of Kamman Hydrology & Engineering, Inc.

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The recent film *Babies*, billed as a “wildlife film about human babies,” featured four babies from four cultures from birth to toddling. The trailer, viewable on YouTube, shows clips of the babies from Namibia, Mongolia, Japan and San Francisco. For a few seconds this image of Hattie from San Francisco with her father Frazer Bradshaw on Chicken Ranch Beach flashes by. According to her mother, Susie Wise, Chicken Ranch Beach is a favorite picnic spot for the family. Hattie is now four; in this image she is 18 months old. The movie, directed by Thomas Balmes, opened on Mother’s Day and is still in Bay Area theaters.

The Bagpiper

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IA Annual Meeting 7:00 p.m. July 10 at the Inverness Yacht Club

Inverness Foundation

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INVERNESS ASSOCIATION
INVERNESS FOUNDATION

The Inverness Association meets on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Jack Mason Museum.

The agenda is posted in advance on our website:

www.invernessassociation.org