

## Russian River Main Stem Descent *Russian River Confluence Initiative* August – October 2016

### Russian River Main Stem Descent Explorations

A 10-day 'Trek' of the Russian River, from the headwaters near Lake Mendocino to the river's mouth at Jenner, is comprised of three distinct, but connected, "paddle explorations" starting in late August of 2016. The purpose of this multi-day *Trek* is two-fold: to provide an opportunity for deeper understanding and collaboration going forward between public agencies, NGO's and Agriculture **and** to draw public awareness to land stewardship practices and impacts across all sectors of our community (public agencies, private business and residents alike). The Russian River winds its way through for over 100 miles through both ruggedly beautiful and pastoral landscapes in Mendocino County and Sonoma Counties to the Pacific Ocean, and yet human's impacts have begun to take a toll on its functioning and biota. The *Main Stem Descent* seeks to highlight these issues and seek in positive, collaborative fashion solutions that we all can participate bring to fruition.

The *Main Stem Descent* (Trek) of the Russian River will be comprised of three continuous explorations where participants will paddle, eat and sleep along the length of the River at lands both public and private land. Paddlers on each of the ten distinct days traversing the river will include leaders of public agencies, elected officials and heads of regional NGO's that relate to the vitality of the Russian River and its tributaries. LandPaths – the lead on coordinating overnight stays, local meals and other logistics for a safe and inspiring series of explorations – sees as paramount the hiring of local young people in supporting every aspect of the Trek. The third exploration, ending at the mouth of the Russian River in early October, will bookend the start of the trip in August by including a public invitation to join the last two days of paddling and camping as a community focused on the health of the River.

It is hoped that this trip will become but one in a series of annual Treks of this kind – highlighting the biotic and geographic beauty of the North Bay, the need for both government, private sector and residents to work harder, together, in caring for the Russian River and its sub-watersheds, and reveling in the sheer enjoyment that comes from healthy, passive-use outdoor activities available in Northern California.

### Background – LandPaths' TrekSonoma

LandPaths *TrekSonoma* began in 2009, inspired by models across the globe of groups of people '*immersing themselves in a given landscape*,' connecting multi-day journeys by virtue of local food, wine and overnight stays. To date, LandPaths has designed and led over a dozen such trips in Sonoma County on foot, by kayak/canoe and bike. In March of this year a group of 16 students from 5 different high schools participated in a trek from LandPaths' Bohemia Preserve near Camp Meeker, arriving four days later at the ocean by Shell Beach. Such trips showcase the truly interconnected nature of both public parklands and working landscapes in Sonoma County, the beauty of both our open space & cities with routes that enable the traveler to walk for multiple days, eating locally while marveling in a healthful walk or paddle rich in vistas and camaraderie, all without having to step into a vehicle. Supporting local businesses and creating an additional driver for green jobs and revenue for park operations and agricultural operators are key to the success of this endeavor.

LandPaths – 618 Fourth Street, Suite 217, Santa Rosa, CA 95404 ~  
*5 Nature Preserves Stewarded by and for the Public, Habitat Integrity & Local Food*

