

POND FARM UPDATE

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HISTORIC POND FARM TARGETED FOR PRESERVATION

A partnership including local, state and national organizations has come together to address critical preservation needs and create a vision for the future of Pond Farm. Partners hope that a success at Pond Farm could be used as a model for struggling historic sites and state parks in California and across the country.

Pond Farm includes two small residences and a historic barn repurposed as a pottery studio in the Austin Creek State Recreation Area in Sonoma County's Russian River Valley. The property's modest scale and design belie its historical importance as the home and studio of an internationally-prominent ceramicist, Marguerite Wildenhain. Since Marguerite's death in 1985, her home and the barn have been unoccupied and the elements and the lack of routine maintenance have taken their toll.



Pond Farm is in Austin Creek State Recreation Area

Pond Farm was the site of Pond Farm Workshops, an artist colony founded during World War II by San Francisco couple Gordon and Jane Herr. Among the European artists invited to teach was Marguerite Wildenhain, an early Bauhaus graduate who fled Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany and Holland to

start a new life in this remote Northern California outpost. While the artist colony was short lived, Marguerite stayed until her death in 1985, teaching at the nationally-renowned summer school at Pond Farm for three decades.

Pond Farm Partnership

California Department of Parks and Recreation

California State Parks Foundation

National Trust for Historic Preservation

Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods

PROP 84 PROVIDES \$443,245 FOR POND FARM

A proposal requesting \$443,245 in Prop 84 Cultural Stewardship funding was recently awarded to stabilize

and weatherproof Marguerite Wildenhain's house and the barn which served as her pottery teaching studio at

Pond Farm. The project is currently underway and is scheduled for completion in 2014.

POND FARM SELECTED BY NATIONAL TRUST AS A "NATIONAL TREASURE"

The National Trust for Historic Preservation selected Pond Farm as a "National Treasure," a designation awarded because the site is both na-

tionally significant and currently endangered. A team from the National Trust is working with local and state partners to address preserva-

tion needs and find appropriate new uses to sustain Pond Farm for future generations. To learn more about National Treasures visit:

www.savingplaces.org

POND FARM CONSIDERED FOR NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

A National Register of Historic Places nomination for Pond Farm is currently being prepared by Petaluma-based Terra Cognita Design and

Consulting. While most National Register properties are significant at the local or state level, a preliminary review by the California Office of His-

toric Preservation indicates that Pond Farm may qualify at the national level of significance.

REPORT FINDS \$2.5M IN PRESERVATION NEEDS

Architectural Resources Group, Inc. (ARG) completed a "Conceptual Rehabilitation Program Report" in January 2013 to provide cost estimates for different use

scenarios for Pond Farm. Costs were provided for basic stabilization as well as full rehabilitation. The full rehabilitation budget cost estimate of \$2.5M was used as

the basis for the successful Prop 84 grant proposal requesting funding for stabilization. The report was funded by a grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

STEWARDS OF THE COAST AND REDWOODS TAKES ON MANAGEMENT OF AUSTIN CREEK SRA

Austin Creek State Recreation Area was one of 70 of California's 278 state parks slated for closure in the summer of 2012 due to the state's fiscal crisis. To avoid

closure, the Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods has taken on the management of Austin Creek State Recreation Area. While closure has been averted for now, the ongoing

funding crisis for California State Parks continues to pose a direct threat to Pond Farm's survival. For more information visit:

stewardsofthecoastandredwoods.org

Pond Farm was a "sustainable sanctuary for artists away from a world gone amuck."

-Jonathan Herr

PUBLIC MEETING HELD TO GATHER INPUT ABOUT THE FUTURE OF POND FARM

Pond Farm partners hosted a public meeting in Guerneville on June 20, 2013 to gather input about the future of Pond Farm. The approximately thirty attendees included Gail Herr Steele, (daughter of Gordon and Jane Herr), several Pond Farmers, local artists and interested citizens.

Discussion included observations on both Marguerite Wildenhain's legacy as well as the artist colony founded by Gordon and Jane Herr. For many attendees, the significance of Pond Farm centered around Marguerite's disciplined philosophy of education with a focus on simplicity, humility and elegance.

Participants discussed the Guerneville area's appeal for recreation and relaxation including extended summer

stays. The natural beauty of the area and proximity to San Francisco add to the appeal, and there is a growing artist community.

Ideas for future uses ranged from arts-related uses such as a workshop venue, gallery, studio space or an artist-in-residence to community uses including other types of seminars or retreats.

Many participants expressed a strong desire to ensure that all activities at the site be respectful and in keeping with Marguerite's philosophies.

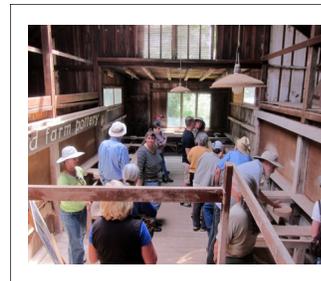
A variety of

suggestions were provided to interpret Pond Farm's legacy including living history, films and educational workshops. Participants noted opportunities to restore the buildings, the landscape and gardens as well as Pond Farm traditions such as afternoon tea.

While participants had different opinions about future uses

there was consensus that Pond Farm is worthy of preservation. For those who missed the public meeting, a survey is available to gather feedback. To provide input, email:

mluna@mcn.org



Pond Farm's studio has many original features including the original pottery wheels.