



*2024 - 2025 Holiday Greetings to visitors, friends and benefactors of  
The Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project*

**2025 Demonstration Run Dates**

**May 17-18, June 14-15 (Fathers Day), Aug. 2-3 and Sept. 13-14**

*The President's Message Tom Schaeffer*



**Steam Up Day**

No longer the small hours of the morning, but the sun has yet to spill the light of a new day into the canyon that hides a piece of Sonoma County History. Sounds in the air are that only of nature. Breaking the stillness are the first rustlings of the earliest crew members readying the boilers for firing up. The Atlas boiler roars to life bringing its chilled water to steam that is needed to power the mill's five steam engines. Out in the yard, wood smoke curls from the stack of "Big Willie" the Willamette Steam Donkey. The sweet rising aroma of the wood fire evokes memories of my childhood and the time spent with my grandfather here at the mill.

The feel of the morning has now changed. As more crew members show themselves and begin their duties in preparation for the crowds, the mood has gone from quiet enthusiasm to that of a party. As our volunteers bring their greetings and laughter to the 9:00 meeting, the topic of safety is always the focus. Car club parking strategy, docent placement and finish up the meeting with lunch vouchers for all the volunteers.

Before our 10:00 am start, visitors are already filing in. First time guests are all aglow at the sight of our antique displays and uniqueness of the mill's grounds and gardens. Guests who have previously visited are anticipating and ready with plugged ears as the 10:00 whistle screams the start of daily demonstrations. With the mill in full operation, the feeling changes to what I describe of that as a carnival. Not to be confused with that of a circus. We reserve that atmosphere for our monthly workdays. Docents are busy introducing our visitors to the many stages a log goes through to start its new life as lumber. Lumber that built the west coast and California as a whole and some cities more than once due to fire and earthquakes. Another long startling blast of the whistle announces "Lunch Time", one of my favorite meals of the day, followed by breakfast and dinner.



As the symphony the sawmill creates subsides and the crew

Morning Safety Meeting

takes it lunch break, an even sweeter melody fills the ears, the Bohemian Ukulele Band is plucking out a lively tune and everyone is singing along with enjoyment. The Cook Shack volunteers have been preparing for hours for the noontime rush and they don't disappoint when it comes to serving up hot fresh fare. All too soon and no time for a nap, the one o'clock whistle summons the crew back to work demonstrating with renewed vigor on how many steps it takes to produce a board. From Sawyer to Edger Man to Trim Sawyer to stacking in the yard, a board is touched by many calloused hands and every step along the way thought was given to how that board could be made and made safely. All of us are proud to say that no serious injuries have occurred in our mill since its inception. Safety is always as the forefront.

Another ear blasting whistle, this one longer and louder, if that is even possible, bringing the day to an end. The atmosphere is still buzzing and guests have not yet gotten their fill of having looked back in time at steam powered redwood sawmilling. But tomorrow is another day with still another chance to step back a century or more to see a small slice in the life of a sawmill worker and the machinery of the time.

As we ready Sturgeons Mill for our 2025 season, I would like to thank our 50 plus volunteers for all their time, hard work and their dedication making Sturgeons Mill a success. To all who have visited and made donations and grants, a huge "Thank You" for your past and hopefully continued support moving us into the future, without you it cannot be possible. Looking forward to seeing you all at our future events.

### ***Woodland Gardens Essie Doty, Secretary/Treasurer***

The Woodland Gardens are so peaceful. Just sitting on a bench and viewing the beautiful redwood trees, shrubs and wonderful peaceful greenery is so relaxing. Wade and Esther Sturgeon probably had no idea the gardens would be such a pleasure for hundreds of folks all those many years ago when they first started planting native plants and flowers. In time they added azaleas, hydrangeas and rhododendrons that were enjoyed by visitors. There are Camellia trees that must be 60 or more years old that bloom from December thru March every year. There are also Pacific Dogwood trees, Magnolias, Pink Eucalyptus and so many more have been planted over the years. The ponds were once filled with water lilies of various colors. The sides were edged with attractive quartz from a gold mine located at the head of Willow Creek in west Sonoma County.



In 2009 the gardens became part of the Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project. At that time work began to restore the gardens to their previous beauty. It has been a work in progress with the dedicated help of several knowledgeable people it is again becoming a special spot for visitors. Wade did not want the gardens to become formal and requested they be called "Woodland Gardens" and we honor his wishes.

### ***Editor's Corner Harvey Henningsen, Board Member***

As we head towards the holidays, we send our best wishes and our annual newsletter to keep you abreast of what's going on at Sturgeon's Mill during the winter months. We have added a new column to our newsletter called "Donors Corner" written by board member Bill Hanson. Bill has a lifetime of career experience in fundraising for the boards he has sat on. Several years ago, Bill was instrumental in raising money so that we could acquire a newer safer forklift to move the milled lumber from the sawmill to appropriate lumber storage racks. This





year Bill had another grant approved so our working museum can get multiple sound systems at points of interest to benefit our visitors on their docent led tours. Bill is willing to work with Legacy donors, Foundations and advanced Estate planning.

Our cook shack lost some crew members this year as a result of volunteers moving out of state. Historically the cooks at the cook shack at the early sawmills were the most important crewmembers. No one ever wanted to make the cook shack crew mad if they wanted to eat great meals. If you like creating in the kitchen, cooking and serving up great meals you would be a valued addition to our volunteer cook shack crew. If interested, please contact us through our website.

Our amazing volunteer crew continues to expand the sawmill's history center. We plan to enhance our historical photo collection and create displays that help tell the story of our sawmill's history.

We send you holiday greetings with hopes that we will see you again next year during our demonstration runs on the weekends of May 17-18, June 14-15, August 2-3 and September 13-14. If you have guests coming from out of the area on one of our demonstration run dates there could be no better place to take them to experience real, local, California history than Sturgeon's Mill.

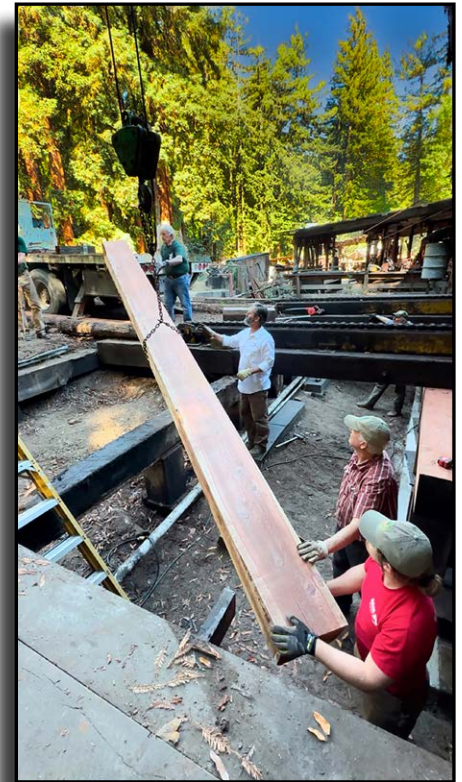
### ***Nuts & Bolts, Sawdust & Steam Harvey Henningsen, Restoration Founder***

We've had another successful year of helping 4000 + visitors from all over the world step back into history at our 111-year-old steam powered sawmill working museum. Our sawmill located in a canyon under the Redwoods which is the source of cool relief on hot summer days has turned the sawmill and surrounding grounds into a permanent damp seasonal refrigerator during the late fall, winter and early spring. By the time visitors arrive next year in late spring on the weekend of May 17 and 18th for our first demonstration run of the 2025 season warm dry weather will have returned to Sturgeon's Mill.

Who would want to come work in a damp cold canyon during the winter? Well, that would be 30 of our faithful crew of who come on the first Saturday of every month to continue to expand the historical features of our sawmill and make repairs. It is amazing to see these volunteers cluster around the bonfire during our safety meetings on cold days. The volunteers that are present are happy to be at the monthly work days and ready to give our sawmill some love. The restoration work goes on year-round at Sturgeon's Mill.

Since the Mill closed down in September our crew has been working on some pressing restoration projects to benefit our visitors' movements and insure their safety. One major project has been to remove and replace all of the 3 x 12" Douglas fir slabs and some of the 12x12" Redwood beams that support the log deck where the logs are rolled into the sawmill. Because our working museum sawmill is so very old there are constant inspections and replacements of older lumber and beams to insure the safety for visitors and our crew.

Our working museum is looking for new crewmembers who are interested in guiding visitors around the mill, telling its history and explaining how things work. If you are a people-person and have an interest in history, machinery, and how things work we would like you to reach out to us at our website to volunteer to become part of our friendly crew as a docent. Our docents have the most important volunteer jobs. They are our crewmembers that help our visitors understand the history of our sawmill and help our visitors understand how things work.



Student Education day for 4th-12th graders will be Thursday, April 24, 2025. Interested teachers and parents please send an email to [hhartist@sonic.net](mailto:hhartist@sonic.net)

## ***Donors' Corner William Hanson, Board Member***

The Mill is supported by generous gifts by those who love what we do and help us keep the Mill in good working order. Your cash donations, raffle tickets, merchandise purchases are all part of our operating fund. One of our primary goals is to operate without an entry or parking fee, making the Mill open to all. We are also supported by gifts from individuals, businesses, foundations and legacy planning.

There are many ways to make a legacy gift to Sturgeons Mill Living History Museum while fulfilling your financial goals. Legacy gifts can offer tax advantages and, in some cases, generate lifetime income. There are more advanced estate planning donations that may be beneficial to donor(s) during their lifetime.

Businesses donate directly and by donating goods and services. Many businesses have Foundations that accept grant applications. You can help the Mill by recommending our request for funding and stand with us during the application and award process.

Contact: William Hanson Donation Coordinator at [div4ab@gmail.com](mailto:div4ab@gmail.com) (707) 483-9336 call or text  
Any estate, tax advantaged and long term giving are done with the advice of your professional advisor.



***Your financial support is needed.  
Please send tax deductible donations to:***

### ***Sturgeon's Mill Restoration Project***

**2150 Green Hill Road  
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[www.sturgeonsmill.com](http://www.sturgeonsmill.com)  
707-829-2479**

**2025 Run Dates, 10 AM to 3 PM (no dogs, please):**

**May 17-18**

**June 14-15 (Father's day)**

**August 2-3**

**September 13-14**

