

47 Years of Environmental News

Arcata, California Vol. 48, No. 6 Dec 2018/Jan 2019

ECONEWS

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NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT?

A PROPOSED SIX-STORY
HOTEL ON TRINIDAD
BLUFF SPARKS
COMMUNITY CONCERNS

Activist Author Terry Tempest Williams | Sea Level Rise Threatens Humboldt Bay

North Coast Otters Project | Rezoning Threatens Waterways | Kin to the Earth: Richard Marks

NEWS FROM THE CENTER

Larry Glass, Executive Director,
and Bella Waters, Admin &
Development Director

It seems that each time we get focused on a new issue, an old issue that's been on the back burner for some time suddenly surges to the forefront again. Such is the case with Mercer Fraser and their unrelenting desire to build hash labs on or near floodplains. One of the projects is near the Big Rock Day Use Area and Trinity Valley Elementary School in Willow Creek. The other project is Mercer-Fraser's gravel operation on Glendale Rd., near the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District's intake wells next to the Mad River. The Willow Creek project hearing is scheduled for the December 4 Board of Supervisors meeting. The Glendale project is also scheduled for a December Board of Supervisors meeting.

Another cannabis project that our Planning Commission has rubber stamped is a huge cannabis manufacturing facility just down the road from Dinsmore on an old, contaminated mill site, in the 100 year flood plain. The proponents of this project call it "Sensi Valley." It is

being promoted by a controversial figure named Sean Trainor, who owns an island near Panama. This project is his latest in a string of attempts to set up shop in the Emerald Triangle. He seems to be unconcerned and unwilling to address the contamination on the site. The facilities would also be located on the floodplain, potentially putting his workers and his operation at risk during a serious storm event. Two of our member groups, Friends of the Eel River and Humboldt Baykeeper, filed an appeal of the Humboldt County Planning Commission's decision to approve the Sensi Valley project in the floodplain of the Van Duzen River. If you're concerned about the County's willingness to roll over for these cannabis entrepreneurs, show up during the appeal hearing and speak out! No date has been set at this point, but we will be following the issue and keep you updated.

More public input to the Planning Commission about the actions they are taking is necessary to make sure that they don't continue to use the excuse that they aren't hearing complaints from the public about their proposed actions.

Two scheduled Planning Commission meetings that we know about are December 6 and December 20. Some of the proposed actions being taken could reshape the desired rural character of the county. One such potential action that they will be discussing at an upcoming meeting is allowing the building of many McMansions in the Fieldbrook and McKinleyville portions of Green Diamond's industrial timber property.

As for some good news, the Great Redwood Trail Act (SB 1029) was signed by Governor Brown. Initially the Act would have dissolved the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA), railbank the railroad line, and create a world class trail system through the Eel River Canyon. As signed by Governor Brown, the Act removes almost all of NCRA's previous mandate to oversee freight rail and instead specifies that trails are the NCRA's new priority. Completing the trail will take years, with an estimated cost of close to \$100 million. However, once complete,



this multi-use trail will allow people to view and experience the Eel River Canyon in ways only previously available by train travel in the 1950s. A big tip of the hat to Jason Liles, Senator McGuire's key staff person who worked tirelessly on this issue and will continue to expertly steer this lengthy project in the right direction.

As for what's happening in the office, staff are busy analyzing the data as it comes in from our member programs and issues survey, which will help us fine-tune our priorities for the coming years. If you're a NEC member and haven't... →

ECONEWS

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EcoNews is the official bi-monthly publication of the **Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC)**, a non-profit organization. Third class postage paid in Arcata. ISSN No. 0885-7237. EcoNews is mailed to our members and distributed free throughout the Northern California and Southern Oregon bioregion. The subscription rate is \$50 per year.

The ideas and views expressed in EcoNews are not necessarily those of the NEC.



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Cover: Photo-illustration of the proposed Trinidad Rancheria hotel by Tim Sheppard. (More information on page 4).

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News from the Center Continued from previous page

...participated in the survey, be sure to do so by December 31 (contact us at bella@yournec.org for the link to the survey).

If you're hungry for current environmental news, be sure to check out the EcoNews Roundup on KHSU the fourth Thursday of each month. You can also find prior recordings on our website at www.yournec.org/econews-report.

We want to thank those who came out for our Wilderness Movie Night in October. We had a very enthusiastic and engaged turnout, including some of the stars of the show, local environmental activist Lynn Ryan and regional activist Ryan Hensen. We're planning another movie night in February, so stay tuned for that. Other upcoming events are our Annual Open House on Thursday, January 24, and our most exciting fundraiser of the Spring, the Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, March 9.

We would like to publicly express our heartfelt thanks to Coastal Programs Coordinator Madison Peters for all her energy, creativity, enthusiasm and passion for clean oceans that she used to enhance our coastal programs these last five years. Madison recently graduated from HSU, and will be traveling with her partner and their cat in their custom-built van! Casey Cruikshank, our current Office Assistant, is stepping up and taking on the Coastal Programs Coordinator position, using her knowledge and passion for clean beaches to continue the positive momentum of these programs. (A photo of Madison appears on page 10.)

As we continue to cover our ever evolving staffing needs, we want to introduce our newly hired Office Assistant, Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson. Rhiannon is a Humboldt native who is very interested in working locally to protect our beautiful region. She recently completed a year-long internship with the Center for Biological Diversity in Oakland. A proper introduction to Rhiannon will be included in the next EcoNews issue.

With many staff changes we're thrilled to have Tiffany Perez continue assisting with day-to-day tasks to help the NEC respond to member requests, process memberships and donations and plan fun, community gathering events. In January we'll be interviewing our spring interns. A list of those opportunities are available on our website.

We are excited to welcome new, energetic people to our team who will ensure our continued ability to be a watchdog for bad projects that will negatively impact our environment, while also educating our community and celebrating the beauty and amazing diversity of Northwest California, the place we call home.



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VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Jason Slyter

Adopt-a-Block volunteer

Being a long time Eureka resident, I have felt that the NEC and its Adopt-a-Block program has helped educate the public on the importance of protecting our common spaces to make our town a safer, cleaner place to be a part of. Every little bit counts. We're all in this together.

Photo courtesy of Jason Slyter.



Need gifts for the Holidays?

NEC merchandise and memberships make great gifts!

We have a limited selection of t-shirts, hoodies, and hats in stock, so stop by the office to pick up yours today!

Call 707-822-6918 for information, or just stop by!

415 I St (around the corner from Richard's Goat) in Arcata.

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BOUQUETS

Thanks to all who came out for our Movie Night, and a special thanks to **Adventure's Edge, Bigfoot Trail Alliance, and Dan Sealy** for donating raffle prizes, plus **Arcata Pizza & Deli** and **Paul's Live from New York** for pizza, **Humboldt Creamery** for ice cream, the **Tofu Shop**, and **Arise Bakery**.

Bouquets to **Garden Gate** for hosting NEC and supplying the wine during December's Arts Arcata!

Bouquets of eternal gratitude to **Madison Peters** for her dedication to educating our community on the importance of clean beaches, organizing the last five years of Coastal Cleanup Day and for being an extraordinary human.
You will be missed!

2018 Year in Review

Bella Waters and Dan Sealy

This Year's Accomplishments

2018 was another successful and challenging year at the NEC! The following list features some of the many issues and events we worked on or were involved with.

- The NEC closely scrutinized the Humboldt Communities Services District's desire to annex the Indianola area, potentially bringing city water there and to the Redmond Road area. Fortunately, this was not approved. If it had been, it would have resulted in many subdivisions and "McMansions" in this currently forested area between Eureka and Arcata.
- Educated the community on the revival of the environmentally destructive east-west railroad concept and the concept's supporters.
- Organized a Board of Supervisors Candidate Questionnaire to ensure our community was informed regarding the positions of the candidates on important environmental issues affecting Humboldt County. Also participated in community forums with the Humboldt supervisorial candidates, and Eureka mayoral and City Council candidates.
- Supported Supervisor Mike Wilson's resolution that gives direction to incorporate anti-offshore oil policy into Humboldt County's Local Coastal Plan (LCP) update. The resolution was passed unanimously by the Board of Supervisors and is the strongest local way to protect our coast from offshore oil drilling.
- In collaboration with Humboldt Baykeeper and EPIC, called for and received the resignation of Humboldt County Planning Commissioner Kevin McKenny. Mr. McKenny had been served with a Notice of Violation and a Cleanup and Abatement Order by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB), placing him on notice that he violated numerous federal and state laws, which is unacceptable for a Planning Commissioner.
- Brought back the popular EcoNews Report Roundup, a monthly overview of current news stories hosted by Larry Glass and Bella Waters.
- Thanks to amazing supporters, we launched a new website that's easier to use, update, and is viewable on various mobile devices.
- Through the work of our Program

Coordinators Anne Maher and Casey Cruikshank, the NEC's Adopt-a-Block program has grown to 28 volunteers! They gathered 18,034 cigarette butts and 2,107 pounds of debris from our streets, storefronts and trails.

- Our Coastal Program Coordinator Madison Peters organized another vital and successful Coastal Cleanup Day, removing over seven tons of trash from our waterways and

bringing together over 800 volunteers.

- Organized the successful All Species Parade in collaboration with Arcata Playhouse, Jessy Jonathan, and Bandemonium.
- In the spring, we partnered with Redwood Region Audubon Society to co-sponsor the Fourth Annual Tim McKay Memorial Birdathon, which was a flocking success.



Supported these state bills:

- SB 835—State Parks Smoking Ban, and SB 836, both of which were vetoed by the Governor but are now before the Senate. These bills would ban smoking in state parks and on state beaches, greatly reducing the amount of litter that's affecting wildlife and water courses and will also address public health concerns associated with smoking. In addition to the fines imposed by both bills, the NEC encouraged adequate funding of personnel to be able to enforce these regulations.
- SB 1335—Sustainable Take-Out Food Packaging for State Parks, Beaches, and Facilities. Approved by the Governor, SB 1335 ensures that food packaging is made of sustainable materials and the used packaging is captured for recycling and composting at a rate of 75 percent or higher at our state parks and beaches.
- AB 2369—Preventing Poaching in Marine Protected Areas. Approved by the Governor, AB 2369 will create more stringent penalties for commercial and party boat poaching in marine protected areas (MPAs), and prohibit a fishing license or permit from being transferred when enforcement action is being taken or there is an ongoing investigation into poaching activity by the license or permit holder.



Photo, above: Coastal Cleanup Day volunteers getting supplies. Photo: Megan Bunday. Below, left: Casey Cruikshank and Megan Bunday carry the NEC banner in the All Species Parade. Photo: Adam Taylor.

Other Important Highlights

- Weighed in on the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for Titlow Hill area illegal subdivisions controversy with the County.
- Continued to engage with Humboldt County over its cannabis ordinances to ensure reasonable enforcement efforts are included with the permitted expansions.
- Educated the community on the Planning Commission's decision for a zoning change for another toxic chemical cannabis extraction facility at Big Rock in Willow Creek, near the popular swimming hole and a few feet from the 100 year flood zone.
- Continued to work with Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests towards better forest management and fuels reduction.
- Submitted comments in response to the Trinidad Rancheria Hotel Project's Environmental Assessment.
- Provided comments in response to Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants: Listing Species and Designating Critical Habitat; and Endangered and Threatened Species: Revision of Regulations for Prohibitions to Threatened Wildlife and Plants; and opposed the de-listing of the Gray Wolf (*Canis lupus*).
- Continued to participate with Congressman Jared Huffman's staff in preparation for the introduction of his Northern California Conservation and Recreation Act (HR 6596) in the House of Representatives in coordination with Senator Kamala Harris's introduction of the Act in the Senate.
- Continued to support and advocate for the Northern California Great Redwood Trail and the dismantling of the North Coast Railroad Authority.

All of these accomplishments and projects wouldn't be possible without your support, so thank you! Please consider donating, renewing or gifting NEC membership in the coming year to help us continue our important work.

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Trinidad Hotel Proposal Sparks Community Concerns



This digitally-edited image offers an idea of the visual impact the current hotel proposal would have on the viewshed of the Trinidad Bay shoreline. The photo of the Hyatt Hotel was provided in the Trinidad Rancheria's Environmental Assessment (EA) of the project. Coast photo by Dave Hankin. Photo-illustration by Tim Sheppard.

Ted Pease

The plan to build a six-story, 100-room Hyatt hotel on the notoriously fragile coastal bluff south of Trinidad caught most folks by surprise. The Trinidad Rancheria has talked about a hotel for years, and many locals applaud the concept for a variety of reasons. But an architect's drawing of a gaudy, six-story Hyatt box on a bluff, with the ocean and Trinidad in the distance, was not what most had envisioned.

Construction could begin as early as January 2019, officials have said, but when word of the project started circulating last summer, few Trinidad-area residents knew anything about it.

The hotel would perch on the west side of Cher-ae Heights Casino, facing Trinidad Bay and the Pacific, towering on the sandy bluff above Scenic Drive—which residents and visitors to Baker, Luffenholtz and Houda beaches (as well as Humboldt County road crews) know slides steadily into the ocean every winter.

By September, a grassroots citizen group had formed and hundreds of people got involved to examine the issue. The Humboldt Alliance for Responsible Planning (HARP) began as an informal group of neighbors, coalescing into a formal organization. HARP's mission statement: "to foster and facilitate citizen and community involvement" in land-use developments that could have "a

substantial effect on community quality of life" in Humboldt County.

"While we applaud the idea of appropriate development that will improve quality of life and economic prospects in Humboldt County," said HARP chairman Richard Johnson, "we think citizens should be fully engaged in the concept and planning process so that projects reflect local values, and the public fully understands all the potential impacts."

Concern focused on an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the project, released in September by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) regional office in Sacramento, the project's lead federal agency. Residents, officials, land-use and water resource experts, and others say the EA is flawed and inaccurate.

The City of Trinidad, the California Coastal Commission (CCC), and dozens of residents sent letters to the BIA in October, raising objections to the proposal. Many call for either a "no-build" decision, or for a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). In fact, HARP attorney Bryce Kenny argues that the Rancheria's own 1999 Gaming Compact with the state requires an EIS.

Generally, an EA seeks to provide grounds for a "finding of no significant impact" (FONSI) to avoid a full-blown environmental impact review. HARP's experts—land-use, environment, water, geology, traffic, regulatory, etc.—conclude that the EA is not just "deficient," but that it cannot support a FONSI.

The issue that has drawn the most heat is the Hyatt hotel design, which many consider inappropriate to the coastal setting and brutally damaging to the viewshed, as shown in HARP's photo-illustration of what a six-story structure on Trinidad Bay would look like (image above and on the cover).

That boxy image is what

got retired Humboldt State fisheries professor David Hankin involved. Hankin is a former director of the HSU Marine Lab, current board president of the Westhaven water district, and a founding HARP member. Hankin says a "freeway hotel" on Trinidad Bay's pristine shoreline would be an eyesore from the town of Trinidad, from Trinidad Head—which is part of the California Coastal National Monument—and the harbor to far out to sea.

As HARP's letter says, "The proposed hotel is incompatible with the surrounding area, which is among an increasingly rare class of unspoiled California coastline. It must be protected and valued so it can be enjoyed by all persons in perpetuity."

The California Coastal Commission agrees. "The Trinidad area's scenic values are inextricably linked with the reason visitors are attracted to this area," writes Mark Delaplaine, manager of the CCC's Federal Consistency Division in San Francisco. "Virtually all the development in the viewshed is limited to one or two stories, with only a very occasional three-story structure. The proposed six-story hotel would tower above and dominate the viewshed over an extremely large area. Thus, our greatest concern over the proposed hotel is its significant visual impact on a portion of the coast particularly prized for its spectacular scenic public views."

Another critical issue for HARP and Trinidad residents is the estimated 19,000 gallons/day (the equivalent of 45 single-family homes) that the hotel would request from Trinidad's municipal water district, which is already overburdened in dry months. In late summer and early fall, Trinidad's primary water source, Luffenholtz Creek, already drops to a trickle.

Before deciding on the hotel's water request, the city has undertaken an engineering study of the water system's pumping capacity, which should be completed in January.

A related concern is the effect of all that water on the stability of the bluff, states Don Allan of Westhaven, a watershed restorationist and founding HARP member. Even though the Rancheria recycles an admirable proportion of the 11,000 gallons the casino now uses...

Continued on page 9

Cher-ae Heights Casino, site of the proposed hotel, is behind the tree at left. Photo: Ted Pease.



Don't Look Away: Lessons from Activist Author Terry Tempest Williams

Dan Sealy

Although Terry Tempest Williams is known as an activist in Utah, her home state, she is better known nationally as a writer. She has published fifteen books including her most well-known title “Refuge” about the dire consequences of development flooding a wildlife refuge near the Great Salt Lake and the corresponding death of her mother at 53 from a cancer that she, too, would later experience. Her most recent book is “The Hour of Land: A Personal Topography of America’s National Parks.” In the Los Angeles Review of Books she says of that book, “I thought I was writing a book about America’s National Parks, but in the end, I realized I had written a book about America.”

She has written articles for many publications such as High Country News. To some, she is the John Muir, the Rachel Carson, the Thoreau, and the Aldo Leopold of our time. Her recognitions include The Wilderness Society’s Robert Marshall Award, the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Western American Literature Association, and the Wallace Stegner Award given by The Center for the American West. She is also the recipient of the 2010 David R. Brower Conservation Award for activism and the Sierra Club’s John Muir Award honoring a distinguished record of leadership in American conservation.

I had the privilege of participating in a writers retreat with Terry Tempest Williams in November at



Terry Tempest Williams, press photo from her website www.coyoteclan.com. Photo: © Debra Anderson.

Santa Sabina Center in San Rafael, California. There were approximately 60 participants; some were professional writers while some were beginners. The retreat had a profound impact on me and I believe it is safe to say every single participant was struck by the depth of Ms. Williams’ talent, her observations of the natural world, and most importantly by her sincere honesty and care for the earth and all its inhabitants.

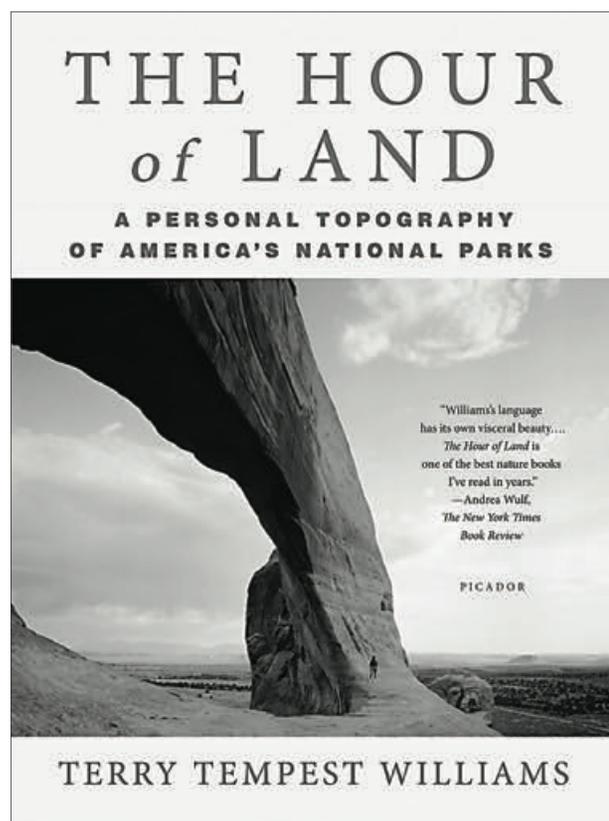
Lesson One: *Dig deep in your writing. When you think you have gotten there, dig deeper. Writing is not just observational, it is personal. There has to be “you” in it.*

This lesson was demonstrated as we began the first evening. Ms. Williams’ brother had committed suicide three months before and she began by reading an essay she had written about her love for him and his death. She wrote of how she and another brother witnessed the cremation of her brother at the funeral home in Salt Lake City; laying hands on and placing feathers on his body before it was placed in the furnace, watching the director carefully, reverently going through the motions of turning his body into the dust his siblings would take and scatter on a mountain. I was struck not only by the beauty and emotion of her words, but by her ability—in just three months’ time—to gather thoughts, put them to paper, work them toward a singular piece and then to read them aloud to a group of writers she

did not know. In allowing us into her deep sorrow and gratitude for her brother, she allowed us to look deeper within ourselves and our writing.

Terry Tempest Williams was raised Mormon but has expanded her beliefs to include themes and stories from other religions. She was chosen to be the 2018 Artist in Residence at the Harvard School of Divinity and spent a year in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Of her work there she wrote, “To be able to work within the context of world religions as it relates to eco-spirituality in all disciples is invigorating to me.” Her predecessors include Toni Morrison, Stephen Jay Gould, and Russell Banks. In her final lecture, titled “The Liturgy of Hope,” she encouraged a meditative, reflective life. In her lecture she asked, “Do we have the strength within ourselves to slow down, to make the necessary changes personally, structurally, and institutionally...so the life around us can flourish? Are we allowing ourselves to be undone by beauty?”

I had seen Ms. Williams once before, not in the western landscape she loves, but in front of the White House, where along with Congressman Jared Huffman she was protesting the removal of critical acres in Bears Ears and Grand Staircase of the Escalante National Monuments. Ms. Williams had been an important voice in the establishment of both. Now, they were under assault. Like Muir, Carson, and other writers, she is not content just to provide inspiring words—she is an engaged activist. Two years ago, she... *Continued on page 21*



Humboldt Bay Region at Risk from Sea Level Rise

Aldaron Laird

The local chapter of the Sierra Club hosted a well-attended panel discussion on Sea Level Rise on Humboldt Bay in early November. The panel consisted of Michael Richardson, Senior Planner for Humboldt County; Larry Oetker, Executive Director of Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation and Conservation District; Jennifer Kalt, Director of Humboldt Baykeeper; and Aldaron Laird, Co-Chair of the HSU Sea Level Rise Initiative.

Aldaron provided an overview presentation conveying that Humboldt Bay is on the threshold of change from existing vulnerabilities and future risks. Seventy-five percent of Humboldt Bay's shoreline is an artificial structure. Humboldt Bay has lost approximately 9,000 to 10,000 acres of salt marsh—a consequence of the historic changes to the shoreline from building 41 miles of earthen dikes and 11 miles of the North Pacific Railroad. These dikes and railroad grade need to be maintained in perpetuity, or thousands of acres of former salt marsh would be inundated today.

Because much of the critical utility and transportation infrastructure (municipal water, sewer, natural gas, optical fiber, electrical transmission towers and distribution poles, and Highway 101 and 255/Samoa Blvd.) that supports the Humboldt Bay region was built on these diked former salt marshes, they too are vulnerable to being tidally inundated if the artificial shoreline is breached.

Graphic below illustrates the area of Humboldt Bay that is vulnerable if shoreline barrier structures such as dikes are compromised by king tides (blue regions) versus potential tidal inundation area with two meters of sea level rise (red).
Graphic: Aldaron Laird.



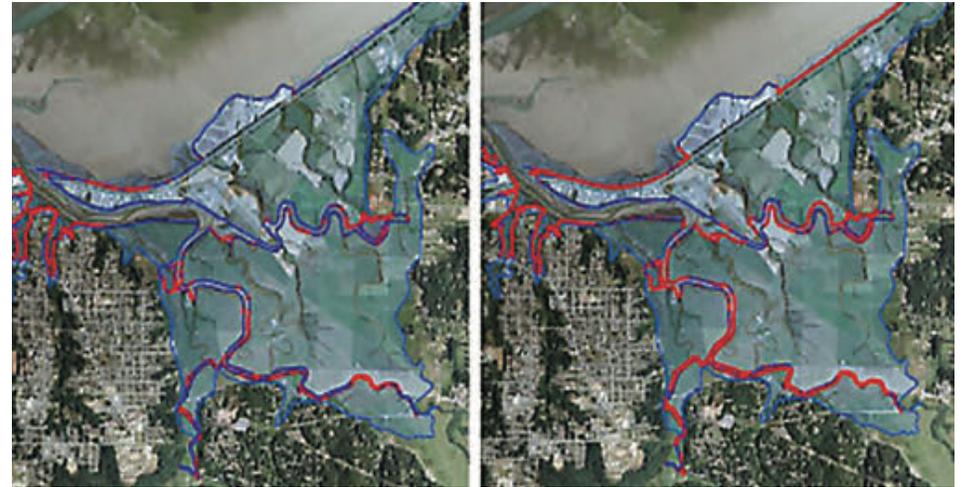
Aldaron revealed that two or three feet of sea level rise will likely breach 23 diked hydrologic units on Humboldt Bay. King tides could cross that threshold before 2050 putting nearly 56 percent of the diked shoreline at risk of breaching.

Research by Cascadia Geosciences and Northern Hydrology Engineers found that Humboldt Bay has the highest rate of sea level rise (18" over 100 years) on the west coast of the U.S. due to tectonic subsidence.

We now have some of the best tools available to assess our vulnerability and risk to sea level rise, thanks to a hydrodynamic model and tidal inundation maps of Humboldt Bay and local sea level rise projections, created by Northern Hydrology Engineers, funded by the Coastal Conservancy. Vulnerability assessments have been completed for all of the Local Coastal Programs (LCP) on Humboldt Bay (Humboldt County, City of Eureka and City of Arcata). Adaptation planning is underway and focused assessments on the diked shoreline and Communities at Risk have been completed (reports are available at the LCP web sites for each of these agencies). Lastly, the need for collaboration between sea level rise planning agencies, utility and transportation asset owners, and shoreline property owners was identified, as we are all in this together and rising water knows no boundaries.

In the panel discussion, Larry Oetker shared the many planning efforts that the district is presently engaged in—its dredged sediment management plan in particular, which is looking into how dredged sediment can be utilized to build resiliency to sea level rise on Humboldt Bay.

Jennifer Kalt highlighted the need to address the numerous hazardous waste sites that are still untreated, which are at risk of being tidally inundated



Red areas in graphic above show regions of diked shoreline that could be overtopped by two feet of sea level rise on left (11 miles total) and by three feet on the right (23 miles total). Graphic: Aldaron Laird.

by sea level rise or breaching shorelines.

Michael Richardson informed us all that the County's Public Works Department has secured a major grant from Caltrans to initiate Phase I of a Sea Level Rise Adaptation Plan for Humboldt Bay Transportation Infrastructure, which will also address how to integrate stakeholders in the planning process.

The County Planning Department has just completed a Sea Level Rise Policy Background Study for the Humboldt Bay Area Plan. The County is exploring many options to address the risks posed by sea level rise, such as creating a Sea Level Rise Zone for areas that are vulnerable to tidal inundation by three feet of sea level rise, real estate disclosures, and siting and development standards.

Humboldt State University's Marine and Coastal Sciences Institute recently created a Sea Level Rise Initiative that Aldaron Co-Chairs with Professor Laurie Richmond. The Initiative is creating a sea level rise web site that will be online before the end of the year, which will serve as a one-stop depository for sea level rise documents and databases with an emphasis on Humboldt Bay.

The Humboldt Bay Area Plan Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment, produced by Aldaron Laird Trinity Associates in January 2018, is available at <http://bit.ly/2rLrAbz> (pdf file will automatically download).

USED REDWOOD
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STUDENT FOCUS

HSU FORESTRY CLUB

The HSU Forestry Club is meant to bring students of the forestry program together in education, experience, friendship, and service. The club has many awesome programs and events, such as:

- Tutoring for forestry classes taught by past students and upperclassmen meant to cultivate the next generation of stewards of all things forestry.

- Organizing, fundraising, and putting on the annual Humboldt State Forestry Logger Ball—a themed night of dancing, dress up, drinks, music, food, and raffles and prizes. The Logger Ball is held every year as a way for students to cut loose before finals as well as socialize and rub shoulders with our community and people in the forestry industry.

- Annual Christmas tree harvest and sale (see below). A group of dedicated forestry students head out to harvest Christmas trees and haul them back to Arcata for sale to our community. The proceeds help fund our club programs and gets students into the field, running chainsaws and thinning forests.

- Club bonfires, club parties, field trips, resume building workshops and a family within the Forestry department is what we strive for. It's a great club with great people who are passionate about our field.

For more information contact forestry@humboldt.edu.



HUMBOLDT STATE FORESTRY

HSU FORESTRY CLUB

ECO-FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

The HSU Forestry Club offers Christmas trees for sale as a fundraiser for the club! All trees sold were removed to provide ecosystem services to areas that need habitat restoration from natural encroachment of trees that are not known to be native in those specific places. Proceeds from this sale go to Humboldt State University Forestry Club, which promotes the professional and ethical advancement of HSU Forestry students.

Get your tree today at Wildberries in Arcata (747 13th Street), or call 707-822-0095 for more information.

Otters Everywhere: Countywide Art and Science Project Begins



River Otters. Photo: Alan Peterson.

Natalie Sanman

"It's a celebration of life," says Humboldt State University wildlife professor Jeff Black of his new project—North Coast Otters, a public arts initiative. In summer of 2020, there will be 100 painted otter statues released throughout Humboldt and Del Norte Counties and surrounding gateway communities.

Since 1999, HSU students have been collecting records of river otter sightings in Humboldt and adjacent counties from citizen science submissions. The findings? There is a healthy population of river otters in our North Coast watersheds and coastlines. This suggests that we still have what it takes for these top predators and these bioindicators (or 'canaries in the coal mine') to thrive. At least for now, and hopefully forever more, if we continue to value our habitats where otters live and play!

Wanting to take the almost 20-year-old research project further, Black was inspired on a recent trip to England to start the North Coast Otters project. While visiting Dartmoor National Park, Black stumbled upon the Moor Otter project, which placed painted otters in galleries, pubs, inns, garden centers, and other businesses around the area. The Moor Otter project inspired Black to create a similar educational outreach that will attempt to merge citizen art and citizen science.

Enter North Coast Otters, a public arts initiative due to take place from June through October, summer 2020. While the project is running, 100 three-foot tall otters, painted by local artists, will be on display throughout Humboldt and Del Norte Counties and adjacent towns. The river otter statues will be auctioned at the end of the summer, with proceeds

going to create student internships and partnerships in community watershed projects.

River otter statues will be available for viewing in

restaurants, museums, visitor centers and other public venues. Along with the otter statues, an educational program will be released, including a schools program set to take place in the spring of 2020. Additionally, "for the young and young at heart," said Black, a fun program will guide participants through educational activities to become a Jr. Otter Ranger Scientist.

Overall, the project aims to increase awareness of our local watersheds, and to inspire wildlife stewardship. Humboldt County has a healthy otter population, but otters in many communities have declined due to...

Continued on page 22

An example of a painted otter, courtesy of North Coast Otters.



General Plan Rezoning Could Threaten Waterways

Scott Frazer

“UPROAR OVER REZONING” is how the November 7 edition of the Mad River Union described the contentious November 1 Humboldt County Planning Commission meeting. Both the public and some Planning Commission members were concerned that this final step in a 20-year-long process to update the County General Plan was being rushed.

Why the rush? Some local residents feel it has something to do with the fact that after January 7, 2019 there will be two progressive votes on the county Board of Supervisors.

Approximately 25-30 people spoke against both the Mercer-Fraser landowner request and action to adopt consistent zoning to complete the General Plan. Of the two who spoke in support of Mercer-Fraser, one was an attorney representing Mercer-Fraser.

Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Manager John Friedenbach testified that additional industrial uses near drinking water source wells on the Mad River would be inappropriate. One must wonder why a majority of Planning Commission members seem intent on seeing this zoning adopted by the Board of Supervisors this month, when there is at least one more year available in the CA state guidelines for completing this process.

Don Allan of the Mad River Alliance expressed concerns over “bad land use planning” when allowing existing industrial use to determine future zoning. This is an important concept. Do the citizens of Humboldt County desire to let past bad planning continue to direct locations for future industrial expansion?

NEC Executive Director and Board President Larry Glass testified, “You have done a fine job of confusing the public!” In addition to the fact that most concerned citizens do not read local legal notices in the newspaper, the numerous revisions and changes to the General Plan proposals over the past 20 years have been difficult to follow. Many Willow Creek residents protested that there is no good way to look up the maps that are an important part of the zoning proposal. Residents of Blue Lake and Glendale stressed the need to protect area rivers (specifically, the Mad and Trinity), creeks and tributaries from the potentially massive increase in medium and heavy industrial development that the zone changes would allow. Allowing some industrial uses both in the floodplain and along the river banks is a bad idea. The “streamside protection” mechanism described in the General Plan update appears to have no teeth and is badly flawed.

Regrettably, a five vote majority of the Planning Commission voted to recommend that the Board of Supervisors adopt revised zoning for all inland areas of the county (coastal areas are dealt with separately).

How can this happen? Well, there are several concerns with the massive changes coming our way, as over 500,000 acres of Humboldt County

(currently considered “Unclassified”) will be rezoned.

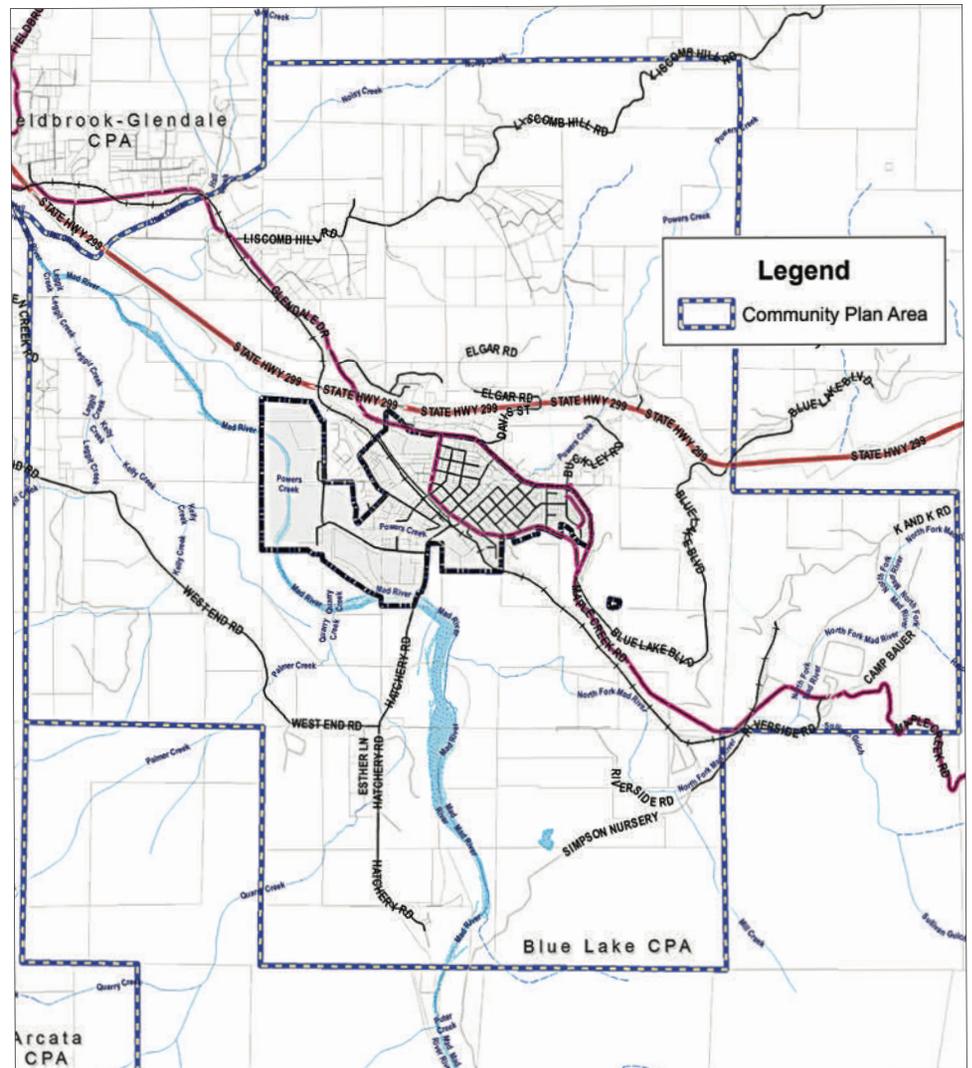
In a large number of locations, the new zoning is proposed to be Agricultural Exclusive (AE) designation. There is also a separate but different Agriculture Exclusive (AE) “zone” that uses the identical term. This dual use for two entirely different parts of the zoning process is particularly confusing to this writer. If AE was “exclusively” agriculture it would not be too bad. However, when you learn from county planning staff that both medium and heavy industry are allowable uses in the AE Designation areas and the AE zone, things become very murky.

Mr. John Miller and other planning staff have done a great job of patiently answering many questions on the phone, in personal visits to their office and, on at least one occasion, visiting residents in Willow Creek the last week of October. However, the recommendation to go to the county website and use the GIS tool to look up specific parcels to determine what changes are being made has met with repeated failures of the GIS tool to function unless you have a high speed internet connection. No one in Willow Creek indicated that they could use the GIS tool when asking the Planning Commission to delay immediate action on the zoning changes. The GIS tool even crashed during

the public meeting in Willow Creek according to testimony before the Planning Commission.

In fact, the GIS website was down for several days again the week of November 12. This limits our ability to conduct the active involvement that Planning Commission Chairman Morris suggested during the November 1, 2018 discussion.

Chairman Morris and Ben Shepherd both encouraged members of local communities, specifically including... *Continued on page 22*



Map of the Blue Lake Community Planning Area (CPA) by John Miller, a Senior Planner with the Humboldt County Planning Department.

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the Northcoast Environmental Center

Trinidad Hotel Continued from page 4



Kayakers and long-boarders turned out November 11 for the We Love Trinidad Bay Paddle-Out, a paddle protest of the Trinidad Rancheria's hotel proposals, which organizer Jason Self of Kayak Trinidad points out would ruin the very scenery that tourists come to the area to enjoy. In this photo, Cher-ae Heights Casino, where the hotel would be built, is directly behind the paddleboarder in the middle. Photo by Lisa Wilhelmi Perkins.

...(the Rancheria is Trinidad's largest water customer), huge additional amounts of wastewater would need to be treated and then released into the aquifer, Allan points out. What will the geological and environmental impacts be?

HARP also points out that the EA is vague on many other biological, environmental, and geological impacts, including the stability of the bluff, which engineers acknowledge is subject to annual landslide activity. Other concerns include noise and light pollution, flashy electronic signage, bird strikes, and the financial viability of a new casino-hotel in an area that already has several.

Then there's the issue of traffic. The California Transportation Commission is conducting a long-range, \$775,000 study for a proposed Highway 101 interchange/overpass to serve the Rancheria, less than three-quarters of a mile south of the existing Trinidad exit. Even if the (taxpayer-funded) construction is approved, it could not be completed until 2026 at the earliest. In the meantime, traffic for construction, the hotel and casino, Rancheria and Scenic Drive residents, and tourists would all funnel through the busy six-way intersection at Trinidad's Main Street and onto Scenic Drive.

HARP member Ken Miller is alarmed by the piecemeal approach that treats the hotel project in isolation from other expansion, and about the cumulative build-out impacts. Besides the hotel, the Rancheria has also envisioned a 50-unit RV park, a minimart and gas station, tripling the size of the casino, and new residential and administrative buildings.

There is no telling when the BIA will make a decision, or whether Trinidad will agree to supply the hotel's water needs. Whatever those outcomes, HARP is prepared to assist citizens in getting their perspectives heard.

Get involved! A meeting of HARP's full membership and anyone else interested is planned for January to map ways that HARP can facilitate these conversations, details to be announced. You can keep up with this and other HARP projects on their website (www.HumboldtAlliance.org) and on the HARP Facebook page. If we have learned anything from the Trinidad Rancheria hotel issue, it's that getting people involved is a good thing.

Ted Pease of Trinidad is a founding member of the Humboldt Alliance for Responsible Planning (HARP), a retired university professor, and a working journalist, editor, photographer and fisherman. Contact: tedpeasemedia@gmail.com.

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The NEC gives our heartfelt thanks to Coastal Programs Coordinator Madison Peters for all her energy, creativity, enthusiasm, and passion for clean oceans that she used to enhance our coastal programs these last five years! Thank you, Madison, we will miss you! Good luck in your future adventures!



Where are they now?

Former NEC Environmental Policy Intern **Natalie Vaughan**

Natalie Vaughan

I was an intern at the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC) during the 2013-2014 school year while attending Humboldt State, where I received my degree in Environmental Management and Protection with an emphasis in Planning. My internship duties included writing articles and photographing wilderness areas in the North Coast region for publication in EcoNews, which encouraged individuals to experience wilderness in a variety of ways. I researched and planned three overnight wilderness backpack trips and two day-trips, including to the Trinity Alps and Sinkyone wilderness. I was subsequently invited to display my photographs in the Wilderness and Her Rivers gallery event in Arcata.

My conservation career began when I was selected from a nationwide search of students to participate in the Second Biennial Youth and Public Lands Congress in Phoenix, Arizona, which was sponsored by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Public Lands Foundation (PLF), and the Arizona Wilderness Coalition (AWC). I collaborated with peers to make recommendations regarding the future management of public lands and how to establish a national land ethic. We presented to the BLM State Director, BLM Director, U.S. Forest Service Regional Forester, AWC Executive Director, and PLF Vice President for Operations. Afterwards I was selected from the Congress to attend the 50th Anniversary Wilderness Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2014. The conference was one of the most treasured and impactful experiences I've had in my life.

After graduating I moved back to the Bay Area where I worked as a Project Manager for a private environmental consulting firm. I wrote Phase I Environmental Site Assessments for commercial real estate properties. Unfulfilled with this work, I quit my job to pursue my photography businesses full-time. My first business, NatVon Photography (www.natvonphoto.com) is for fashion, branding, and lifestyle photography. My mission is to empower brands and women entrepreneurs to establish



Photo courtesy of Natalie Vaughan.

credibility, attract clients, and maximize revenue. I also recently launched another photography business called Headshots by Nat (www.headshotsbynat.com), where I specialize in corporate and professional headshots. Quality photography and headshots are an empowering tool and I aim to photograph and promote sustainable brands and environmental professionals who are making a positive impact on the world. I am excited to be self-employed and living the career of my dreams, all while I am pregnant with a baby boy.

I am not sure when or how I will continue with an environmental career path, however I cannot ignore my passion to preserve and fight for wilderness and our Earth. I am devastated by some of the ways humans are treating the Earth all around the world. Elephants and rhinos are being poached nearly to extinction, deforestation is accelerating climate change, oceans are being trashed, and the list goes on. I am heartbroken and unsure of what exactly needs to be done but I need to do something. In my lifetime I will fight and do whatever it takes to conserve the Earth for my baby and future generations. Most of our daily lives are so disconnected from nature that it's easy to forget these problems exist. But they are very real and need to be dealt with. We ALL need to take responsibility to care for and protect our Earth.

Overall, I am grateful for my opportunity with the NEC, which allowed me to blend my two passions together, and for Dan Sealy's encouragement that my photography really does make a difference.

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Richard Marks

Commissioner on the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District, Division 4



Richard Marks for Harbor Commissioner 2018 Facebook profile photo.

Tom Wheeler

Richard may not be what you think of when you picture an environmentalist. For nearly 30 years, Richard was a heavy equipment operator at the Samoa Pulp Mill. He was also a union organizer for the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers and President of Local 4. But he is also a deep lover of Humboldt Bay and has been one of its most important champions. Richard is a Kin to the Earth.

After working for years next to Humboldt Bay at the mill, Richard shifted to working on behalf of the Bay. First elected to the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District in 2009, Richard now serves as Chairman of the Board. In his work on behalf of the Harbor District, Richard safeguards the bay. Most notably, Richard was instrumental in the cleanup of his former place of employment.

First, the Harbor District purchased the mill site and three million gallons of caustic liquors stored onsite. The liquors, once used to break down wood chips into pulp, were stored in old, rusting tanks—so rusty that rainwater leaked in, slowly filling up the containers until they were ready to burst. The threat was so real that once the EPA saw the problem, they made cleanup of the site its top

priority. With overflowing, corroding tanks, time was of the essence. Next, the Harbor District coordinated a massive cleanup with the EPA—700 trucks, each hauling 2,500 gallons, carried away the hazardous chemicals to be safely reused by another pulp plant in Longview, Washington. Richard takes no greater pride than knowing that the harbor is healthy.

According to Jennifer Kalt of Humboldt Baykeeper, “the acquisition of the former pulp mill was a risky proposition. But Richard was so determined that he was clearly not going to take no for an answer, and the District bravely plowed ahead where no other government agency dared to tread.”

The Harbor District is working on additional cleanups of contaminated soil and debris and rehabilitating old mill buildings for a modern business park. On top of the renovated buildings is a massive solar array—the largest in the county—able to power 750 kilowatts. Already 18 businesses have taken up residence in the old mill, helping to generate income for the Harbor District. Once near bankruptcy, Richard and company have brought the District back to financial solvency.

“Cleaning up the former pulp mill site is one of the Harbor District’s greatest achievements,” said Surfrider Foundation’s Jennifer Savage. “But it’s only one of a long list of ways in which Richard made the Harbor District better.”

Richard just went through a tough reelection fight but emerged with a decisive victory, taking home some 62 percent of the vote. (This was especially comforting, as Richard’s opponent ran against the Harbor District’s cleanup work.) Richard put a lot of miles in, knocking on doors in the past election. By his count, he totaled over 3,000 doors. And he did it in fashion, rocking pink and robin’s egg blue sneakers.

Reflective of his dual nature—both salt of the earth union organizer and beloved environmentalist—Richard’s campaign endorsements were a study in contrasts. Both Mike Wilson (a bleeding heart liberal, in my words) and Greg Dale (a “conservative Republican,” in his words) sing Richard’s praises.

Says Dale, “Richard Marks is one of the best public servants I’ve ever had the pleasure of interacting with. He not only listens to all sides of an issue, from all parties, he follows up by educating himself and others on the issue before making a decision. His genuine good will, honesty, professionalism and pleasant demeanor come through in all circumstances and through his influence, makes us all better humans. I’m proud to call him a mentor and friend.”

When Richard isn’t saving the bay, he’s probably playing (or writing about) softball. Richard is the President of the Mad River Softball Association. He even maintains a blog—samoasoftball.blogspot.com—where he writes about the local leagues (and local politics, food reviews, rankings of worst bands, and a random smattering of other things that strike his fancy).

Richard Marks placing a yardsign for his reelection campaign in Eureka. Photo from the Richard Marks for Harbor Commissioner 2018 Facebook page.





The Sandpiper



DECEMBER 2018/JANUARY 2019

Redwood Region Audubon Society

www.rras.org

FIELD TRIPS

Every Saturday: Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. These are our famous, rain-or-shine, docent-led field trips at the Marsh. Bring your binoculars and have a great morning birding! Meet in the parking lot at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) in Arcata at **8:30 a.m.** Trips end around 11 a.m. Walks led by: Michael Morris (Dec 1); Jude Power (Dec 8); Tracy Walker (Dec 15); Christine Vertical (Dec 22); and Bob Battagin (Dec 29). If you are interested in leading a Marsh walk, please contact Ken Burton at shrikethree@gmail.com.

Don't forget about the annual Audubon Christmas Bird Counts coming up in December. These are fun, all-day events where we chase down birds with other nutty birders, all in the name of science! Dates vary by location, so participate in one, two, or all of the local counts! Visit <https://www.audubon.org/conservation/join-christmas-bird-count> for more information on trip leaders, times, and dates. New counters are more than welcome!

For some of our more far-reaching trips we would like to suggest donating gas money to drivers on field trips. A good rule of thumb is \$5 per ½-hour drive time to field trip destination.

Saturday, December 8: Willow Creek Bird Walk. Meet at Studio 299 (75 The Terrace, Willow Creek) starting at **9 a.m.** We will depart promptly at 9:30 for our destination; carpooling available. Walks generally run 2-3 hours. All ages, abilities, and interest levels welcome! For more information, please contact Birgitte Elbek at 707-267-4140 or willowcreekbirdwalks@gmail.com.



A rainy Marsh walk © Alexa DeJoannis

Saturday, December 8: Twilight Walk. Let's stroll along the new Waterfront Trail and observe night fall on the Bay. Meet at **4 p.m.** on 2nd St. next to Target in Eureka. Call Alexa DeJoannis at 707-826-7031 for more information.

Sunday, December 9: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This is a wonderful, 2- to 3-hour trip for people wanting to learn the birds of the Humboldt Bay area. It takes a leisurely pace with emphasis on enjoying the birds! Beginners are more than welcome. Meet at the Refuge Visitor Center **9 a.m.** Call Jude Power at 707-822- 3613 for info.

Saturday, December 15: Arcata Christmas Bird Count. This circle includes Mad River mouth, McKinleyville, part of Arcata Community Forest, Arcata, Bayside, Indianola, Eureka, and the North Spit. Contact Tony Kurz (tonyk_71220@hotmail.com) to join in.

(continued on next page)

POTLUCK: DECEMBER 14

End-of-Year Show & Tell



Join us for an end-of-year potluck dinner and Show & Tell. Bring a dish to share; we will provide drinks and utensils (if you don't have your own). And share your best pictures and stories! Send in photos for a slide "show & tell", and brush up your [tall] tales. We'll limit photos to ten and story-telling to three minutes per person so there's time for everyone to get in their best yarns. Send photos to board@rras.org or drop in our program folder (click [here](#) for link or email us) by December 12.

PROGRAM: JANUARY 11

Building Bird-Friendly Yards and Communities



Three short talks will demonstrate a number of ways you can create bird-friendly habitats, starting in your own yard, that could benefit species locally and globally!

Presenters will be available after the talks for informal discussion and show & tell. You are encouraged to bring your questions and success stories.

Potluck starts at 6 p.m., and program start at 7:30 p.m. at Six Rivers Masonic Lodge, 251 Bayside Road, Arcata. Bring a mug to enjoy shade-grown coffee and come fragrance-free.

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Secretary — Sierra Huffman.....707-298-8608
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Educatn/Schlrshps — Denise Seeger 707-444-2399
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Lake Earl Branch — Sue Calla..... 707-465-6191
RRAS Web Page..... www.rras.org
Bird Alert (Bird Box).....707-822-5666
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The Sandpiper is published six times each year by
Redwood Region Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502.

President's Column

By Alexa DeJoannis

The leaves are mostly fallen, and there seems to be cattail fluff everywhere. The coming winter is a time to rest and recoup strength. It's also a time to prepare for a new cycle in RRAS: several integral members are stepping aside from crucial positions, and leaving opportunities for service and engagement on environmental topics. Our monthly walks at the Refuge will be led by a rotation of trip leaders, like our trips in Garberville and at the Marsh; Ralph Bucher will take charge of it. Members interested in mentoring youth by supervising our annual Nature Writing Contest for children, run from January to April, or helping Project FeederWatch students identify the birds at



Burrowing Owl on Jackson Ranch Rd., Oct 20, 2018. ©Alexa DeJoannis

FIELD TRIPS (continued)

Saturday, December 15: Southern Humboldt Community Park in Garberville. Meet leader at **9:30 a.m.** at Tooby Park, one mile out on Sprowl Creek Road on the right. The walk is an easy, 2- to 3-hour stroll. If you're late you can easily catch up by walking towards the barn! Organic, shade-grown (bird-friendly) coffee and extra binoculars are usually provided. No dogs, please. Porta-potty available on the trail. For information contact Jay at 707-923-2695 or Jaysooter10@gmail.com. Heavy rain cancels.

Sunday, December 16: Eureka Waterfront. Meet at **9 a.m.** by the concrete fishing pier at the foot of W. Del Norte St., where we will scope for birds off the public dock until everyone assembles. We will then bird down the Hikshari' Trail. Contact Ralph Bucher at 707-499-1247 or thebook@reninet.com for more information.

Sunday, December 16: Del Norte Christmas Bird Count. This circle includes Crescent City, Tolowa Dunes State Park, Smith River mouth, and Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park. Contact Alan Barron at flockfinder@yahoo.com.

Saturday, December 22: Willow Creek Christmas Bird Count. This circle is centered near Willow Creek, and includes part of Hoopa Valley Indian Reservation and Six Rivers National Forest. Contact Birgitte Elbek at 707-267-4140 or willowcreekbirdwalks@gmail.com.

their feeders are asked to contact the Board at board@rras.org. We are planning a trip leaders' rendezvous in February, when new leaders will be welcomed. Our Membership Chair is getting ready to pass the baton to someone interested in developing new organizational skills. And annual elections for Board position are coming up in January. This season of rest is a good time to take stock and re-commit to what we believe in. I hope RRAS's mission of conserving habitats for wildlife is one you can get behind.

I've been looking through my photos and my eBird checklists from the past year for the best stuff to bring to our end-of-year show & tell. It's good fun to show off photos that turned out well. I'm looking forward to hearing stories of birding adventures at our December potluck!

Save the Date!

Our annual Banquet is scheduled for March 16, 2019. Dr. Lisa Tell, an avian veterinarian at the University of California, Davis, will speak about her research on hummingbird health. See you at the Arcata D Street Neighborhood Center, starting at 5 p.m.!

Saturday, December 29: Birding Without Binoculars. No binoculars needed (but you can still bring them)! Birding begins by noticing. Young birders are particularly welcome. Meet at **3 p.m.** at the Arcata Marsh Visitor Center on South G St. Walk runs about 2 hrs. Call Alexa DeJoannis at 707-826-7031 for more information.

Sunday, December 30: Centerville Christmas Bird Count. This circle includes South Spit, King Salmon, Fields Landing, lower Elk River, Fortuna, Ferndale, Centerville Beach, Eel River mouth, and Loleta. Contact Sean McAllister at whiteouters@gmail.com.

Friday, January 4: Tall Trees Christmas Bird Count. This circle includes Orick, Humboldt Lagoons State Park, part of Redwoods National Park, Redwood Creek mouth, and part of Bald Hills Road. Contact Ken Burton at shrikethree@gmail.com.

Saturday, January 12: Willow Creek Bird Walk. See December 8.

Sunday, January 13: Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. See December 9.

Saturday, January 19: Southern Humboldt Community Park in Garberville. See December 15. Leader David Fix.

Sunday, January 20: Eureka Waterfront. See December 16.

What's the Difference? These two gulls were photographed at the Del Norte pier in Eureka on October 21, 2018, by Alexa DeJoannis. When they stood up, they both had pink legs. Note any differences between the two, and determine their species. See page 4 for answers.



Our Finances: The Annual Report

By Alexa DeJoannis

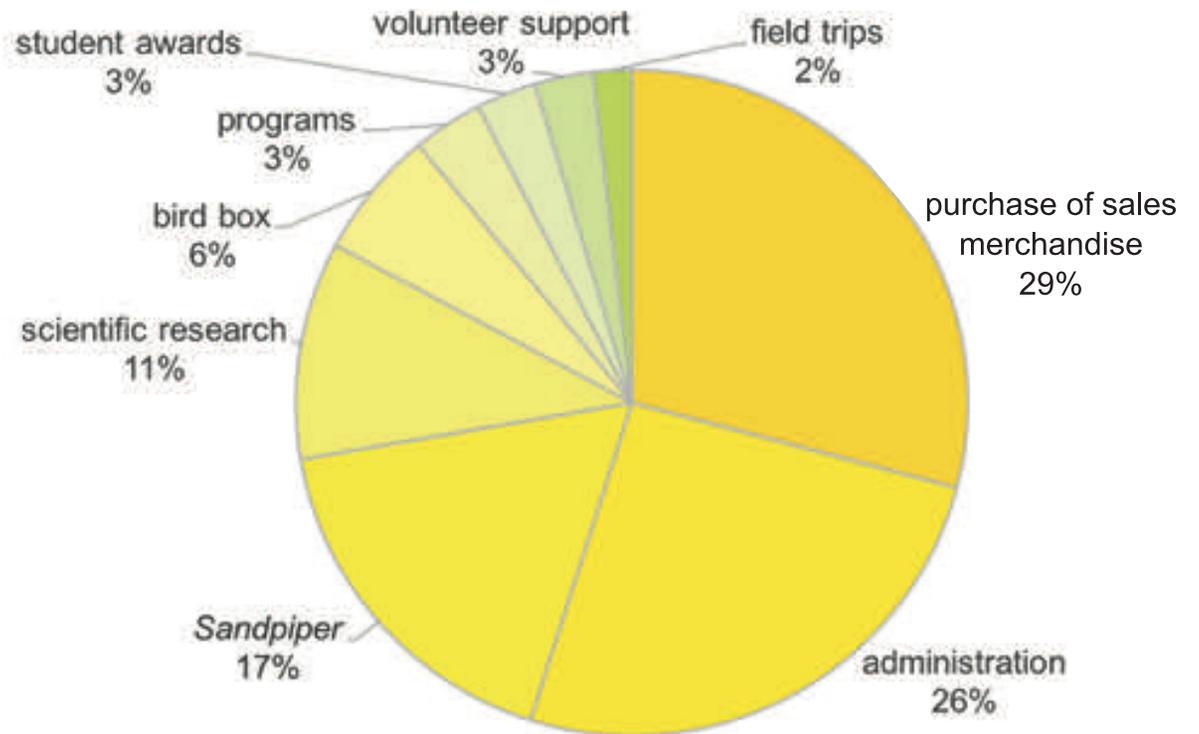
We ended our fiscal year on June 30, and prepared the following summary. We spent \$17,686 and took in \$23,242, resulting in net ordinary income of \$5,556.

Our expenses included outlays on student awards, the rare-bird alert phone number (a.k.a. the bird box), monthly program and field trip costs, our volunteer appreciation event and volunteer supplies, printing the *Sandpiper*, and partially funding a shorebird population study on Humboldt Bay (see last issue), as well as various administration costs.

Our income included donations, membership dues, book sales, investment interest, and fundraising proceeds. Our annual Banquet, our food service during Godwit Days Festival, and the Bird-athon bring in significant income.

Donations and membership dues are very important to us, as they show community support for our mission. We invest capital on a rolling basis, which pays small, predictable dividends from year to year. Like membership and donations, fundraising events depend on community support, but their success comes from active participation. The volunteers who plan, set up, run, and clean up at the Godwit Café and the Banquet are crucial to the success of these efforts. Thank you for your continued support!

RRAS Expenses July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018



Keep Up-to-Date Through RRAS Listserve

Be reminded of RRAS events and other public meetings, symposia, etc. of interest. Subscribe in one of two ways: navigate to the web page at <https://groups.io/g/rras> or by email to subscribe@groups.io/rras. This listserv is **not** about posting bird sightings.

Thinking of Joining the National Audubon Society?

If so, please use the coupon below. By sending in your membership on this form, rather than replying to solicitations from National Audubon, \$20 is sent directly to RRAS. This is how NAS rewards local chapters for recruiting national members. (Otherwise, the RRAS dues share per new member is only a couple of dollars.) Thank you.

Chapter Membership Application

Yes, I'd like to join.

Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for \$20 is enclosed. (Introductory offer)

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STATE _____ ZIP _____

email _____

Local Chapter Code: C24

Please make checks to the National Audubon Society.

Send this application and your check to:

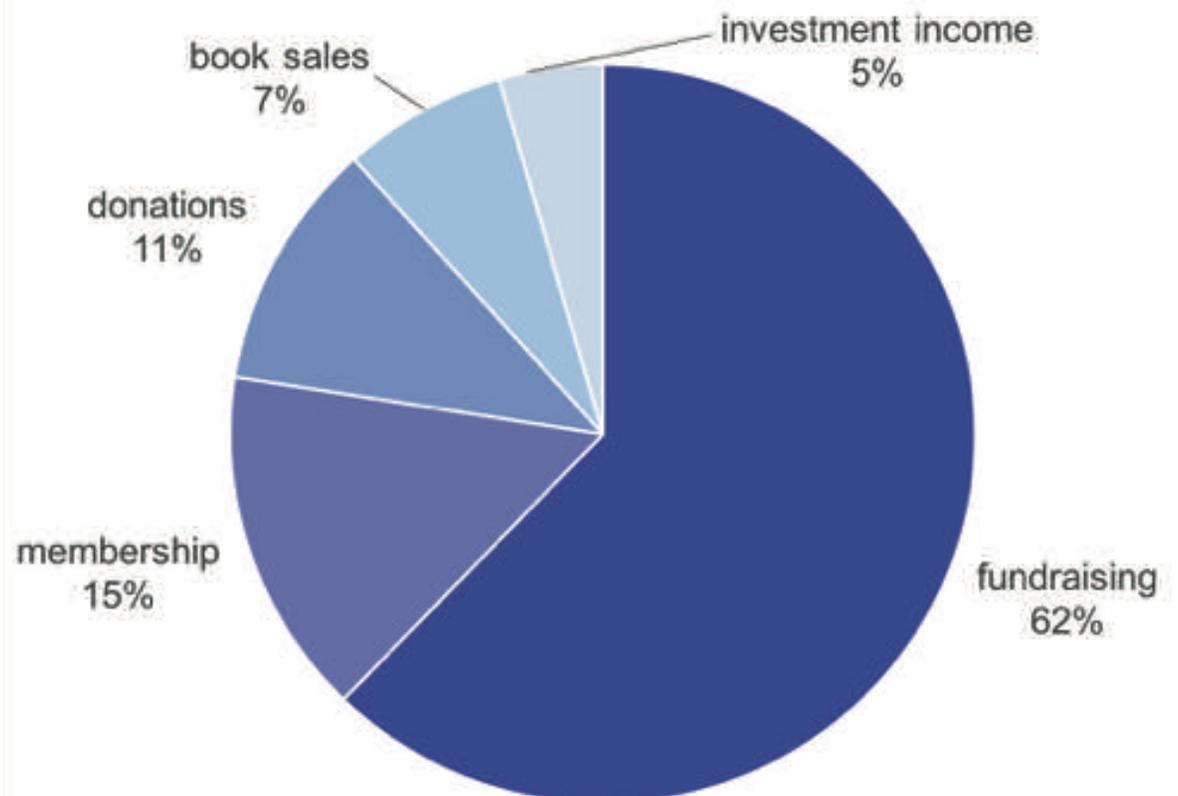
National Audubon Society

P.O. Box 422250

Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

-----LOCAL CHAPTER-----
REDWOOD REGION AUDUBON SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 1054, EUREKA, CA 95502

RRAS Income July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018



Counting Winter Birds

By Alexa DeJoannis

Around Christmas-time, we count birds. Audubon has been tallying birds every winter for more than a hundred years, and those data have helped researchers illuminate trends in the natural world that affect us all. This month, we'll do it again.

Christmas Bird Counts are scheduled in the latter half of December and the first week of January. They're designed to sample species diversity and abundance* in a narrow window of time so that the thousands of count circles can be compounded over landscapes and continents to model bird populations during a seasonal moment. We are allowed to count at any time within the 24-hour period of the count day (including looking for owls at night!), but tally activity tends to focus on the morning hours, when birds are most active and, therefore, observable. When you sign up with the compiler (technical CBC term for organizer), he or she will assign you to work on a portion of the territory, sometimes alone, but mostly with other counters. This is an opportunity to spend time with friends, or, if your friends don't bird, make more friends who do. A lot of counters are faithful and count the same area every year, which is great for consistency. These birders know where to look and listen, and have a good sense of what to expect. New or new-to-the-area birders can learn a lot with a local expert.

As ever when birding, it's critical to get a good look at the bird from beak to tail when making a visual identification. Most birds we count will be common locally (though we hope for some exciting rarities!). Here are some of the usual suspects of our area that are easy to confuse.

House vs. Purple Finch

House Finches were originally native to the Southwest, but were assisted to other areas by humans. They adapted well to human neighborhoods, while Purple Finches are commonly seen in woods. Purples are the bulkier of the two, their beaks are large and conical, and the color of males is, while not actually purple, a deep rose. Some say they look "stained by wine." If wine was involved, they definitely fell in the barrel (their color extends onto their backs and wings), while House Finches, sporting a brighter crimson, appear to have stuck only their heads and bibs in strawberry jam. Look for a slight "Roman nose" curve on the House Finch's small beak, and brown streaking on breast and belly.

Downy vs. Hairy Woodpecker

These two woodpeckers look like standard and toy versions, so it was surprising when it was recently discovered by genetic analysis that the two are not closely related within the woodpecker group. Boldly marked by similar patterns of black and white, the Hairy is bigger than the Downy, and it's got the beak to match. The Hairy's beak is more than half the distance in length as the width of its head, and it's clearly a working tool. The Downy's beak is toy-sized, and could almost be mistaken for that of a bird who does no wood-pecking. The Hairy does a lot of tapping on larger stems, while the Downy picks

quietly among small branches.

Sibley and others have pointed out another difference: male Downies have one solid red patch on the back of their heads, while male Hairies show a black vertical line through the red patch.

Loons

Only three loon species commonly occur in our waters. Common Loons are the largest, easily visible without binoculars. They're in the same size class as geese. They also have heavy, straight bills. The Red-throated and Pacific Loons are more in the Mallard class. The Red-throated's bill seems to curve up slightly, and the bird's slim neck and cheek are mostly white. The Pacific Loon has a straight, thin bill. While the gray color on a Common Loon appears to have been dabbed on with a damp sponge, the artist seems to have applied the gray neatly down the back of the Pacific Loon's neck and white on the front with a precise brush.

Loons may be confused with a few other seabirds. In silhouette, cormorants are similar, but they hold their noses in the air, while loons keep their beaks level. Large grebes show much longer, elegantly slim necks. Murres are compact, little footballs next to all of these other seabirds.

Slate-colored and Cassiar Juncos

Dark-eyed Juncos are really variable across their range. Luckily, most of the ones around here are the "Oregon" subspecies: they've got a black or blackish hood, white front, and gray wings with cinnamon sprinkled liberally between the shoulders and brushed along the sides under the wings. There are tons of them wintering locally, and they show up at feeders often, but we also get occasional Slate-colored and Cassiar types in these flocks. Cassiars have black hoods and gray backs like Oregons, with a bit of brown dusted just on the back of the collar. Slate-colored are hooded in charcoal gray, and the hood color just continues into the back and wings. Both are useful sightings that point to the summer breeding grounds of our winter visitors: Cassiars come from the Canadian Rockies, while Slate-colored show up in western Canada and the East Coast to breed.

Sparrows

Sparrows thrive in our mild winters, and along with our more common species (White-crowned, Golden-crowned, Song, Savannah, and Lincoln's), we regularly get several "specials", such as Harris's, White-throated, Swamp, Vesper, American Tree, and Clay-colored. There are many sparrow species, but their tribes are grouped by features like head patterning, bill shape, tail length, and chest color or patterning. Sparrows are best addressed with a field guide or smartphone app after noting as many features as possible. Writing down details or sketching can help a lot.

There are five count circles in our area, so please contact compilers early to join the one or more you're interested in. See Field Trips on pages 1-2 for more information on local Christmas Bird Counts.

*Species diversity measures how many species are present; abundance refers to numbers of individuals of various species.



Swamp Sparrow in the Arcata Bottoms, Nov. 17, 2018. © Mark Stephenson



Harris's Sparrow in the Arcata Bottoms, Nov. 17, 2018. © Mark Stephenson



Snow Bunting in the Arcata Bottoms, Nov. 17, 2018. © Mark Stephenson

What's the Difference? The foreground gull has a faintly streaked head and neck, a pale gray mantle, and matching gray wingtips. The background gull has an unmarked head and neck, a dark gray mantle, and black wingtips. Otherwise, they're similar in size, wing length, and their beaks. The foreground gull is a Glaucous-winged Gull, and the other is a Western Gull. They're so similar that they often hybridize, and they're frequently seen in flocks together. (See photo on page 2.)

Eye on Washington



When is a Lame Duck not a Duck at all?

Dan Sealy, NEC Legislative Analyst

In November, voters across the nation voted for more Democrats over Republicans in races for seats in the House while the Republican Party increased its majority in the Senate.

From November 6 through January 3, 2019, when the 116th Congress is sworn in, both chambers will be in a “lame-duck” session. Lame-duck in this case is not a duck with a bum leg or wing. With regard to Congress, Wikipedia defines a lame-duck session as one that occurs “whenever one Congress meets after its successor is elected, but before the successor’s term begins.”

This is a time when mischief can happen. In the House, Republicans will be anxious to pass legislation favoring their priorities before the Democrats take over. In the Senate, the Democrats will try to move some key legislation before their numbers are reduced. Republicans will be making good use of these few weeks as an important window of opportunity.

For example, on November 14 the House returned from their districts to pass House Resolution 1142 on removal of the gray wolf (*Canis lupus*) in the contiguous 48 States from the List of Endangered and Threatened Species. The Resolution passed in a 223-201 vote. The proposal now requires Senate action before being signed into law by the president. Conservation organizations—including the Northcoast Environmental Center—are working collaboratively to stop that action.

Reauthorization of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (funded through offshore oil production revenues to offset impacts) is a bipartisan issue with support from conservationists. A coalition of supporters released an economic report that found every \$1 invested in conservation efforts nationally produced \$4 in return. “Public lands at all scales have huge economic benefits,” said Amy Wilson Morris, one of the report’s authors. “The breadth of community health benefits is enormous.” Senators Steve Daines (R-MT) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM) were part of a discussion of the economic report and Daines said there is a “great opportunity” to put together a public lands legislative package during Congress’ lame-duck session.

During the Congressional transition, both parties will be reconfiguring leadership in the Senate and especially in the House where every single committee and subcommittee will now be chaired by a Democrat. Those chairs will work with the new Speaker of the House to determine what bills will be considered in the 116th Congress. Elections really do have consequences.

The House Natural Resources Committee will be chaired by Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ) and Jared Huffman (D-CA) is expected to chair the Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, succeeding Doug Lamborn (R-CO). Also of significance, Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI) will replace Tom McClintock (R-CA) as chair of the Federal Lands subcommittee, which McClintock has used to push anti-conservation legislation. Congressman Huffman’s staff has told the NEC the Federal Lands subcommittee will revert to its previous name: Public Lands.

Missing from the House Natural Resources Committee will be Steve Pearce (R-NM) known as a “birther” and recipient of large amounts of campaign donations from oil companies. Pearce lost his run for governor and was replaced in the House by a Democrat. Raúl Labrador (R-ID) also gave up his seat for an unsuccessful run for governor and was replaced by another Republican in the House. Jeff Denham (D-CA), who had a six percent lifetime score from the League of Conservation Voters, was beaten by newcomer Josh Harder. Harder (D-CA) is a fifth-generation resident of California’s Central Valley. His work in committees may mirror other Central Valley representatives, but he may be open to working with legislators on bills to conserve water.

In the House Agriculture Committee, Collin Peterson (D-MN) is expected to take over the gavel from his predecessor, Michael Conaway (R-TX). The committee is expected to provide greater oversight of the important work on the Farm Bill and addresses legislation governing the work of the U.S. Forest Service.

Committee assignments will be set in the next few weeks.

What is in the future? Perhaps the new Congress will return climate change to the legislative agenda. Sources confirm that incoming Democrat leaders are planning a series of hearings on Climate Change with some tension within the party on how to address the issue. In a joint statement, Energy and Commerce Committee ranking member Frank Pallone (D-NJ); Natural Resources Committee ranking member Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ); and Science, Space and Technology Committee ranking member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) said they would hold the hearings during a two-day period early next year to lay out a path forward on climate action. Democrats are wary of overplaying their hand for fear of losing their new-found majority in 2020. Pallone disagrees with House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) regarding the resurrection of the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

SAVE THIS LIST OF CONTACTS FOR YOUR REFERENCE

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**Note: 5th District Supervisor-Elect Steve Madrone will replace Sundberg as of January 1*

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Senator Diane Feinstein

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Senator Kamala Harris

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Look up other senators here:

<https://www.senate.gov/senators/index.htm>

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Congressman Jared Huffman

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Look up other representatives here:

<https://www.house.gov/representatives>

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR

Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.

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Governor Edmund G. Brown
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Phone: 916-445-2841

Look up California state legislators here:

<http://findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/>

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Baykeeper Appeals County Permit for Big Lagoon Asphalt Plant

Jennifer Kalt, Director

Humboldt Baykeeper is appealing the County's Coastal Development Permit for an asphalt plant near Big Lagoon, a sensitive waterway known for its abundant fish, migratory birds, and popularity with kayakers and swimmers.

The County Planning Commission approved a five-year permit with a five-year extension for an asphalt plant just east of Big Lagoon. The County's environmental review was limited to the impacts of the one-year temporary permit that was approved in 2017. The County failed to address many of its own coastal policies, including impacts to recreation, sensitive habitat, scenic views, and floodplain development.

The site is within the 100-year flood zone adjacent to Maple Creek on the site of the former Louisiana-Pacific lumber mill, which was dismantled in 2003. Potential industrial contamination at the site has not been analyzed, so the extent of soil and/or groundwater contamination is unknown.

The County permit would allow the asphalt plant to operate 24/7 with no conditions to limit light pollution, odor, and other impacts to a designated Coastal Scenic Area, Harry A. Merlo State Recreation Area, Big Lagoon County Park and Campground, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Big Lagoon Wildlife Area. Although the temporary permit expired in March, the asphalt plant remains on the site, and is visible from

Big Lagoon and Highway 101.

Big Lagoon is an important area for coho and Chinook salmon, steelhead and coastal Cutthroat trout, tidewater goby, migratory birds, and water-based recreation, including kayaking, fishing, sailing, windsurfing, waterfowl hunting, standup paddle boarding, and swimming.

If you recreate at Big Lagoon and/or Maple Creek, we want to hear from you! Tell us why you love Big Lagoon and how often you go there.

We will keep the public informed of the next steps, including future opportunities for public comment. If you are not on our email list and would like to be added, contact us at alerts@humboldtbykeeper.org.

State Issues Humboldt Bay Fish Advisory using Baykeeper's Mercury Data

In October, the State of California issued an official fish advisory for Humboldt Bay using data from Humboldt Baykeeper's recent study of mercury in fish and shellfish. The advisory addresses eight species of fish, some of which are safe to eat up to seven times a week.

Only leopard shark is listed as unsafe to consume in any amounts. Lingcod is considered safe for children and women of childbearing age to eat one serving a week. An adult serving is eight ounces uncooked (four ounces cooked), while a child's serving is half that size.

The state advisory also used studies of PCBs, DDT, and other contaminants in Humboldt Bay fish dating from 1990 to 2016 to develop the guidelines.

For coastal areas without site-specific guidance, the state issued a guide to eating fish from the California coast in 2016. You can find links to both advisories on our website.

Baykeeper sampled California halibut, clams, oysters, and other species that are not included in the state's advisory. To download Baykeeper's recommendations for eating fish and shellfish from Humboldt Bay, visit our website at www.humboldtbykeeper.org. The guidelines are also available in Spanish and Hmong.



Women
(18-45 Years)



Children
(1-17 Years)

A GUIDE TO EATING FISH from HUMBOLDT BAY

(HUMBOLDT COUNTY)

**WOMEN 18 - 45 YEARS AND
CHILDREN 1 - 17 YEARS**

7 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK

OR

2 TOTAL SERVINGS A WEEK

OR

1 TOTAL SERVING A WEEK

OR

0 DO NOT EAT

Eat the Good Fish
Eating fish that are low in chemicals may provide health benefits to children and adults.



Avoid the Bad Fish
Eating fish with higher levels of chemicals like mercury or PCBs may cause health problems in children and adults.



Choose the Right Fish
Chemicals may be more harmful to unborn babies and children.

 Speckled Sanddab	 Shiner Perch	 White Surfperch
 Red Rock Crab	 Lingcod	 Pile Perch
	 Walleye Surfperch	
 Leopard Shark		



California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
web www.oehha.ca.gov/fish
email fish@oehha.ca.gov
phone (916) 324-7572

Serving Size
A serving of fish is about the size and thickness of your hand. Give children smaller servings.

For Adults 

For Children 

Some chemicals are higher in the skin, fat, and guts.

Eat only the skinless fillet 

Eat only the meat 

13

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DEC 2018/JAN 2019 ECONews

Robbing a Burn Victim

Tom Wheeler
Executive Director, EPIC

On October 16, EPIC filed a lawsuit challenging a large post-fire timber sale on the Siskiyou Crest in Klamath National Forest. This timber sale, called the Seiad-Horse Project after the watersheds it will impact, is one of the most cynical and destructive projects we've seen. The sale would clear-cut almost 1,200 acres of forests set aside for owl habitat, and would in the process not only harm wildlife, but would cost taxpayers money while giving a gift to the timber industry.

The Klamath National Forest is relying on the public's fear of fire to push forward projects that are not only bad for the environment but illegal. In her final decision on the project, Klamath National Forest Supervisor Patty Grantham cites the recent spate of fires, such as the Carr fire which killed eight individuals in 2018, as evidence that these projects are necessary to promote public safety.

What the Klamath National Forest fails to mention is that post-fire logging increases the likelihood of a high-severity fire. Here's how: in a post-fire timber sale, the loggers will "high-grade" the forest, removing the largest trees while leaving the smallest. The largest trees are those which are

Conservation Advocate, Amber Jamieson standing in front of Westside post-fire logging deck 2016. Photo: Kimberly Baker.



Clearcut in Klamath National Forest's Westside Project 2016. Photo: Amber Jamieson.

the most fire-resistant, even when dead, while the smaller trees quickly become the fine surface fuels that are often the cause of fast-moving and hot-burning fires. Loggers also leave large amounts of slash—the tree tops, branches and other woody debris—on the forest floor, further adding to the "fuel load." The timber industry and the Forest Service have tried their best to suppress this science.

Fundraising Season!

It takes a village to make this kind of work happen. We go up against big industry and governments, speak on behalf of the voiceless and work tirelessly to make incremental changes. Filing lawsuits and writing comments are not that exciting, but the precedents we set are very important for this and future generations. If you do not have the time to write comments, or the capability to volunteer, you probably have a few dollars to spare. In the capitalistic society that we live in, we vote with our dollars. Please remember to vote for the organizations, people and businesses that you want to survive by supporting them financially. It is the only way that we will have the resources necessary to defeat irresponsible corporate interests and secure a sustainable future for generations to come.

tree marking, and preparation of an environmental analysis, the Forest Service loses our taxpayer money on the sale.

The Klamath National Forest is a relic of the old Forest Service, one that prioritized the wants of the timber industry over the needs of nature. Other national forests in California have moved away from this model and have worked with all stakeholders after a fire to implement commonsense projects to address post-fire conditions.

Wood debris that has been pushed down the hillside in Westside timber sale 2016. Photo: Amber Jamieson.





Capitalizing on Disaster: Why Recent State Legislation and Subsidies for Biomass Electric Generation are Very Bad Ideas

Felice Pace

In the wake of wildfires that caused terrible devastation when they entered Northern California towns, politicians are ignoring the facts and using the disasters to push “solutions” that will only increase fire risks. While some communities are bordered by forests, most fires which threaten western towns and cities come from shrublands and woodlands with few trees, not from forests. But that has not stopped President Trump from blaming “poor forest management” for the devastation communities have experienced, even as his administration pushes the Forest Service to convert more natural forest to highly flammable tree plantations.

Trump is not the only politician using the fire disasters to push logging-related agendas. North Coast state representatives Mike McGuire and Jim Wood helped get SB 901 passed by the California legislature. Signed into law by Governor Brown, SB 901 allows some landowners to log and construct logging roads without notice or review by Regional Water Boards and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Because younger forests and tree plantations burn hotter as compared to older and natural forests, AB 901 will actually lead to more fire risk as older forests are replaced by younger, more flammable forests and tree plantations.

Another industry capitalizing on the public’s fear of wildfire is the biomass industry. Biomass electricity generation can not compete with cleaner forms of electric generation like natural gas, solar and wind. In order to survive, the biomass industry requires government subsidies paid for by taxpayers. Unfortunately, California politicians appear eager to subsidize this dirty form of electricity generation. Both SB 901, and the earlier SB 859, mandate taxpayer-financed subsidies to the biomass industry.

Why biomass is the wrong choice

Biomass is the wrong choice for California for two reasons: First, in California’s interior valleys, winter inversions trap air near the ground. When biomass plants are located in these valleys, and many are, already poor winter air quality is rendered much worse. The resulting health impacts are significant. In addition, home woodstove use is curtailed during bad air days in order to allow biomass generation to continue. Curtailing home wood burning more heavily impacts low income residents who rely on wood heat.

When used for biomass electric generation, tree plantations are typically harvested every 30 to 50 years, guaranteeing that enhanced fire risk is sustained over time. And because biomass plants pull fuel only from nearby forests, the enhanced risk is located where it can do the most damage, that is, close to rural towns and cities.

Sierra Club California is looking out for the health of rural residents

While some major environmental organizations support subsidies for the biomass industry, Sierra Club California opposes them. It is working to educate state lawmakers and others about the problems biomass electricity generation creates and why it is not a good, sustainable solution for electricity generation. You can learn more from Sierra Club California’s fact sheets at this link: <https://www.sierraclub.org/california/biomass-dirty-energy-source>. Read Sierra Club California Director Kathryn Phillips’ “Letter from Sacramento” about attempts by the Biomass Industry and California politicians to use the recent fires to leverage more subsidies for biomass electricity generation here: www.sierraclub.org/california/letter-sacramento-step-away-from-the-incinerator.

Because North Coast Senator Mike McGuire and North Coast Assembly Member Jim Wood supported logging without review and biomass subsidies, they need to hear from constituents who object to unregulated logging and dirty power. Please tell McGuire and Wood that SB 901 will increase fire risk and damage our watersheds. Remind them that biomass creates massive greenhouse gas emissions, threatens the health of residents living near the plants and increases fire risk by encouraging conversion of naturally diverse forests to single-tree plantations managed on short rotations. Let these politicians know that you do not want them to promote plantation forestry which poses the greatest risk for forest catastrophic fire effects. Here’s how to contact them:



Green Diamond Resources (formerly Simpson Timber) is converting the Northcoast forests it controls (this one is in Redwood Creek) into tree plantations. That increases the fire risk to nearby towns, including Hoopa, Weitchpec, Klamath and Trinidad. Submitted photo.

- Contact Senator McGuire via email at senator.mcguire@senate.ca.gov, or by calling his Sacramento office: 916-651-4002.
- Contact Assembly Member Wood via web form at www.lcmspubcontact.lc.ca.gov/PublicLCMS/ContactPopup.php?district=AD02 or by calling his office: 916 319-2002.

Saturday, December 8—North Group. Humboldt Redwoods State Park Centennial Hike. Celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the establishment of Save the Redwoods League and Humboldt Redwoods State Park as we hike Dyerville, Bull Creek flats, and the historic Women’s Federation Grove. Bring lunch and water. No dogs. Medium difficulty, eight miles. Contact leader Ned 707-825-3652 or nedforsyth48@gmail.com for carpool and other information.

Please Join Us!

The North Group’s Executive Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month in the first floor conference room at the Adorni Center on the waterfront in Eureka. The meeting, which covers regular business and conservation issues, begins at 6:45 PM. Members and non-members with environmental concerns are encouraged to attend. When a new person comes to us with an environmental issue or concern, we often place them first or early on the agenda.



Native Plants Any Day!

Missed the plant sale? Ready
NOW for a native plant?

A selection of our chapter-grown native plants is available to buy every day, noon-6 p.m., at the Kneeland Glen Farm Stand at Freshwater Farms Reserve, 5851 Myrtle Ave (near Three Corners Market). If you don't see what you want there, you can ask if we have it by contacting us at northcoastcnps@gmail.com.

Photo: Carol Ralph.



Bear River Ridge Field Trip in November



CNPS field trippers focus on lunch while getting to know what we will sacrifice for clean energy if wind turbines are built along Bear River Ridge Road. A huge sky; rolling, clean coastal prairie; vast vistas of mountain peaks and the known world far below—as close as we get to soaring while having our feet on the ground. The Terra-Gen Humboldt Wind Project proposes 591-foot tall turbines on this ridge and on Monument Ridge, a nearby, less open ridge on a private road. Bear River Ridge is easily accessed on county road from Monument Rd. in Rio Dell. It connects to the Mattole Rd. out of Ferndale. Photos: Carol Ralph.



Evening Programs

Evening programs are free, public programs on the second Wednesday of each month, September through May, at the Six Rivers Masonic Lodge, 251 Bayside Rd., Arcata. Refreshments at 7:00 p.m.; program at 7:30 p.m. For information or to suggest a speaker or topic, contact Michael Kauffmann at 707-407-7686 or michaelkauffmann@gmail.com.

December 12, Wednesday. 7:30 p.m. Native Plant Show and Tell. Short slideshow presentations from plant exploring adventures this year. Graduate student and chapter awardee Andres Rodriguez will share research about how rabbits affect the dune plants on the North Spit of Humboldt Bay. Ann Wallace will show photos of the Azores—a beautiful, volcanic landscape in islands totally under the hand of man for centuries. Len Mazur will share photos from the CNPS North Coast Chapter field trip to Sugar Lake.

January 9, Wednesday. 7:30 p.m. “Flora of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.” Author, botanist, and CNPS North Coast member Dana York will take us on a botanical and historical tour of these two national treasures. *An Illustrated Flora of Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks* is the first comprehensive guidebook covering the diversity of plants found in the Southern Sierra Nevada. From towering giant sequoias in magnificent forests to pygmy alpine golds growing on desert-like ridgetops, the plants are as rich and beautiful as the famous Sierra landscapes where they grow. Dana will be signing his book at the program.

Garden Visit

January 20, Sunday. 1-3 p.m. Winter in Pete’s Garden. What native plants and lichen can we establish in our gardens to enjoy in the winter? Look around Pete and Judy’s Fieldbrook garden in mid-winter to see what puts a smile on your face. Bring suggestions of what you think might be good winter native plants. Contact Pete at phaggard@suddenlink.net or 839-0307 to make a reservation and get directions. Limited to 10 people.

Missed the Tallamy Evening Program?

(“Restoring Nature One Garden at a Time”) Don’t despair! You can see the lecture at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yo4ZJ-ryTaE>. To see other Douglas Tallamy videos, search his name on YouTube. The lectures include Dr. Tallamy’s most recent research. His book, *Bringing Nature Home*, is still a good starting point for understanding how important native plants are to native songbirds.

ZERO WASTE HUMBOLDT

REDUCE • REUSE • RECYCLE

Anne Maher

It's been quite a year for Zero Waste Humboldt (ZWH), and the entire Zero Waste community. The last 12 months have brought advocacy, education, and change to the North Coast, both within our organization and beyond.

With the beginning of the year starting out with an all new board and staff, Zero Waste Humboldt soon entered a new chapter of projects and events. We hosted our first ever Clothing Swap in April, and first ever Plastic Free July cleanup in conjunction with the Northcoast Environmental Center. There were also monthly presentations and workshops at local schools and events, including Humboldt State's Zero Waste Conference and the Global Youth Summit. Zero Waste Humboldt assisted in recruiting volunteers for the North Country Fair and Fourth of July Jubilee, and did our part by volunteering at Humboldt State's Donation Dash! You may have seen us tabling at events throughout the year as well, including Arts Arcata, the Farmers Market, Earth Day, and others.

Zero Waste Humboldt worked hard to advocate for relevant policy issues this year. We sat in on the City of Arcata Zero Waste Study Session and county supervisors meetings, and submitted comments for other important local governance. ZWH wrote to your representatives in support of Senate Bill 1335,

which would encourage the use of reusable disposables in California, as well as writing to the City of Arcata in support of a city-wide straw ban. A letter was also submitted regarding Health Code 114353, requesting that the code be changed to allow reusables at outdoor festivals. You can find a sample of this letter on the Get Involved page of our website, and send in one of your own!

And, of course, 2018 resulted in huge strides within our Hydration Station campaign. By July, we had ordered five hydration stations and provided them for free to the cities of Blue Lake, Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, and McKinleyville for installation. By providing these hydration stations throughout Humboldt County, ZWH hopes to continue to encourage residents to

Zero Waste Humboldt
contact@zerowastehumboldt.org

A Year in Review for Zero Waste



Jeff, Kaylee and Emily Cook have fun cleaning up Samoa Beach during a Plastic Free July cleanup with the NEC. Photo: Sarai Lucarelli.

use their reusable water bottles and take back the tap. Stay in tune for the installation locations of these stations!

All in all, 2018 saw Zero Waste Humboldt grow as an organization and make strides for change on the North Coast. With waste continuing to be a prominent issue within the environmental movement, we are looking forward to another year of advocating for a Zero Waste future. Visit our website at www.zerowastehumboldt.org to find out how you can, too!

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Don't just get frustrated or angry with what is going on in Washington.

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We have hosted Teach-Ins and attended Town Halls. Join us for letter-writing events, meetings, rallies and teach-ins and learn how you can help save the planet.

Watch our website and EcoNews for updates. Don't be frustrated and angry—**be effective!**

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Raise Your Voice for a People-Friendly (and Climate-Friendly) Plaza

Colin Fiske, Executive Director

For a year and a half, the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP) has been advocating for a redesign of the Arcata Plaza that puts people first. Currently, over 60 percent of the Plaza's area is devoted to parking and driving. We think there are more important uses for Arcata's prime civic real estate. We also know, based on extensive academic research, two important things about the use of public space:

1. Designing for pedestrian comfort and safety is one of the key requirements for a public space to be successful—that is, for it to be a fun, lively, safe, well-used place. In other words, people of all ages and mobility levels have to feel comfortable and safe when they're not in a vehicle.
2. When we build public infrastructure for cars, more people drive. Conversely, when we build infrastructure for pedestrians, more people walk. Of course, there are limits to this phenomenon (called "induced demand"). Most important are the limits imposed by land use patterns—after all, most people will only walk so far. But Arcata has plenty of short-distance car trips that could be converted to walking.

We also know that in order to meet critical greenhouse gas reduction goals, Americans are going to have to drive a lot less and walk, bike, and take the bus a lot more. And it doesn't make much sense that a community like Arcata, which is so committed to tackling the climate crisis, would devote more than half of its central square to automobiles.

Partly as a result of our advocacy, the Arcata City Council created a Task Force earlier this year to consider improvements to the Plaza. We have begun circulating a petition to present to the Task Force

and the City Council showing broad-based support for a redesign of the Plaza that puts people first. Here's what the petition says:

"I support proposals such as the Living Plaza concept which prioritize pedestrians and ensure that people can use and enjoy the Arcata Plaza safely and comfortably by foot, bicycle or assisted mobility device. Research shows that this kind of design encourages more climate-friendly modes of transportation, community-friendly social and civic gatherings, and economy-friendly spending at local businesses. I encourage the City Council and Plaza Improvement Task Force to prioritize pedestrians and other non-vehicular users in their plans to revitalize the Plaza."

As of this writing, we're well over halfway to our goal of 500 signatures. If you haven't signed yet, you can sign online at www.transportationpriorities.org/plaza. You can also read more about the Living Plaza concept while you're on our website.

You don't have to be a resident of Arcata to sign the petition—you just have to be someone who uses the Plaza and wants to see it thrive! And if you have time, you can also attend a Task Force meeting to let them know what you think. Times and dates of meetings will be posted on the City of Arcata's website.



The Plaza is a thriving public space when there's an event happening. Let's make it a vibrant and active place all the time! Photo: CRTP.

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NEC Round-up: '79 Sneak Preview

by Tim McKay

Editor's note: At the NEC office, we have copies of nearly all issues of EcoNews that have been produced since the early 1970s. This library documents environmental issues in our bioregion and the activities of conservationists over time, providing a valuable historic overview. We feel it's insightful to share historic timecapsules with you.

The following provides a glimpse of many issues of note in 1978 and 1979 (forty years ago) during this time of year.

Tim McKay

This article excerpt is reprinted from the January 1979 issue of EcoNews.

Season's greetings! As we close out 1978, I think it would be good to conjecture, fantasize, and otherwise look forward to the year ahead.

1979 will be the International Year of the Child (IYC), by resolution of the UN General Assembly, to focus activities around the world on the needs of young people. Diverse groups will join hands to raise people's consciousness regarding the world's 1.5 billion youngsters (under 10). The goal is to put children at the center of world concern.

Here at the NEC we now have a committee of one which we hope will grow into a meaningful part of the international effort. I invite you all to think of ways in which we can protect this most precious natural resource.

Meanwhile other decisions in 1979 will have implications for future generations of children.

Fisheries

In a protein-short world, decisions that affect the productivity of fishery resources are of critical concern. In the year ahead, we will see continued tightening of regulations governing the salmon fishery: commercial, sport, and Native American.

The question all of those groups will be asking ever more frequently is when will the destruction of the salmon breeding habitat be stopped? The answer is likely to produce new alliances among fishermen, fish, and conservationists.

Beaches

On the beach, the NEC will begin a project to clean and restore the seashore of Humboldt County. This project is intended to link up with the Point Reyes Bird Observatory's beached bird survey and the California Marine Mammal Center's distressed marine mammal project.



Also in the coastal zone will be Sen. Barry Keene's proposed reduction in coastal zone boundaries and the continuation by local governments of bringing planning documents into compliance with the 1976 Coastal Act, thus leading to the extinction of regional coastal commissions.

Marina

The Woodley Island marina project will go forward this year, as may the Fields Landing navigation channel improvement project proposed by the Corps of Engineers. This project would disturb or destroy some of the eel grass beds upon which the black brant depend.

Arcata Little League supporters may still be looking for a site suitable for the planting of a ballpark, as the State Coastal Commission will soon decide the appeal of the regional commission's approval of the facility in the Coastal Zone on agricultural land.

Land Trust

1979 will be a fledgling year for the Humboldt Land Trust, which is Trinidad area residents' answer to state proposed acquisition of a number of coastal properties to protect their unique resources.



HBWA

Problems surrounding the Humboldt Bay Wastewater Authority's regional sewer system may have been resolved. For a good treatment (pardon the pun) of alternative methods, see the Army Corps of Engineers summer '78 issue of Water Spectrum.

Wetlands

As the October issue of the Conservation Foundation's Letter reports: "Efforts to save wetlands are bogged down." Bogged down closer to home are efforts to protect Del Norte County's Lake Earl, which is an important refuge for thousands of waterfowl and many other nongame species.

Forests

Out of the Coastal Zone but still not out of the woods, forestry issues aren't likely to be resolved early or easily—and there is a full slate of them.

At the top of the list is RARE II. Nationally there are 2,700 roadless areas in National Forests. Having received some 264,000 "inputs," the Forest Service will now make recommendations to Congress regarding their wilderness potential. The forestry industry lobbying groups are making RARE II a priority item in this year's crusades.

Also being released soon is the Six Rivers National Forest timber harvest scheduling study. As you may recall, a provision of the Redwood National Park expansion legislation called for studying possible increased cuts on local National Forests to offset the effects of Park expansion.

Industry lobbyists had argued that Congress should increase the cut by 400 million board feet—and so Congress directed the Forest Service to study that option and report back. Some pretty high-powered thinkers were sent in to tinker with the problem, and the results—which should be available in March—could be interesting.

Some conservationists are concerned that Congress may have created the functional equivalent of spending hundreds of millions of dollars, if not a billion, for a largely cutover redwood park, while trading off the North Coast's last wilderness areas and wild rivers.

Continued on page 21

Michael Kauffmann

Many years ago the Nordic people, living within the frigid forests of northern Germany, brought evergreen conifers into their homes to celebrate the winter solstice, a return to light, and the Norse god Jul (eventually called Yule). This custom slowly spread across Europe until traditions merged in the early 1500s and the Yule tree and Christ's Mass became one and the same. The tradition arrived, as a Christian celebration of Jesus, in the New World in the mid 1700s. Today the most popular Yule trees in the United States include the Douglas-fir, Fraser fir, white fir, noble fir, and white pine. In the Pacific Northwest, we love to use local firs including the noble and white.



Pacific Slope Yule Trees

PINACEAE

The Pinaceae family contains the firs, Douglas-firs, spruces, pines, larches, and hemlocks. This group is differentiated from other conifers by the unfused seed scale and bract scale structures of the cone.

Abies—true firs

Trees with evergreen, aromatic needles that attach singly to the twig. Crowns are usually spire-like or conical. Bark has rounded resin blisters when young and develops furrows and ridges with age; ridges sometimes flake into platelets. Diagnostic seed cones are ovoid to cylindrical and sit in clusters, upright from branches, at the tops of trees.

Pinus—pines

Trees are evergreen with single or multi-stemmed trunks and conical or cylindrical crowns that broaden with age. Bark is highly variable at maturity but often divided into plates. Needles in bundles of three or five (some in one, two, or four), bound by a fascicle. Seed cones are cylindrical and varied in size with spirally arranged scales. Most species-rich conifer family.

Pseudotsuga—Douglas-firs

Single-trunked evergreen trees with conical crowns maturing to cylindrical. Bark is divided into thick ridges by deep furrows. Needles are single and arranged spirally around branches. Seed cones are ovoid and oblong, hanging singly with distinct bracts protruding beyond scales. Douglas-fir is the most economically important lumber tree in the world.

CUPRESSACEAE—the forgotten Yule trees

The Cupressaceae family contains the cypresses, junipers, “cedars,” and redwoods. This is the most widely distributed family of conifers in the world. Its trees and shrubs are generally aromatic, with spherical cones, and scale-like needles. Not so popular as a Yule trees, but should be better appreciated!

Calocedrus—incense-cedar

More or less only grows in California where it favors dry sites in montane forest. The needles are scale-like and persistent. I think it is one of the perfect Yule trees because the needles stay green and don't fall off for a long time!

The **TAXACEAE** family contains the yews, which develop seeds singly in a fleshy aril rather than a woody cone. Not used as yule trees in our region.

Other trees to consider for Yule: redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) and western redcedar (*Thuja plicata*).



Photos, clockwise from above: incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), western white pine (*Pinus monticola*), white fir (*Abies concolor*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*). Photos: Michael Kauffmann.



Michael Kauffmann is author of three books including two, “Conifer Country” and “Conifers of the Pacific Slope,” that help with conifer identification.

Williams Continued from page 5

...and her husband, Brooke Williams, protested climate change by bidding on Bureau of Land Management oil and gas leases. Their winning bids on 1,120 acres north of Arches National Park prompted them to incorporate their own energy company. The Interior Department refunded the Williams' money and withheld the leases, which the Williamses unsuccessfully appealed.

Lesson Two: *If you want to know the story, don't look away.*

This lesson is illustrated not only by her personal story of her brother but also in her work with saving natural areas. She is not squeamish about looking directly on defeats as well as the joy of successes. She is a credible and articulate voice for the world around her. Ms. Williams could easily have arrived post-cremation to receive her brother's ashes. In her conservation work she could easily use her lofty author's perch to tell others what to do. Instead she is on the ground, a witness to the perils of the earth. In her Harvard lecture, she asked, "Are we watching, are we listening, hands on the earth, eyes looking upward?"

Lesson Three: *Listening to one another is a gift.*

Her challenge to dig deep was met by each retreat participant on the last day as we read personal two-minute essays on love, nature, rejection by family, personal injury and how lives are tied indelibly to our landscapes of hope, our homes. In the Las Angeles Review of Books interview she said "When we share our stories, empathy enters the room. A tenderness is felt. We experience another generosity, that of listening to one another as human beings. The weather system shifts as we realize we are being heard and seen for who we are, instead of as people who hold a contrary position or opinion." At the retreat, writers dug deep into their lives, writing, and landscapes. After the last person read their offering, there were a few tears and a collective deep sigh of appreciation. Ms. Williams responded to the depth of the writers' honesty by omitting a final question and answer session and, instead, ended with grateful silence.

Last Lesson: *"My home gets very, very clean when I face a writing deadline."*

My home is spotless right now.

You can learn more about Terry Tempest Williams at her website: <http://coyoteclan.com/contacts.html>.

Blast from the Past Continued from page 19

Laws

Other legislation expected to have major implications is the proposed reorganization of the Interior Department and the revision of the 1872 Mining Act. What is proposed is the creation of a Natural Resources Super-Agency by taking the Bureau of Land Management and putting it in the Forest Service, and then sticking the Forest Service into Interior.

The proposal also calls for putting the National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers all into Interior too.

The California legislature may have to deal with the results of the State Department of Food and Agriculture study and recommendations on pesticide use. The study documents what many environmentalists have known for years: the direct correlation between pesticide use and nervous disorders of skin and disease.

Below, the cover of the December 1978 EcoNews featured the design of the NEC's Snail Darter baseball team jersey. NEC staff have been bouncing around the idea of doing a limited edition run of Snail Darter t-shirts just for fun! If you would be interested in an NEC t-shirt with the vintage Snail Darters logo, send an email to nec@yournec.org indicating your support for the idea!



The legislature also has before it a proposal to repeal the 1976 Nuclear Safeguard Act—passed under the threat of Proposition 15, which would have banned construction of nuclear power plants. Now nuclear interests and the utilities are working to have the act deep-sixed.

Herbicides

The timber industry is likely to appeal a water quality ruling banning any trace of 2,4,5-T in rivers or streams. Also an EPA study of 2,4,5-T will come to a conclusion, and pending permits to apply 2,4-D are already being challenged by rural residents worried about their water.

Smith River

The proposed Smith River waterway management plan is about to be released for public comment. Conservationists will be working to achieve maximum protection of the watercourse, and logging interests will work overtime to gut the plan. The Smith is the only major undammed river in California.

As for dams, California reservoirs are filled to 127 percent of average throughout the state. A little over a year ago, they were at record lows.

Agricultural interests in the southern San Joaquin Valley would dearly love to have the Eel watering their sagebrush. So pray for rain.

And pray too that we all will be up to the work ahead in what shapes up as a busy year.

[Editor's note: *This wish still applies! May we all be up to the work ahead in these very challenging times.*]

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Otter Art Continued from page 7

...less concern for maintaining clean water and healthy habitats. Through the North Coast Otters project, community members will be able to learn about otters, search for statues, experience new art, and celebrate life on the North Coast.

North Coast Otters is currently seeking sponsors for the project's initial activities. Several "Humboldt Patrons" have committed initial funding to help launch the project, but more funding is needed. Future steps will include a public call for artists' design concepts and a search for host locations for the completed sculptures. Each of these efforts will enhance the visibility of the project and its supporters. Please be in touch to discuss options for sponsoring the project by contacting otterart@humboldt.edu. You can also visit the project's webpage at www.otterart.humboldt.edu for more information and a link to donate to the project.

And if you see a wild otter, please let us know on our website's sighting submissions page (below) or send us an email otters@humboldt.edu. We are keeping track of the comings and goings of otter social groups on a weekly basis throughout the year! Please join in the fun to help describe how our otters are doing. The basic information we ask for is the date, time, number of otters, relative size of pups, and a location with google map coordinates.

To report sightings and observations of wild otters, record the date, time, and map location and send an email to otters@humboldt.edu, call 707-826-3439, or visit: www2.humboldt.edu/wildlife/faculty/black/research/ottersentry.html.

Have You Seen a River Otter?

River otters are important top predators in the North Coast aquatic food chain.

You can help track ecosystem health by reporting sightings of river otters in Humboldt and Del Norte counties for an ongoing study.

Record date, time, map location, # of otters, and submit your observations to: otters@humboldt.edu or 707-826-3439.



Rezoning Continued from page 8

...Willow Creek, Glendale and Bluelake, to participate in a "Community Planning Area" (CPA). There are existing lines on Community Planning Area maps for these communities. However, when that CPA process was considered 15 or more years ago there was no continuity or draft plans developed.

Local residents are now working to seek a delay in zone change implementation within CPA boundaries. This would allow the CPAs for both Glendale and Blue Lake communities to develop a final Community Plan for zone designations. Such a plan could place a high priority of supporting current agriculture uses in a zone that does not encourage conversion to industrial uses!

Take Action: Please plan on attending the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors meeting on December 11 to support good and consistent planning and help prevent our river banks and streamside habitats from being rezoned for extensive medium and heavy industrial development. The public notice for the December 11 meeting will not be final until Friday, December 7. Check the agenda to confirm the hearing date and time, as it is possible that the zoning topic may be delayed until the December 18 meeting.

For more information, please read the Board of Supervisors' agenda when it is published (visit www.humboldt.gov/167/Board-of-Supervisors) or contact the NEC at 707-822-6918. The NEC can also put you in touch with this author, Scott Frazer, if you have additional questions.

Alexa DeJohannis, President of the Redwood Region Audubon Society, submitted a critical letter in response outlining specific changes needed to improve the process and ability of the public to participate. The full text of the letter will be posted with this article on the NEC website.



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