News From the Center

Larry Glass, Executive Director and Carrie Tully, Admin & Dev. Director

To quote Julie Sze’s Environmental Justice in a Moment of Danger, “The resurgence of explicit racism is unsurprising for justice activists, who see their lives impacted by legacies of structural domination and racist public policies. Social movements for environmental and climate justice are mobilizing large numbers of people (including virtually) and having a broad national and global impact outside of local contexts. Oil pipeline protests on the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation; responses to mass lease poisonings in Flint, Michigan; mobilizations against police killings of African Americans [such as Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery] and other people of color; Taylor, George Floyd, and Ahmaud Arbery’s mobilizations against police killings of Indigenous and small island populations in opposition to climate change - all comprise a snapshot of the hundreds of protests in the United States that have foregrounded the convergence between environmentalism and movements to combat social justice and inequality.”

We see that our job at the NEC is to provide our members and supporters with factual reporting about the challenges that we all face. Most of the challenges we are confronting are linked together by a common thread of selfishness and greed. The mission is to shine a light on these, and connect the dots.

One of the most frustrating aspects of the current times we live in is the widespread amount of ignorance and science-denial. This has led to us seeing long-time environmental protections being abandoned by the White House, and the elevation of junk-science and conspiracy theories about things as important as climate collapse and worldwide pandemics.

Here at the Center, we strive to stay factual and rooted in proven science. Because of that, let us take this opportunity to remind our readers that our natural environment is still being threatened by uncontrolled changes in our climate.

Our office still remains closed. We understand that it’s human nature to be impatient and to want to go back to normal life, but we are still in the middle of a pandemic - no matter what propaganda is coming out of Washington D.C. We will continue to be cautious and protect our staff and members until it is truly safe to open back up.

Closed or not, the NEC staff continues to do their job. Right now we are focused on the next monthly EcoNews print editions, which are being warmly received by the public. If you’ve been having trouble finding a copy, it’s because they’ve been flying off the racks! We’ve been restocking as fast as we can. Please visit our website if you wish to become a member, and you can get one mailed directly to you.

As we’re going to press, we’ve just learned about another controversial potential project that will certainly hold our attention, and that is a proposed water line that would extend the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District’s service area all the way to Trinidad. This proposal could result in an unchecked wave of development in Northern McKinleyville and beyond. We will keep you posted as this project develops or is stopped.

We are excited to introduce the NEC’s newest interactive clean-up project: Trash-a-thon! Similar to a walk-a-thon, where you raise money from sponsors for each mile walked, Trash-a-thon is a way of raising donations for the number of pieces of trash that are picked up within a 24-hour timeframe. Anyone can volunteer to pick up trash, either as an individual or in teams of 2-5 people. Leading up to the day of the cleanup, volunteers are encouraged to collect pledges (donations) from their network. A suggested pledge could range anywhere from $0.05 – $5 per piece of trash. Be sure to sign up so you can participate in this great event!

Our dynamic new Administrative Director is heavily involved in the dots.
News from the Center
Continued from prior page

community activities. I would like to give Carrie an opportunity to tell you about two of the more exciting and impactful endeavors that she is deeply committed to:

One of the projects that I have been involved with since last fall is the development of the Native American Studies Food Sovereignty Lab and Cultural Workspace (NAS LAB) at Humboldt State University. The purpose of the NAS LAB is to provide Native and non-Native students, faculty, staff, and community members the opportunity for hands-on learning about sustainable agriculture and Traditional Ecological Knowledge. This facility will integrate the values of ecological sustainability, bio-cultural sovereignty of Indigenous peoples, interconnectedness of life, and community involvement in efforts to develop reverence for food sovereignty.

This space will help to strengthen the bond between our local community, Indigenous Nations, and students here at Humboldt State University. The NAS LAB will work directly with local members of the community and local tribes to include traditional Indigenous practices of sustainable harvesting and food preparation and preservation. This space will also focus on developing curriculum, internships, research opportunities, workshops, and programs. This lab would also set aside hours for community activities and meetings, including workshops on sustainable harvesting practices and cultural revival of local Indigenous traditions.

Over the next two years we will be focusing on development of the NAS LAB which will include: outreach, strategic planning, budgeting, fundraising, location remodel, equipment installation, policy and resolution writing and adoption, internship and research plans and the official opening of the Food Sovereignty Lab & Cultural Workspace space at HSU.

In addition, I have been assisting with the Save California Salmon & HSU Native American Studies Advocacy & Water Protection in Native California Summer Speakers Series & Certificate Program. Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy explains the program as being “aimed at people interested in making a difference through education and direct action. We are facing urgent environmental justice issues, we are navigating a pandemic, and we are seeing the importance of direct action and social movements in real time all over the news. This series brings together voices, resources, and stories to help build new visions of the future and inspire people to protect our waters, salmon, and communities” (indiancountrytoday.com). See page 7 for more information on the speakers series. For more info on either the NAS LAB or the Advocacy & Water Protection in Native California Summer Series, please contact Carrie at ct243@humboldt.edu.

Letters to EcoNews

We want to hear from you! Write us a letter 300 words or less that’s relevant to EcoNews and we’ll consider publishing it! Letters may be edited and shortened for space. The NEC reserves the right to reject any submitted material for any reason. Don’t forget to include your contact information when submitting!

Send to caroline@yournec.org

THE NEC IS LOOKING FOR HELP WITH SOME PROJECTS! WE NEED:

1 - AN OUTDOOR NEWSPAPER RACK FOR ECONNEWS
2 - A DISPLAY CASE MADE FOR OUR CIGARETTE SALMON
INTERESTED IN HELPING? EMAIL CHELSEA@YOURNEC.ORG

MICROSCOPE DONATIONS

We are donating 3 compound microscopes to local schools. If you would like to be considered for donation please write a letter expressing how this would benefit your classroom. Submit to chelsea@yournec.org

COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS

We want to feature your work! Do you have some nature art you’d like to share? How about photos of your catio, compost bin, garden, solar array, etc.? Email your photos to caroline@yournec.org and you might see them in the next issue of the EcoNews!

Nature Art by Kallie Gregg, Age 4

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SINCERE GRATITUDE TO:

• Black Humboldt for the important work they do to promote and support unity throughout the black and people of color community in Humboldt County.
• NEC’s Work Study Office Support: Brittany Kleinschnitz! Brittany has opted to stay with the NEC through the Summer as a volunteer. We appreciate her perspective, insight, and dedication. We are excited to welcome her back on as staff in the Fall.
• Patricia Sennott for her beautiful design of the NEC & CNPS sponsored North Coast Otter. This otter will be showcased at the Garden Gate soon!
• Alicia Hamann, Executive Director for the Friends of the Eel River, and NEC Board Member. A big congratulations on welcoming her new baby into the world!
July 18-26 is National Moth Week, a time when citizen scientists are encouraged to leave their porch lights on to attract and document local moths.

NATIONAL MOSHT WEEK | JULY 18-26

While they’ve been maligned as butterflies’ less attractive and sometimes more destructive cousins, moths have always had loyal fans for their diversity, beauty and value as pollinators and food sources for birds and other animals. The beautiful Luna, mystifying Death’s-head and exotic tropical moths have long attracted the attention of artists and writers as well as entomologists.

In addition to using lights, moth-ers also can attract moths by coating tree trunks with a sticky, sweet mixture of fruit and stale beer. Searching for caterpillars and day-flying moths is a good activity for daytime. The National Moth Week website offers tips on attracting moths.

Free registration of private and public moth-watching events is encouraged at nationalmothweek.org in order to show where moths are being observed around the world.

Volunteer Spotlight

Aly Krystkowiak

What inspires you to volunteer your time?

I really value and cherish my favorite outdoor places and picking up trash is an awesome feel-good thing that anyone can do to pay respect to the natural world we are lucky enough to call home. I want animals and other peoples’ experiences to be untainted by the harm and distraction of the human footprint as much as possible. Trash picking also keeps me physically fit and mentally stoked on life by encouraging me to visit my happy places and contribute to their well-being.

What made you choose debris removal?

I grew tired of always having the same negative thoughts when going to my favorite outdoor places and seeing trash: “Why the heck is this nasty stuff here and who in their right mind is going to pick it up?” One day I just started filling up dog poo bags full of debris found along my beach walks with my dog, Leroy, and realized how much of a need there was for it. Instead of continuing the same negative thought flow, I decided that since I was going to be out there enjoying the beach anyway, I could be the one who picks it up! What a mutually beneficial excuse to visit my favorite outdoor places more frequently! Trash picking is not only the best excuse to enjoy the outdoors and help the environment, it is also a great workout, a wonderful way to inspire others, make friends, and discover new favorite outdoor spots.

What words of advice do you have to people interested in volunteering?

Just get out there and do it! If people are looking at you while you’re picking, it is because they are moved and inspired; just smile and continue rocking it. Next time you are out there, you might just see them picking up trash! Join a cleanup group and ask a friend to go with you if you are intimidated at all. If you aren’t interested in handling trash, find a friend who is and participate in data collecting (no trash handling involved!). Remember, dogs also make excellent picking partners. Have fun, be safe and stay positive!

Welcome to the Wonderful New World of Electric Bicycles!

May 2, 2020 – Everything you need to know about RCEA’s electric bike rebate program. What is it, why is it, and how do you take advantage of it?

Backyard Birding for the Bored!

April 25, 2020 – the Green Gang investigates backyard birding! Stay sane during the shelter in place by birding without having to leave your house!
No Climate Justice Without Racial Justice

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

“We know that there is no climate justice without racial justice. The exploitation of black people is the greatest extractive system of production of all time and in order to heal the planet, we must have black and indigenous liberation.”

- Alexandria Villaseñor, 15-year-old co-founder of the U.S. Youth Climate Strike and founder of Earth Uprising

In the days since another unarmed black man was killed by police officers in Minneapolis, protests and demonstrations have risen up in hundreds of cities around the world calling for an end to the systemic racism that has led to police brutality of people of color becoming so commonplace in the U.S. These protests have been notable not just in their size and intensity, but also because of the solidarity that has been shown by environmental justice, social justice and labor-rights organizations. The intersection of racial justice and environmental or climate justice is profit; the systems of oppression and exploitation that harm people of color, poor people and the environment are often the same and they exist so that someone can get rich. The environment is just collateral damage, as are the people who rely on that environment to live. Profit is why more than half of all people who live within 1.86 miles of a hazardous waste facility in the U.S. are people of color. People of color are almost twice as likely as white people to live near dangerous chemical facilities. As Flint, MI has shown us, poor minority communities are at a significantly higher risk when it comes to water contamination: 11.2 percent of African American children and 4.0 percent of Mexican-American children are poisoned by lead, compared with 2.3 percent of white children.

Racial justice is environmental justice. If we in the environmental movement seek to end the assault on our air, water and climate we need to join together to get to the root of the problem: profit-driven, polluting corporations and institutions are harming communities of color because they see them as expendable and less likely to speak out about and fight against environmental harm than their white counterparts. Communities of color are being used to facilitate the profit-driven assault on the environment, and the segregation and stratification of our society has allowed this to continue because the repercussions are not felt equally, and are largely not felt by decision makers.

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. The key word here is meaningful. Statements of solidarity, of which there have been many, are powerful, but actions of solidarity are what are needed. Here on the north coast, what that looks like is following the leadership of Indigenous communities and communities of color when it comes to the issues that affect us all: we need to offer our skills and energy in fighting side-by-side and truly collaborating on solutions. Solidarity means shared struggle. It means that our fight is the same fight, and when we stand together against injustice, both environmental and racial, we can tip the scales.


Research Vessel Nathaniel B. Palmer docked in Humboldt Bay

Joan Tippetts
California Native Plant Society

Some of you may have noticed a cream and red colored ship docked near Samoa in Humboldt Bay since May 14 of this year. It is the Nathaniel B. Palmer, a research vessel with ice-breaker capabilities that is chartered by the National Science Foundation that has most recently been doing research in Antarctica in collaboration with the United Kingdom. The Nathaniel B. Palmer is tasked with extended scientific missions in Antarctica. The Nathaniel B. Palmer was purpose-built for and delivered to the NSF by Edison Chouest Offshore’s North American Shipbuilding facility in 1992. The Nathaniel B. Palmer carries a helicopter, accommodates up to 37 scientists, has a crew of 22 and is capable of missions lasting up to 75 days. The vessel is named after merchant mariner and shipbuilder, Nathaniel Brown Palmer who is credited by some historians with the discovery of Antarctica.

Thwaites Offshore Research (THOR) is a ship-based and ice-based project that will examine the sedimentary records both offshore from Thwaites Glacier and beneath the ice shelf, together with glacial landforms on the sea bed, to reconstruct past changes in ocean conditions and the glacier’s response to these changes. More information can be found at https://thwaitesglacier.org/

There are no scientists on board and no research or maintenance being done at this time, according to public relations staff person Elaine Hood. She further stated that “the ship simply has to be ‘parked’ somewhere in between science cruises and northern California is a convenient location at this time” and adds, “We are delighted with the reception received at Eureka.” The public is not being allowed to tour the vessel at this time due to COVID concerns but the ship is scheduled to be here through the end of September.
What is Food Sovereignty?

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

“FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IS THE RIGHT OF PEOPLES TO HEALTHY AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE FOOD PRODUCED THROUGH ECOCLEUTICALLY SOUND AND SUSTAINABLE METHODS, AND THEIR RIGHT TO DEFINE THEIR OWN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE SYSTEMS. IT PUTS THE ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS OF THOSE WHO PRODUCE, DISTRIBUTE AND CONSUME FOOD AT THE HEART OF FOOD SYSTEMS AND POLICIES RATHER THAN THE DEMANDS OF MARKETS AND CORPORATIONS.”

— DECLARATION OF NYÉLÉNI, FIRST GLOBAL FORUM ON FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, MALI, 2007

First presented in 1996 by La Via Campesina, an international peasant movement, the concept of food sovereignty arose out of the global struggle over land, water, food and livelihoods. In the wake of the coronavirus, many see that the need to provide local control over our food systems and produce healthy, environmentally and culturally appropriate food in a manner that serves people and the environment, not profits, is more important than ever.

Food is fundamental to human survival and the way that food is grown and transported has a profound effect on our water, soil and air. The industrialization of farming worldwide has made it so our food travels an estimated 1500 miles on average from farm to table and many of us have no idea how the foods we are eating have been grown, where and by whom. Large farms control 65% of the world’s agricultural land. Agricultural pollution in the form of fertilizer and pesticide run-off from farms in Illinois, Ohio, Iowa and southwest Minnesota has led to an algal bloom and subsequent massive dead-zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Water from our local rivers is diverted to irrigate ag land in the Central Valley, harming the fish that have been a food source for generations (see pg 17). Experts in public health, medicine and environmental science warn that factory farms and confined feeding operations pose an incredible risk to public health in the form of disease. An Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy study estimated that over half of the farm workers in the United States are undocumented, leaving them open to exploitation and underpayment for their vital service, and farm workers in the U.S. are exempt from many labor laws.

The Principles of Food Sovereignty, as outlined at the 2007 Forum for Food Sovereignty in Mali, address these issues and lay out the path forward for healing the planet, so the planet can heal us.

Focuses on Food for People: Food sovereignty stresses the right to sufficient, healthy and culturally appropriate food for all people, especially those who are hungry or living under occupation, or who are marginalized. It rejects the idea that food is just another commodity to be capitalized on.

Values Food Providers: Food sovereignty values and supports the contributions, and respects the rights, of women and men, peasants and small scale family farmers, pastoralists, artisanal fishers, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and agricultural and fisheries workers, including migrants, who cultivate, grow, harvest and process food; and rejects those policies, actions and programs that undervalue them, threaten their livelihoods and eliminate them.

Localizes Food Systems: Food sovereignty puts producers and consumers at the center of making food policy, protecting them from unhealthy food and farming practices and taking the power away from corporations who benefit from unsustainable practices and inequitable international trade.

Puts Control Locally: Food sovereignty rejects the privatization of natural resources and seeks to share resources in socially and environmentally conscious ways which conserve diversity. It recognizes that territories often cross state and international boundaries and advances the right of local communities to inhabit and use their territories.

Builds Knowledge and Skills: Food sovereignty builds on the skills and knowledge of local food producers that have been passed down for generations, skills that conserve, develop and manage local food systems. It rejects technologies that undermine, threaten or contaminate these, i.e. genetic engineering.

Works With Nature: Food sovereignty seeks to heal the planet so that the planet may heal us, and rejects methods that harm beneficial ecosystem functions, that depend on energy intensive monocultures and livestock factories, destructive fishing practices and other industrialized production methods, which damage the environment and contribute to global warming.

Locally, food sovereignty takes many forms, from the sustainable fishing and gathering of local tribes, to the 100+ local farms that exist in Humboldt County. Working towards equitable food systems that are less damaging to the environment is the core of this movement, a side effect of which is protecting our food systems for years to come.

Sowing Seeds of Resiliency

Jasmine Harvey

We are in very uncertain times. This year has been marked with massive changes to society from a global pandemic and widespread social unrest, and nobody knows what tomorrow may bring. Although the Karuk Tribal Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has always worked to ensure that our communities aren’t faced with food insecurity, this year our efforts have grown substantially.

Building off of the groundwork of food security projects from many years of dedication, DNR staff, along with community volunteers and financial support from the Humboldt Area Foundation, have designed and implemented a Community Farm on Tribal Property in Orleans.

Under the Karuk Tribe’s Incident Management team for the COVID-19 response, DNR has taken on planning and implementation of Emergency Support Functions (ESF) 4 and 11. (Firefighting and Agriculture/Natural Resources respectively) ESF 11 outlines standard operating procedures to ensure the safe production and distribution of food grown at this community farm. Producing food locally will supply fresh healthy food to the distribution boxes as part of the Tribe’s COVID response, and will also provide safe jobs to local workers who are laid off due to necessary precautions taken to slow the spread.

So far we have planted hundreds upon hundreds of tomatoes, peppers, squash, cucumbers, green beans, and potatoes, and are looking into our options for sustaining what we have and expanding into meat, eggs, mushrooms and fruit production, as well as processing facilities to preserve our harvests.

If you are interested in supporting these efforts or would like to know more about DNR’s food security projects, contact us at (530)-627-3446.

Resilient sprout. Photo source: Pexels.com Creative Commons
Food Sovereignty Lab & Cultural Workspace

Carrie Tully,
NEC Admin. & Development Director

I begin by acknowledging that I am on the land of the Wiyot peoples which includes the Wiyot Tribe, Bear River Rancheria and Blue Lake Rancheria. Arcata is known as Goudi’ni meaning “among the redwoods.” The persistence of the Wiyot peoples to remain in relationship with these lands despite their attempted genocide, compels me to spread awareness to my community regarding the true history of this space. I strive to hold myself and others accountable for the continuation of colonial acts which neglect to include the voices and needs of these Tribes, while remembering to lead with compassion.

I wish to also acknowledge my own white privilege. As a person of mainly European descent, I recognize that I have lived a simple life compared to my friends and associates of color. I do not get questioned when I enter a store. I do not get stopped at random by police. I don’t get called racist slurs. This is important to recognize in order to address this country’s history: of settler colonialism, of racism, and genocide.

Providing a comprehensive history of settler colonialism would take a book...or two. I simply wish to declare that we are still living in a settler colonial state that continues to pursue genocide through a multitude of ways. Particularly, the U.S. government strives to sever Indigenous peoples from their culture, one of the most fundamental aspects of which is food sovereignty.

Indigenous peoples have always considered food to be more than a way of sustenance; it is about relationships and reciprocation. Unfortunately, the relationship many of us have with our food today is lacking that reciprocation. Food has become a commodity...a way to feed ourselves. But what do we give in return?

This country has worked hard to kill off Indigenous food sources by damming rivers to stop the flow of water, restricting cultural burning, and denying access on state and federal lands for gathering food, medicines and basketry materials. The lost connection between people and their land has made Indigenous peoples sick...homesick for a way of life that was known to their ancestors for thousands of years prior to colonization and genocide.

When we begin to take responsibility for our human and more-than-human community, we can rebuild those relationships. Now, more than ever before, it is integral to be working towards reconnecting to our food and food systems.

Last Fall the students in Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy’s NAS 331 course at HSU, Indigenous Natural Resource Management Practices, imagined a research project that would have lasting benefits for our community. This project was intrinsically interdisciplinary, designed and led by students spanning twelve majors across campus. After interviewing Indigenous students, faculty, staff and community members, we collectively decided that the project which will serve everyone best is a Food Sovereignty Lab and Cultural Workspace (NAS LAB). We envisioned a lab with a commercial kitchen, a Native plants and food garden, and salmon smoking pit that will teach key concepts of food sovereignty, food security, basketry and regalia making. This lab will be able to be utilized by all; not only by our diverse student population, but also by our surrounding communities, tribal nations, and national and international scholars. It will be a space that builds true connections to one another and to the world.

Food sovereignty happens at various levels. Individual food sovereignty refers to personal food choices. However, the breadth of the spectrum of choice is defined by the degree to which individuals and communities have access to the foods they desire. Providing access to healthy foods and space for cultural expression clearly supports both human health as well as ecosystem health.

The concept of food sovereignty directly relates to building individual and community resilience while preparing for climate change. Because of the intense impact of COVID-19, it is clear that there is a deep-rooted need for change. A focus on community-based collaborative education, research, and work is apparent and essential. The NAS LAB will serve to promote and sustain the mental, physical, cultural, and spiritual health of both Native and non-Native students along with community members of all ages. It is for these reasons that we feel that our project is a vital addition to our university.

The Food Sovereignty Lab Steering Committee is excited to share with you that we were recently granted the use of the former Hilltop Marketplace across from the BSS building for the use of the NAS LAB. Our project will be created and shared with our community in order to help restore our relationships to our food, environment, and one another.

At this time the Food Sovereignty Lab and Cultural Workspace is seeking funding to begin planning and designing the space. If you have any questions regarding the NAS LAB, please contact Carrie Tully at ct243@humboldt.edu.
The Original Environmentalists: HSU Water Protectors Speaker Series

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

From the Dakota Access Pipeline fight at Standing Rock, to the Jordan Cove LNG Pipeline, to the decades long battle to keep water in the Klamath River for threatened salmon species, Indigenous activists have long been leading the fight against resource extraction and the commodification of our land, water and air. Locally, the HSU Native American Studies Department and Save California Salmon have joined together to provide a free speaker series and certificate program titled Advocacy and Water Protection in Native California. The series seeks to educate individuals and organizations about water issues on our local rivers, the laws pertaining to water and environmental protection, and how tribes have been fighting to protect waterways.

Starting June 5 and running every Friday until August 28, the course is open to everyone. Certificate seekers are required to attend three CORE courses, five elective webinars and present at a symposium that will be the culmination of the course. Webinars will be available on YouTube for those who are unable to attend. The Advocacy and Water Protection in Native California Symposium will be held September 25th.

The first module of the series ran through the month of June and is entitled The State of California Salmon. It lays out the history and present of the fight to save the salmon of Northern California’s rivers. Many of the courses in this module focus on the effects of dams on salmon populations and those that rely on them, and the effects of water diversion projects for agriculture in the Central Valley. The courses highlight the interconnectedness of the watersheds, the history of dams and diversions on the waterways, and the legal challenges to them as a way to show the full landscape of threats to the salmon.

July is dedicated to Culture, Advocacy and Environmental Justice, and will explore grassroots movements, indigenous environmental justice, art, food sovereignty, culture and community resilience as they relate to water justice. Courses led by Indigenous artists and activists focus on the importance of revitalizing cultural traditions in relationship to water, culture, and identity; the centrality of Indigenous relationships to food systems and the importance of food sovereignty for tribal nations; and how the ecological dynamics of settler colonialism are essential for theorizing the relationships between health and environmental justice.

August is focused on Direct Action and Allyship with Indigenous Movements and will examine Indigenous resistance through the strategies and tactics of water protectors. Courses will cover topics related to organizing and carrying out grassroots campaigns inspired by the knowledge shared in previous courses. By taking in the big picture of the history of colonization and ecological damage, then learning how Indigenous activists have been and continue to advocate for the environment, attendees will learn how to craft grassroots campaigns following the lead of people who have been fighting to protect our waters since the arrival of settlers.

Courses are being led by Indigenous activists and artists from around California including Allie Hostler of the Hoopa Valley Tribe; Britanni Orona of the Hoopa Valley Tribe; Caleen Sisk, the Spiritual Leader and Tribal Chief of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe; and Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy, chair of the HSU Native American Studies Department and member of the Hoopa Valley Tribe; Hillary Renick of the Sherwood Valley Band of the Pomo Indians; Ka’ila Farrell-Smith, a Klamath Modoc visual artist and activist; and Morning Star Gail, an activist and organizer from the Ajumawi Band of the Pit River Tribe.

All of this will culminate in a virtual symposium on September 25th featuring panelists, presentations and workshops about the work that is being done throughout Native California.

Advocacy & Water Protection in Native CA
Summer Speakers Series & Certificate Program

June 5, 2020 - August 28, 2020
Weekly on Friday 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Register for ZOOM link: https://tinyurl.com/y9syml2d
or watch on Facebook LIVE: facebook.com/hsunasp

~ All webinars are free and open to the public ~

CORE Courses and Electives will be recorded and posted online and can be viewed via YouTube if you cannot attend the course.

June: The State of California Salmon
6/5: CORE Course - Water Policy, Law, and Tribal Sovereignty in Native California
6/12: State of the Salmon and Water Wars on the Klamath River
6/19: From the Trump Water Plan to the Shasta Dam Raise:
    The Fight for Sacramento River/Bay Delta Salmon
6/26: Bringing Salmon Home: Eel River Dam Removal

July: Culture, Advocacy, and Environmental Justice for Tribal Communities
7/3: CORE Course - Grassroots Advocacy & Indigenous Environmental Justice
7/10: Arts as Activism: Protecting Land, Water & Life
7/17: Cultural Revitalization on the Water: Canoe Traditions in the Pacific Northwest
7/24: The River Feeds Us: Food Sovereignty & Community Resilience
7/31: Salmon and Acorns Feed Our People: Connections Between Health & Environmental Justice

August: Direct Action & Allyship with Indigenous Movements
8/7: CORE Course - From Fish Wars to Fish Kill
8/14: Community Organizing & Creating a Campaign
8/21: Telling Your Story: Outreach and Media
8/28: Youth Water Advocacy & Education

Webinar Advocacy & Water Protection in Native California Symposium
September 25, 2020 10 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
EcoNews Journalist

The environmental movement is seeking to right the wrongs of industrial capitalism using the best available science, but what about traditional ecological knowledge? The podcast “Future Ecologies” wants us to envision how following the lead of Indigenous land stewards can bring us back into balance and right the wrongs of our forebears, both ecologically and socially.

“Once you start to examine how our ecosystems have changed, how they have changed over time, where they are now and what trajectory they might take in the future depending on what we do, perhaps the single most important thing to realize is that none of this is possible to understand without understanding the role that Indigenous people have played in shaping these ecosystems; something that Western science has only recently woken up to. And the thing is, their track record is a lot better than the settlers that came afterwards.” This is how Episode 1 “This is Where It Begins” starts, before setting off to tell the story of the unprecedented decision to return Duluwat Island to the Wiyot Tribe and the return of ancestral lands to the Amah Mutsun Tribe of the Monterey Bay region, and how these simple, forward thinking acts could be the key to changing the trajectory of our extractive culture.

Future Ecologies (which can be found at futureecologies.net) bills itself as an exploration of the future of human habitation on planet earth through ecology, design and science. In order to explore that future, we need to look at the harsh truths of the past without getting stuck there and, most importantly, envision the path to the future we want to live in. For this episode, the hosts of Future Ecologies, Adam Huggins and Mendel Skulski, interview Wiyot Tribal Chairman Ted Hernandez and Valentin Lopez, Chair of the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, about the visionary paths the tribes followed to regain stewardship of their lands.

Both the lands that were returned to the Wiyot and Amah Mutsun were damaged by the industrial and military uses that the settlers had subjected them to. The tribes inherited that industrial damage and have set out to heal the land and restore balance. Through collaboration between the tribes, government agencies, nonprofits and the community, these lands can once again support life.

“Once people stopped being adversarial towards each other and (started) looking at solving the problem, that’s when it happened,” said Michelle Vassel of the Wiyot Tribe of the process. People wanted to heal, added Chairman Hernandez, and what better place to start that healing than here, on this sacred site.

Future Ecologies explores the ways that our attitudes toward nature shape every aspect of who we are. In addition to monthly episodes, Future Ecologies also offers a podcast miniseries called The Scales of Change: The Dragons of Climate Inaction, a detailed phylogeny of the beasts inside of us that prevent us from acting to fight climate change.
In keeping with the collaborative spirit of Coastal Programs at the NEC, this month I’m featuring the Smith River Alliance and their wonderful watershed stewardship. I had the pleasure of speaking with Tara Dettmar, Programs Coordinator at the Smith River Alliance and below are some of her words from our interview:

The Smith River Alliance (SRA) was incorporated in 1980 as a non-profit organization of conservation, sport fishing, recreation, and civic groups united in their support for sound management of the Smith River as the “Crown Jewel” of the California Wild and Scenic Rivers systems. Our mission is to provide for the long-term, landscape scale protection, stewardship and restoration of watershed and county resources and habitat. SRA led the campaigns that brought the Smith River and its tributaries (397 miles) into the National Wild and Scenic River System (1981) and established the Smith River National Recreation Area (1990).

SRA programming is vast and encompasses a variety of projects that focus on protection, stewardship and restoration.

Protection - SRA has played a key role in the long-term protection of the watershed, most significantly by acquiring private inholdings throughout the watershed to create the Smith River National Recreation Area. SRA was also a key partner in the Mill Creek Acquisition, the basin’s Coho stronghold, that is now seeing a resurgence of restoration efforts through the Redwood Rising initiative.

We also raise awareness about potential threats to the health of the river. When a foreign-owned company proposed a nickel strip mine on the North Fork Smith River and other regional waterways, threatening the health and livelihood of downstream communities, SRA created the campaign that led to safeguarding the river with a 20 year mining ban.

Stewardship - We offer regular stewardship events and programs catered to individuals and organizations. We have hosted immersion camps, naturalist programs, group hikes and river trips. If any of your readers have an idea for an event and would like to utilize our facilities and/or staff, send us an email! We can help to create a unique and unforgettable experience based in education, adventure and stewardship.

We also have a handful of long running annual and biannual events. These include the Annual Adult Fish Count, which is likely how many of our Humboldt supporters know of us, and River and Coastal cleanups.

Restoration - I encourage folks to head over to our website (smithriveralliance.org) to check out some of SRA’s livelier restoration efforts. You can watch a sped-up version of a culvert removal on Cedar Creek, or read about the immediate return of Coho after the removal of a culvert on Hamilton Creek. There is also information on our current efforts to restore the Smith River coastal plain, including the ever-important estuary, nursery to the salmonids that are so important to this region.

The Alliance has been organizing annual River cleanups around the Smith River National Recreation Area (NRA) for more than a decade. In 2017 we moved these cleanups to the coast due to excessive smoke around the NRA and the fact that there weren’t any coastal cleanups being organized in Del Norte. Last year’s cleanup drew more volunteers than ever before. In the past we would average around 50 participants, but in 2019 we worked to involve more of the community. We had 720 students from two schools, 70 participants at our annual cleanup in Crescent City and 43 participants at a new event in Smith River co-hosted by Tolowa Dee-n’ Nation, bringing the total of volunteers to 833. Needless to say, we removed more garbage than ever before -- nearly 7 tons!

When we are cleaning up public spaces, plastics are the number one culprit: unbranded bottle caps, clear baggies, and trash bags. These cleanups often take place on the coastline where birds, fish and mammals can ingest or get caught up in plastic waste. But let’s not discount how hazardous the other littered items can be. When we go into areas that are known dumping grounds or former encampments the list and size of items is much larger. There are kitchen appliances, scraps from home improvement projects, shopping carts, tarps, and so much more, many of which can leach hazardous materials into the soil and groundwater.

To help us suss out the big culprits, in terms of quantity, we recruited Organic Essence (OE), a local, organic body care company whose products come in plastic-free packaging. OE conducted a waste audit and subsequent report on the variety of litter that was being picked up. It can be found on their website or through a quick google search.

When I was still doing fisheries work for the Alliance, we would find all sorts of stuff while we were out in the field and our crew came to have a prized collection at our field house of all the weird trash we’d found. There were iPhones, guns, an -- ahem -- adult movie, and a really lovely silver, scallop plate that was found not once, but twice after it fell off the pack of the first biologist who found it.

I had my first volunteer experience with SRA at a Fish Count a decade ago and from that moment I vowed that I would someday live and work on that river. Now here I am, advocating for one of the most beautiful places on earth. Spend some time on it and it will change your life. We could ALWAYS use help on our various watershed projects and seek volunteers with an array of skill sets. Give us a call or send an email and we’ll be sure to provide a meaningful volunteer experience you won’t soon forget. We have a beautiful off-grid property called Rock Creek Ranch, located several miles up the South Fork of the Smith River, where we love to host volunteer events. Help us chop some wood or do some brushing and be rewarded by a dip in the aptly named majesty pool that sits just below some prime camping real estate and an outdoor kitchen.

Smith River Alliance Cleanup volunteers. Photo credit: Bryant Anderson III.
Trump Lawsuit for ‘Expediting’ Fossil Fuel Projects

Tom Wheeler, EPIC Executive Director

In the midst of the turmoil and unrest of early June, the Trump administration quietly used the COVID-19 pandemic to undermine federal environmental laws and fast-track oil and gas drilling. In an executive order issued on June 4, the administration cited the global pandemic and its effects on the economy as justification for “reforming and streamlining an outdated regulatory system that has held back our economy with needless paperwork and costly delays.”

In the executive order, Trump first directs that all federal agencies examine potential projects the agencies can pursue to expedite the “delivery of infrastructure” on public lands, such as oil and gas development and to use all available “emergency...authorities to expedite” their construction.

Second, the Trump administration takes direct aim at the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. To the National Environmental Policy Act, the Trump administration calls for a broad utilization of “alternative arrangements” that can be used in times of emergency to bypass public disclosure and public comment requirements of the law, allowing for projects to be built without adequate environmental review and oversight. To the Clean Water Act, the executive order similarly calls for projects to be shepherded through under emergency rules, trading degradation of waterways for expedited projects. Lastly to the Endangered Species Act, the executive order directs that federal agencies not consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or the National Marine Fisheries Service about the effects of projects on listed species.

The Center for Biological Diversity filed a notice of its intent to sue President Donald Trump over this executive order. “Everyone sees through Trump’s ploy. There’s quite a difference between rebuilding after an earthquake and claiming we need to build an oil pipeline to fight the coronavirus,” said Kieran Suckling, executive director of the Center. “This dangerous executive order is an open-ended invitation for abuse, and if he doesn’t revoke it, we’ll take him to court.”

Baby Condor Needs a Name

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

The Ventana Wildlife Society, two miles inland from Big Sur, CA, has been releasing and documenting captive-bred condors since 1997. On April 25, 2020, the Big Sur Condor Cam, which is nestled in the redwood tree that is home to condors Kingpin and Redwood Queen, caught the hatching of Condor 1031. Now the public is being asked to submit possible names for this new addition to the family. Viewers can watch this ball of fluff and the new parents in action at https://www.ventanaws.org/babycondors.html.

Condors on the central coast have been successfully producing wild chicks since 2007. California condors, the largest flying bird in North America with up to a 10 foot wingspan, reach breeding age at 6-8 years and form pair bonds that can last their entire lifetimes. According to the Ventana Wildlife society, which monitors and documents the success of the condors it releases, condors in Central California are now producing nearly as many wild chicks as it releases into the wild every year.

One of the largest threats to condors remains poisoning from lead ammunition, despite legislation banning the use of it within the condors’ range. Locally, the Yurok Tribe, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service are among 16 partners teaming up in an effort to reintroduce condors to Northern California, so we may soon be able to catch a glimpse of these massive scavengers in real life. Until then, the Condor Cam, which documents the sights and sounds both inside and outside of the nest, provides an opportunity to appreciate this sacred bird.
**Kin to the Earth: Tamara McFarland**

Tamara McFarland is a person of deep convictions who lives her values everyday. She consistently challenges herself and those around her to be the best versions of ourselves that we can be. And she does so without being preachy.

When I was asked to write about Tamara I turned to the person who has known her longer than anyone else—her mother, Jeri Scardina.

Jeri shared that from a very early age Tamara did everything she could to right any wrong that she saw. Jeri said, “Tamara has always stood up for her beliefs, even when it was hard. I am so very proud of the woman she has become. I taught her as a child, and she is teaching me as an adult.”

At age 14, young Tamara announced to her traditional meat and potatoes family that she was becoming a vegetarian. Today that may not seem so radical, but in the early 90’s in rural Humboldt that was a big deal. A few years later she became a vegan. Jeri says, “Tamara never wavered. And she didn’t have just one reason, she had all the reasons: avoiding animal cruelty, protecting the environment, her personal health, spirituality.”

Tamara married her high school sweetheart, local firefighter Matt McFarland. They are raising two beautiful children together here in Eureka.

In her early 20’s Tamara helped to found “Friends for Life” to help homeless and abandoned animals find forever homes. Jeri estimates that she and Matt have personally fostered over 20 different animals.

She also created her own successful small business. At McFarland Designs she creates custom jewelry from recycled metals and ethically sourced gemstones to create wearable works of art. She was one of the very first jewelers to incorporate this level of social justice and sustainability.

She was the lead organizer for the Bernie Sanders campaign in Humboldt County in 2016, and went on to serve as campaign manager for Austin Allison’s successful campaign for Eureka City Council. The local Central Labor Council awarded her the “Community Partner of the Year” in recognition of her work.

I asked Austin about Tamara and he was effusive. “She is one of most organized people I’ve ever met. She was -- and still is -- an inspiration to me. Honestly, she is one of the main reasons I got elected. In every way, she was just on it. Always.”

After the 2016 election she helped to co-found the North Coast People’s Alliance to advocate for economic, environmental, and social justice with a focus on local progressive politics.

In 2017 she helped to co-found Cooperation Humboldt in order to help create a local economic system that puts people and planet before profit.

I confess that in writing this column I tricked her, sharing that I was having trouble helping a friend see the connection between the environment and racial justice.

She did not hesitate, and immediately pointed out that our destructive capitalist economy has always required “sacrifice zones,” and that these are always located where black and brown folks live. She reminded me that helping folks to do the hard work to confront -- and to overcome -- the white supremacist and patriarchal culture is critical. She sighed and said, “I know it is hard and can be uncomfortable, and I don’t always do it very well. But I keep doing it. Not only because it is morally the right thing to do. But because we have to do it if we want to win.”

Later that evening she sent me a follow up email. Here it is below so you can get a sense for who this woman is:

“I was imagining that this person you’re talking to might be feeling frustrated watching this incredible worldwide mobilization around Black Lives Matter when the same thing isn’t happening around the climate crisis.

But we have to remember that our current economic system -- which is the cause of the rampant environmental degradation we’re facing -- must be replaced if we are to have any chance of repairing/regenerating our planet. Our entire society is literally built on a foundation of racism and genocide. It’s not possible to replace this economic system with something based on deep ecology unless we find a way to address and reconcile that racism and genocide. And if we try to skip that step in our efforts to save the planet, the unaddressed racial issues will eventually infect and undermine the new system.”

She also included the following article “Why Every Environmentalist Should Be Anti-Racist.”

Tamara McFarland truly is “Kin to the Earth.” I am a better person because she is in my life, and I am grateful to call her a friend, a mentor, and a colleague.

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David Cobb, Cooperation Humboldt

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The Cooperation Humboldt mini gardens project, started by McFarland, has installed 100 gardens for low-income people. Photo source: Cooperation Humboldt Facebook Page.
The Environmental Protection Information Center

Novel Hoof Disease Detected in Del Norte Elk

In early April, the Department of Fish and Wildlife reports that it first discovered the disease in two elk in Del Norte County. However, no information concerning the disease was made public prior to a decision by the Commission to increase hunting on April 16. Among the Commission's charges is to consider whether the increased hunting will, together with likely population declines from TAHD, cause a significant impact to local elk herds.

EPIC has petitioned the California Fish and Game Commission to pass an emergency rule to pause hunting in the affected area. With significant potential population declines associated with the disease, we first need to not make the situation worse. Until the Department of Fish and Wildlife completes an action plan to stop the spread of the disease and mitigate the effects where present, we don't believe that we should allow further hunting.

Klamath-Siskiyou Pacific Fishers Denied Protections by US Fish and Wildlife Service

“Saving fishers will require better habitat protections,” said Tom Wheeler, executive director of the Environmental Protection Information Center. “We both need to maintain more old, large trees and snags and make sure our forests are free from rodenticides. Over 85% of fishers have tested positive for rodenticide exposure. Fishers are our indicator that something is deeply wrong in California’s forests. The Service has thrown the needs of the fisher under the bus by ignoring the needs of the southern Oregon and northern California population.”

Tom Wheeler, Executive Director

After acknowledging in 2019 that Pacific Fishers are threatened with extinction by a combination of logging, rodenticide poison use by marijuana growers, climate change and forest fire, the US Fish and Wildlife Service once again reversed course and denied protections for most fishers while only listing a small subset of the species as threatened in the southern Sierra Mountain Range. Remnant fisher populations in southern Oregon and Northern California remain unprotected.

Conservation groups petitioned to list the Pacific Fisher in 2000. In 2004, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a rule finding that listing was warranted but did not finalize listing. Conservation groups sued in 2010 to force the Service to complete the listing process. Again, the Service proposed federal protection for the fisher in 2014, but then arbitrarily withdrew the proposal in 2016. Conservation organizations then filed suit alleging that the denial ignored the science in a politically motivated bow to the timber industry. As a result of today’s rule, the Service again put politics over science and ignored its own recommendations to protect Pacific Fishers in the Klamath-Siskiyou.

A relative of minks and otters, Pacific Fishers once roamed from British Columbia to Southern California. But due to intense logging and historical trapping, only two naturally occurring populations remain today: a population of 100 to 500 fishers in the southern Sierra Nevada and a population of between 250 and a few thousand in southern Oregon and Northern California. In a 2015 study, scientists conducting necropsies on fishers found that 85 percent had been exposed to rodent poison.

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Roosevelt Elk. Photo Credit: Linda Tanner, Flikr Creative Commons
Field trips
Field Trips at this moment (June 8) are not permitted. As soon as they are, we will schedule some! Stay in touch! Go on your own field trips. See the Places to See Plants page under the Activities tab of the website. Don’t miss the Columbia Lilies along Highway 101 in Del Norte Redwoods State Park. Share your photos on facebook.com/groups/NorthCoastCNPS/.

Evening Programs
Evening programs are not scheduled for June-August. View recent programs archived under the Education tab on our website. For amazing photos of caterpillars and motivation about the importance of planting native plants see lectures by Douglas Tallamy at tinyurl.com/douglastalent. Or read his new book, Nature’s Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard.

Need Plants?
A constantly changing selection of our volunteer-run nursery plants is available every day, 12 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.

Lewisia: A Star in the Wild and the Garden
Lewisia, by which we usually mean Lewisia cotyledon, is a truly breath-taking native plant, charged with color, perched in wild, rocky sites. It has also proven adaptable and hardy in gardens, where hundreds of forms have been selected and developed. It illustrates two threats to wild plants that develop with native plant cultivation. One is that no matter how easily the species propagates in gardens, it will be poached from the wild. For this reason you will not find Lewisia growing near roads. Some poachers are scoundrels collecting plants to sell; some are ignorant passers-by hoping to add a free, pretty plant to their gardens.

Reduce Food Waste to Reduce Climate Change

The connection between reducing the food we waste and climate change is not yet commonly understood by the general public. Methane emissions resulting from the decomposition of landfilled organic waste are a significant source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions contributing to global climate change. Organic materials -- including waste that can be readily prevented, recycled, or composted -- account for 30–40% of the waste disposed of in most regions of the U.S.

Organic waste is the largest waste stream in California and on the Redwood Coast. At 23 million tons per year, food and organic waste are by far the largest material type landfilled annually in California.

In September 2016, California SB 1383 was signed into law to establish methane emissions reduction targets. SB1383 addresses one of five key climate change strategy pillars necessary to meet California’s target to reduce GHG emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

SB1838 sets forth ambitious new rules for food waste reduction, with a target of 75% reduction by 2025. Since the passage of this new law, a round of public hearings contributed to drafting detailed regulations for its implementation. It will require significant restructuring of our waste management system to expand organic waste collection to homes and businesses.

CalRecycle, the state agency responsible for developing SB1383 regulations, is urging all local governments, food-related businesses, and individuals to plan now for its implementation and required record keeping for accountability. Programs must be in place by January 1, 2022, when enforcement begins. Penalties have been planned for noncompliance.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating impact on our economy will affect funding for food waste reduction systems and SB1383 compliance. It is uncertain at this time if loss of funding due to the COVID-19 will be included in the “extraordinary circumstances,” that allow for postponing the dates set for implementation and reporting progress. Zero Waste Humboldt will monitor how this will impact Humboldt County’s businesses and jurisdictions.

Contact zerowastehumboldt@gmail.com or your local government to learn more.

In the meantime, reducing food waste is one of the most cost-effective strategies for each of us -- as individuals at home, and for business and industry -- to reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change.

Maggie Gainer, Zero Waste Humboldt Vice President

Food and its relation to the planet. Image Source: Freepik.
Calling on the Honor of the US Park Police: Black Lives Matter

Note: Opinions expressed in this piece do not necessarily reflect the positions of the NEC or its Member Organizations

Dan Sealy,
NEC Board Member

In 1982, Washington DC experienced blizzard conditions. A commercial liner carrying 74 passengers and five crew crashed on takeoff and plunged into the frozen Potomac River. US Park Police (USPP), using their helicopter, hovering so low its skids dipped into the icy water, plucked 5 of only 6 survivors from the river assisted by onshore citizens. The USPP pilot, Usher, and paramedic, Windsor, were awarded the Carnegie Hero Fund Medal. Though dramatically caught on live TV, this was not a rare event. I had the honor of working alongside the US Park Police as a park ranger/natural resource manager at Muir Woods and Golden Gate National Recreation Area in California and in parks in Washington, DC metropolitan area. Brave men and women did the work rangers were generally happy to let them cover in urban areas: robbery, organized crime and murder. US Park Police also assisted park rangers with river and ocean rescues, searches for lost hikers and evacuating visitors with emergency medical issues. Thirteen members of the USPP have lost their lives in the line of duty; two of those were African Americans.

Unfortunately, I also knew a Park Police officer who was filmed kicking a young immigrant man in the head while handcuffed. Another time, after a long day of working huge crowds for the annual July 4th celebration in Washington, DC a young woman ran up to me in the darkness to report her friend had been punched in the chest by her boyfriend and could not breathe; her lung had collapsed. When I enlisted the help of a nearby Park Police officer, his response was “she probably deserved it” and he sped off on his motorcycle leaving me to find another officer to call for a medical evacuation. I have seen lots of the best of the USPP and, unfortunately, a little of the worst. The USPP are a valued part of the National Park Service in our urban areas. It is their duty to assist other agencies with the protection of the President as well as our national park resources. On June 1, video emerged of the USPP participating in attacks on an Australian journalist and photographer in Lafayette Park, near the White House in order for President Trump to conduct a dangerously unscripted and widely criticized photo op in front of a nearby church. I was shocked and saddened. USPP placed both officers on administrative leave while an investigation is being conducted. The USPP admitted to using tear gas to clear the protestors.

On June 3 Chief of US Park Police, Monahan stated: “The United States Park Police is committed to the peaceful expression of First Amendment rights. However, this past weekend’s demonstrations at Lafayette Park and across the National Mall included activities that were not part of a peaceful protest, which resulted in injuries to USPP officers in the line of duty, the destruction of public property and the defacing of memorials and monuments. During four days of demonstrations, 51 members of the USPP were injured; of those, 11 were transported to the hospital and released and three were admitted.”

On June 4, The Northcoast Environmental Center joined over 75 other conservation organizations around the nation sending a letter to Secretary of the Interior, Bernhardt condemning this excessive force on a peaceful protest of citizens exercising their First Amendment Rights. “Dear Secretary Bernhardt, We write with deep concern about the recent actions of the United States Park Police during ongoing protests in Washington, DC. Like protests around the country, those in our nation’s capital are calls for justice for the Black community. We grieve and condemn the recent horrific acts of violence and intimidation against Black people in our country, and the June 1 expulsion of peaceful protesters from in and near Lafayette Park, a national park unit, which was both unprovoked and unnecessarily aggressive... On behalf of our millions of members and supporters across the country, we ask that you provide explanations for the Park Police’s use of force to clear a public space where people were exercising their constitutional rights.”

Surely, we can do better. From my experience such actions, whether by law enforcement officers, firefighters, or other trained frontline safety personnel, can get out of hand typically due to one of two circumstances:

1. A “rogue” person who has a personal agenda or bias and ignores the mission at hand instead acting on that personal prejudice or moral belief, most clearly due to racism, xenophobia, or religious beliefs. The solution to that is better vetting of candidates through mental and psychological testing, background checks, and, if chosen, routine observation and analysis for specific racial and non-relevant prejudicial actions. USPP has increased these, but more is needed. Once hired and represented by a union, it is routine and expected that the union defends the actions of its members. Clearly there are limits and unions must make sure members uphold the high standards of the law enforcement unit.

2. The hypertension when a unit prepares for engagements to protect something of value and honor can result in rising tension, and esprit-de-corps can lead to actions even the best officer regrets in hindsight. They plead they “got caught up in the moment.” This human response to excitement and danger is recognized in training programs, but it is time for psychologists and specialists to look at how that training can be improved, while giving members of a unit both the freedom and the responsibility to speak up when there is an early sign of impending injustice or excessive force.

The letter sums up the concern: “The Black community and people of color deserve better. Our national parks deserve better. The public deserves better. And our democracy deserves better.”
Casey Cruikshank,  
NEC Coastal Programs Coordinator

The NEC has a weekly Creature Feature on our social media. Here is a sample of recent posts. To see these weekly posts in real time follow us on Facebook. com/yournec or Instagram @your_nec.

**Northern Kelp Crab**

The Northern Kelp Crab (Pugettia producta) is commonly found in local tide pools during low tide. Their coloring depends on the type of food they consume. They’re primarily nocturnal and their diet mostly consists of kelp. Their favorites include bull kelp, sea cabbage, and rockweed. If eating green kelp, they tend to be green. If eating red, they tend to be red and so on and so forth. Because they take on the color of the surrounding kelp from their diet, they have a natural camouflage which helps to provide protection against predators.

**California Newt**

The California Newt (Taricha torosa) is a species endemic to California. Adults can reach 5 to 8 inches in length. Their skin produces a potent neurotoxin that is hundreds of times more toxic than cyanide, but is only harmful if ingested.

Due to their toxicity they have very few natural predators. Garter snakes are their most common predator and some species have developed a genetic resistance to their toxins. The California Newt’s diet mostly consists of earthworms, snails, slugs, woodlice, bloodworms, mosquito larvae, crickets and other invertebrates.

**SPOTTED TRIOPHA**

For today’s creature feature we have a Spotted Triopha (Triopha maculata). Triophas are a species of sea slug called nudibranchs. They’re fairly common in our local tidepools but this color variation comes far and few between. On rare occasions Spotted Triopha can grow up to seven inches long but on average they only grow up to two inches. The one pictured is approximately three inches long.

If you’re interested in finding some nudibranchs of your own, take a little trip down to our rocky shores! Remember, it takes a good low tide to see these fellas so be sure to check the tides. Understanding a tide chart is an important part of being a savvy beach goer. Learn more by googling our local tide charts or downloading an app.

Always be aware of the waves and look, but do not touch your tidepool friends. Understanding the ocean and the creatures within is an important part of loving and protecting our valuable coastal ecosystem. So, grab your social distance buddies, go do some exploring and don’t forget to snag a few pieces of trash along the way!

**Crayfish**

Have you ever snorkeled in our local rivers? There are many beautiful creatures to be found. Featured is a Crayfish, also known as a Crawdad. They’re freshwater crustaceans resembling small lobsters. Though Crayfish can be found in a variety of locations around the world, North America has the greatest diversity with over 330 species.

This summer is a great time to grab a mask and explore our rivers and streams from a new perspective.

**Kelp crabs fall into the Family Epialdida, a group called masking crabs that like to attach algae and kelp to their shells to help with camouflage. Though kelp crabs mostly like to maintain a smooth shell for easier movement, they can occasionally be found attaching kelp and algae to their shells not as a mask but as a way to store food for later. Keep an eye out for these characters next time you’re in the tide pools!**

**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, Del Norte, and adjacent counties for an ongoing study. Record date, time, map location, # of otters, and submit your observations to:

otters@humboldt.edu or 707-826-3439
Ciara Emery: Renewable Energy Community Considerations

Ciara Emery is a graduate of Humboldt State University, Summa Cum Laude, where she obtained a Master of Social Science in Environment and Community and a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science. Ciara received several awards during her college career and recently was one of 12 students selected to represent HSU in the CSU Student Research Competition for her graduate thesis work on offshore wind energy generation in Humboldt County.

Ciara’s research focuses on the community considerations of renewable energy development. As impacts from anthropogenic climate change continue to manifest at global and local scales, communities are increasingly seeking solutions to transition the world away from fossil fuels. Novel renewable energy technologies, including offshore floating wind energy, continue to garner developer interest. Technological success, however, is one small piece in the effort to decarbonize. Project developers are required to engage in political and bureaucratic processes and work with communities where projects may be sited. Balancing community perceptions and needs, as well as permitting and leasing processes, with increasing pressure to decarbonize will be key as the fight against climate change continues.

Her thesis work specifically addresses stakeholder perceptions of proposed offshore wind energy development as they relate to the development process and climate change in Humboldt County, California. She interviewed 26 Humboldt County stakeholders, including elected officials, environmental leaders, labor, fishermen, and renewable energy developers, and attended 14 public meetings in 2018 and 2019. Her thesis work finds that stakeholders weigh numerous concerns when considering offshore wind development in Humboldt County, and climate change is not the most salient factor in the discussion. Stakeholders cited various potential benefits of an offshore wind project, including the reduction of fossil fuels, jobs and economic benefits, local control, and port infrastructure upgrades. Stakeholders interviewed were most concerned about a potential project’s environmental impacts, impacts to fish populations and the local fishing fleet, project scale, and cost. However, while almost all stakeholders interviewed discussed climate change in some way, most were unsure how to incorporate their feelings about it into the local development process. Ciara suggests changes to both federal and state permitting and environmental review procedures to better incorporate climate concerns in local development processes. She also advocates for continued local engagement by developers who are attempting to pursue such projects.

Ciara’s full thesis will be published by the HSU library later this summer. Her work is also part of a larger project with Schatz Energy Research Center on offshore wind energy development in Humboldt County under the supervision of Dr. Laurie Richmond which is expected to be published later this year.

In the community Ciara works in the Office of Congressman Jared Huffman, volunteers for the Humboldt County Democrats and is President of the Humboldt Young Democrats. She is originally from the Central Valley.

Example of an offshore wind farm. Middelgrunden Offshore Wind Farm in Denmark. Photo Credit United Nations, Eskinder Debebe
How Much Water Does a River Need to Live? All Of It

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

The largest dam removal project in U.S. history is inching closer to fruition. In April, the State Water Resources Control Board issued a Clean Water permit and environmental assessment for the proposal to breach four dams on the Klamath River. The lengthy process to remove the Copco #1, Copco #2, J.C. Boyle and Iron Gate dams was started in 2004 by Klamath River tribes and fishermen in response to the 2002 fish kill in which over 65,000 salmon died due to reduced water flows and increased water temperatures.

Like the Scott Dam on the Eel River (which was previously reported on in EcoNews and is also on track to be removed), the operation of the dams in question no longer makes financial sense for current owner, PacifiCorp. They produce very little power and relicensing them with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) would likely be costly due to environmental mandates to provide fish passage. A non-profit organization that was created to remove the dams, the Klamath River Renewal Corporation (KRRC), has petitioned FERC to transfer ownership of the dams and has already hired a contractor to carry out the removal. It is waiting on FERC approval of the license transfer to move onto the next phase, which will involve submitting a dam removal plan and then waiting for that to be approved. Though FERC has been under fire lately from environmental activists for expediting approval of pipeline projects during the COVID-19 public health crisis, groups who are working toward dam removal, such as Save California Salmon, say it is dragging its feet when it comes to approving this license transfer. PacifiCorp, which is a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, supports the license transfer.

The dams on the Klamath River block 420 miles of habitat and, by reducing water flows, lead to toxic algal blooms and high water temperatures. According to Regina Chichizola of Save California Salmon, last year was one of the worst salmon runs in history. “We are losing multiple age classes of salmon every year,” Chichizola says, “The situation is dire. We need the dams removed as soon as possible.” Although these specific dams are on the road to removal, elsewhere in the watershed, dams and proposed water diversion projects continue to threaten the salmon and those who rely on them.

Due to court decisions which led to the Lower Klamath River Long Term Plan, Trinity River water, which is colder than the Klamath, can be released to stop fish kills in drought or low water years. However, there are numerous projects proposed that would affect Trinity River flows, in turn affecting the Klamath River.

There are also two dams already on the Trinity River (Trinity Dam and Lewiston Dam) which divert water to Whiskeytown Lake and then into the Sacramento River via a ten-mile tunnel built through a mountain. The main beneficiary of this water is the Westlands Water District, the largest agricultural district in the United States, which comprises more than 600,000 acres of farmland in western Fresno and Kings counties. Agricultural products produced using water from the District (and from the Trinity River) include almonds, pistachios and grapes. The former lobbyist for the District, David Bernhardt, was recently confirmed as Secretary of the Department of the Interior for the Trump administration. The Trump Administration Water Plan seeks to divert 22% more water to the Central Valley for irrigation and would impact the Trinity, Klamath, Feather, Yuba, American, Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, among others.

Other threats to the Trinity include the Sites Reservoir Project and the Shasta Dam enlargement. Sites Reservoir would be a 14.7 billion dollar, 14,000 acre reservoir off of the Sacramento River. According to the Sites Project website, the reservoir will “capture winter runoff from uncontrolled streams below the existing reservoirs in the Sacramento Valley... Much of the rainfall from extreme events – especially those that occur back-to-back when the ground is saturated – runs off before it can be captured for maximum environmental, urban and agricultural benefit.” This is a variation of Trump’s claim that water is being wasted when we allow rivers to flow into the ocean. A hydrology report commissioned by Save California Salmon shows that the Sites reservoirs diversions would increase temperatures in the Trinity River, harming salmon.

Many of these proposed projects are evaluated and scoped separately, making them appear unconnected, but rivers are connected like veins in a circulatory system: cutting off an artery affects the veins it would have run into. To protect the Klamath River for all of the species that rely on it, including humans, we need to step back and look at the entire system. And then step up to protect all of the waterways that flow into that system.
Increases to Gulf States would, of course, be at the States more money from the oil and gas revenues. an amendment on the bill that would guarantee Gulf States more money from the oil and gas revenues. These senators have stated that they are concerned that Gulf State senators and waffling by the President. there has been some pushback on the bill from some oil and gas revenues. The bill garnered bipartisan support, even from the President, but in recent days, there has been some pushback on the bill from some Gulf State senators and waffling by the President. This pushback has mainly been led by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA). These senators have stated that they are concerned that Gulf States (primarily Louisiana and Texas) have been left out and Cassidy would seek an amendment on the bill that would guarantee Gulf States more money from the oil and gas revenues. Increases to Gulf States would, of course, be at the expense of all the other states. The Senate, despite this last-minute pushback, voted to adopt the legislative vehicle as-is with a vote of 80-17. The bill passed the full Senate with a bipartisan vote of 73-25 and awaits the President’s signature.

VISIONS OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE: COVID-19 FUNDING

Progressive and moderate House Democrats are pushing budgets that increase funding for sustainable energy like solar and wind and energy saving infrastructure. H.R.2210, the “INVEST in America Act,” introduced by the chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Rep. DeFazio (D-OR) would include $500 billion in a “green” transportation bill aimed at addressing the climate crisis. Republicans on the committee, however, immediately complained they were not involved in drafting the legislation and would not support the bill. In the Senate, the powerful Energy and Public Works Committee had unanimously passed “America’s Transportation Infrastructure Act,” S. 2302, last summer and it sits ready for action. That bill contains the first-ever climate title and aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and improve natural disaster resilience in new projects. Unfortunately, it also includes “streamlining,” i.e. limiting, public environmental review of those projects, a continuing goal of conservative groups and the current administration. It is uncertain if the clean-energy provisions of the House bill that were removed last year in a similar bill can be added, but House Ways and Means Committee Chair Neal (D-MA) wants to see them returned to the bill. These provisions were supported by conservationists and industry.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

The Trump administration has begun rulemaking to reduce protections of birds covered under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which includes most native birds. The Act makes it illegal to harm or interfere with the nesting and health of all but invasive species and sport-hunting fowl. The changes would generally assure industries they will not be prosecuted for inadvertently killing migratory birds -- even when the company’s actions clearly have the potential for loss of birds. Even the US Fish and Wildlife Service recently called out the increased mortality the changes would make. The Service predicts that without enforcement of the Act that “some entities” such as energy companies will “likely reduce” compliance with industry best-practice standards designed to protect birds.

IN CONGRESS

Congressional committee hearings are planned for mid-July where budgets for departments and agencies that administer the environmental and conservation programs of the United States will be covered. The budgets include the Department of the Interior where the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service sit and the Department of Agriculture which oversees the US Forest Service. Leaders in the House and Senate hope for full floor votes later in July. In recent years the House has been more generous with conservation budget proposals, while the Senate continued to recommend more belt-tightening. Sabre-rattling has begun between the two bodies with Leader McConnell threatening to put anything remotely related to the Green New Deal; a posture that the President has said suits him just fine. Regardless of the committee work scheduled for July, Congress is not likely to send many, if any, spending bills to the President before the new fiscal year begins on Oct. 1st. As a result, lawmakers will be required to pass stopgap legislation, known as a continuing resolution, in order to keep the government open, at least after the elections.

IS PERMANENT CONSERVATION FUNDING POSSIBLE?

S. 3422, “The Great American Outdoors Act,” is a landmark piece of conservation legislation that would, for the first time in our country’s history, provide guaranteed $900 million-dollar annual funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Those funds are used for a variety of projects by states and the federal government including new public lands purchases. The bill would also allocate $20 billion over the next five years to address maintenance backlogs in national parks and public lands. The funding for these programs would come from royalties from offshore oil and gas revenues. The bill garnered bipartisan support, even from the President, but in recent days, there has been some pushback on the bill from some Gulf State senators and waffling by the President. This pushback has mainly been led by Senator Bill Cassidy (R-LA). These senators have stated that they are concerned that Gulf States (primarily Louisiana and Texas) have been left out and Cassidy would seek an amendment on the bill that would guarantee Gulf States more money from the oil and gas revenues. Increases to Gulf States would, of course, be at the expense of all the other states. The Senate, despite this
Local Joint Powers Authorities: A Review

Ali Ong Lee

Now is an important time for public oversight of Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs) and local governance. Virtual public meetings — sometimes with phone-in access — can help daylight these meetings by eliminating transportation, disability access, and conflicting work-schedule issues that plague public meetings. This overview of Humboldt JPAs holding virtual meetings offers EcoNews readers a way to more easily provide public input for projects that have lasting impacts on the environment.

What is a Joint Powers Authority?
When two or more public authorities make long-term agreements to collaborate on providing services, they often form a new entity to consolidate services; they form a JPA. Allowed by California Government Code Section 6502, participating public authorities can be utility (service) districts, transportation districts, and local governments. JPAs enable a collective power of governance and efficiencies garnered from consolidating resources. JPAs are separate entities from their membership entities and can wield large budgets and much power. (For example, the Hoopa Valley Tribe and Humboldt County formed a JPA in 1995, but this JPA will not be covered in-depth for EcoNews because its focus is the agreement between the Hoopa Valley Tribal Police and Humboldt County Sheriff’s Office.)

Humboldt Bay Fire
Humboldt Bay Fire (HBF) is a JPA founded in 2011 to consolidate Humboldt No. 1 Fire Protection District and City of Eureka Fire Department. HBF coordinates the Humboldt/Del Norte Hazardous Materials Response Authority (HMRA), another JPA.

- Fire Chief Sean Robertson
- Board Chair Joe Wattle
- Board Vice Chair Austin Allison

HBF meets virtually, the second Wednesday of every month. Meeting Agendas page contains links:

- www.hbfire.org/2020-hbf-board-agenda-minutes
- www.HBFire.org
- info@HBFire.org
- 707-441-4000
- Emergencies 9-1-1

Humboldt/Del Norte Hazardous Material Response Authority
The JPA Humboldt/Del Norte Hazardous Material Response Authority (HMRA) was formed in 1993 for round the clock responses to hazardous materials (HazMat) incidents, consultations, and training. Participating entities are Arcata, Blue Lake, Crescent City, Eureka, Ferndale, Rio Dell, Trinidad, and both Del Norte and Humboldt counties. HMRA’s mutual aid system is coordinated by Humboldt Bay Fire (HBF), another local JPA introduced previously, and meets quarterly.

- For HazMat emergencies, call 9-1-1.

Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA)
Established in 1975 and funded by Transportation Development Funds, the Humboldt Transit Authority (HTA) operates and maintains the Redwood Transit System, Willow Creek Transit Service, and Southern Humboldt Transit Service. HTA’s board includes Arcata, Eureka, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad, and Humboldt County.

The HTA Board of Directors meets the first Wednesday of every month and is currently meeting virtually, with a phone-in option.

Humboldt County Association of Governments
Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG) is a JPA with seven participating entities: Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad, and Humboldt County. Prior to COVID-19, HCAOG was the lead agency with the California Department of Transportation to promote controversial changes to the Highway 101 Corridor between Arcata and Cutoff Interchange. HCAOG’s budget for fiscal year 2019-2020 was $1,896,863.

Board members meet the third Thursday of every month, at 4:00 p.m. Meetings are televised by Access Humboldt. Posted agendas contain meeting links with phone-in options:

- www.hcaog.net/content/board-directors
- Executive Director Marcella May
- Chair Estelle Fennell (Humboldt)
- Vice Chair (none currently)
- www.hcaog.net
- 707-444-8208

Humboldt Waste Management Authority
Established in 1999, the Humboldt Waste Management Authority (HWMA) is a JPA responsible for the operation and maintenance of the Hawthorne Street Transfer Station, Eureka Recycling Center, Household Hazardous Waste Facility, and Cummings Road Landfill.

- Executive Director Jill Duffy
- Chair Michael Sweeney, Ferndale
- Vice Chair Frank Wilson, Rio Dell

Board Meetings are on the second Thursday of every month, at 5:30 p.m.

- YouTube channel: youtube.com/channel/UC1xGqIoUyK5m_m6y6WA
- Zoom meetings listed under current meeting agendas: www.hwma.net
- 707-268-8680

Redwood Coast Energy Authority
Created in 2003, the Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA)’s entities are Arcata, Blue Lake, Eureka, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell, Trinidad and Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. RCEA was a pilot project funded by the regulatory California Public Utilities Commission and Local Government Commission. RCEA focuses on energy efficiency, energy conservation, and energy self-reliance programs. RCEA was recently involved in the controversial Humboldt Wind Energy Project south of Rio Dell, the Electric Bike Rebate Program, and celebrated the third anniversary of the Community Choice Energy Program.

- RCEA Executive Director: Matthew Marshall
- Board Chair Austin Allison (Eureka),
- Vice Chair Estelle Fennell (Humboldt County)

Board of Directors business meetings are the fourth Thursday of every month, at 3:30 p.m. Virtual meetings are being held and can also be attended by phone. Submit public comments, referencing meeting agenda items:

- publiccomment@redwoodenergy.org.
- redwoodenergy.org
- 707-269-1700

While the public shelters at home with flexible schedules and Internet access, it is an opportune time to participate in JPA meetings, both to learn about local governance and their board members (who may be up for re-election this fall).
Get on Board for the Climate: Give Democracy A Chance

Martha Walden, 11th Hour

On top of a pandemic, climate change and economic upheaval, protests and riots are shaking cities across the nation as I write this. It seems as though everything is coming apart. There is hope, however, that everything is actually coming together. More and more people agree now that inequality is the root cause of many of our problems. If you’re a person of color, chances are you have known this for a long, long time.

Health outcomes for people stricken by the virus differ a lot, depending on the race and economic status of the victims. Inequality is also a leading cause of climate change. What else to call unsustainable profits for the few? Consider as well that the emissions of affluent countries tower over those of poor countries. Yet those who are the least responsible for the buildup of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere stand to lose the most.

To counter inequality, we need real democracy. Voting is only one example of the ways we participate in a democracy, but it’s the most basic tool. What would the political map look like if everybody voted?

Black, Latinx, and young voters are much more likely than the general population to see climate change as a major priority. Unfortunately, these groups are less likely to vote than the general population. They may move more often, which can make registering more difficult. Or maybe they feel that their vote doesn’t count. Discrimination against them can also be the problem.

Republicans are trying to discourage minorities and young voters from voting and even kick them off the rolls. Certain state governments have been disenfranchising as many people as they can get away with. Ohio, Wisconsin, and Georgia, in particular, have engaged in large-scale purges of voters’ names from the election rolls.

An organization called Reclaim Our Vote targets this injustice. It identifies people who have been purged from the rolls and sends them postcards or telephones them to encourage them to re-register. It also seeks to turn out the vote through phone banking, text banking, and billboards in rural areas that provide information on how to get absentee ballots and directions to the polls. Eight thousand volunteers have so far sent over 1.3 million postcards. Right now the focus is on Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Texas.

The number of voters affected by purges and other unscrupulous tactics are more than enough to change election results in swing states. The stakes couldn’t be any higher this November. We need a strong surge of voters to overwhelm gerrymandered districts and the unequal power wielded by the Electoral College and all the other hurdles placed in front of voting. The defeat of Trump will be only one step back from the brink, but we have to accomplish that much before reforming voting laws and invigorating democracy.

To volunteer for Reclaim Our Vote, go to actionnetwork.org. Give democracy another chance.
SHORTS
Short bits of interest and positivity

Outside News Source

YUROK TRIBE AND PARKS SERVICE SIGN HISTORIC PACT

On June 1, 2020, the Yurok Tribe officially took over operation of the Stone Lagoon Visitor’s Center after signing the first ever Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between a Tribal Government and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. The JPA extends for five years and gives the tribe the opportunity to enhance the way that visitors experience this culturally significant area, for example, by hiring interpreters who will highlight the rich Yurok history in the area. The tribe has plans to host culture-sharing events such as basket-making classes, canoe building workshops and storytelling events. Access to the lagoon will remain the same.

Stone Lagoon, called Chah-pekw O’ Ket’oh in the Yurok language, plays a critical role in the Tribe’s traditional culture. In 2012, a group of Yurok ceremonial leaders restored a Jump Dance at Cha-pekw, which begins with a Boat Dance on Stone Lagoon and concludes on national park land within the Tribe’s ancestral territory. The world renewal ceremony had not occurred at these sites since the 1800s when the United States outlawed the religious practice as part of a coordinated campaign to colonize tribal lands and people. During this tumultuous time period, the California government was equally involved in the forced assimilation effort and committed acts of genocide against indigenous people in the state.

RECORD LEVEL GHG IN MAY DESPITE REDUCED EMISSIONS AMID CORONAVIRUS

Despite our desperate hopes that the upside of the coronavirus would be reduced greenhouse gas emissions, measurements of CO2, the chief greenhouse gas, averaged 417.1 parts per million at Mauna Loa, Hawaii, for the month of May, when carbon levels in the air peak, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). That’s 2.4 parts per million higher than a year ago. Emissions of CO2 dropped by as much as 17% in April due to shelter in place orders around the world, but it was only a brief decline. This highlights the enormity of the problem and shows that large-scale mobilization will be needed to permanently reduce the carbon in our atmosphere.

THE END OF PLASTIC?

Globally, around 300 million tons of plastic are manufactured from fossil fuels every year, contributing significantly to the climate crisis and the scourge of microplastics. But, a Dutch company is developing a 100% plant-based bottle that will break down within a year, as compared to a plastic bottle which takes 450 years to degrade. The “bottle” would consist of a cardboard container lined with a plant-based plastic sourced from corn, wheat or beets. Carlsberg Beer has announced intentions to “bottle” its Pilsner in the new, plant-based container.

RACIAL EQUITY IN THE ENVIRO MOVEMENT

The largest conservation network in the country, the National Wildlife Federation, has named its first Vice President for Racial Equity and Justice. Chante Coleman was previously the group’s first director of equity and justice, and she worked on its 2020 Equity and Justice Strategic Plan. The plan contains a commitment to a more diverse staff, a new hiring process, and a recognition of “the social, economic, and political contexts that shaped the early environmental and conservation movements and resulted in cultural biases that permeate our institutions today.”

Wedgewood

by Catherine Gurin

For much of its newfound natural gas richness the United States can thank the horrifying mass extinctions of the Late Devonian period.

—Peter Brannen, The Ends of the World

In the predawn dark, the flame blue as open ocean awakens under my kettle.

“Humans have always cooked over fire,” a friend once told me. “It’s primal.”

So I burn an ancient, suffocated sea. The teacup warms my hands: heat from the making of a new ghost.

CA CLEAN TRUCK RULE COULD AVOID 17.6M TONS OF CO2

An independent analysis of California’s landmark proposal to require manufacturers to sell certain percentages of zero-emissions trucks starting in 2024 found that it could prevent 17.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide and 58,000 tons of nitrogen oxides from entering the atmosphere through 2040.

Chris Busch, research director at Energy Innovation and an additional author of the analysis, said the rule would likely benefit low-income communities and communities of color in California that have historically suffered from air pollution. However, he cautioned that the analysis didn’t specifically examine this impact.

The trucking industry is worried about its ability to comply with the mandate by 2024, saying that just because manufacturers are mandated to sell them, doesn’t mean that people will buy them. The California Air Resources Board is set to vote on the proposed rule on June 25.

RARE BLUE BEE, THOUGHT TO BE EXTINCT, MAKES AN APPEARANCE IN FLORIDA

First discovered in 2011, the blue calamintha bee (Osmia calaminthae), hasn’t been seen since 2016. But this spring, just as Americans began sheltering in place due to COVID-19, the rare blue bees made an appearance in central Florida, foraging on Ashe’s calamint, a dainty violet flower that blooms in certain scrub habitats.

Researchers don’t know what causes the bee’s indigo coloring. The solitary bees (a hive has never been found for them) have only ever been documented in the wild from March 9 to April 30.

Chase Kimmel of the Florida Museum of Natural History was one of the researchers who confirmed the bees’ survival in March. At first, he couldn’t believe his own eyes. “It was a great feeling; those first few nights were hard to sleep due to the anxiousness and excitement,” he said.
FOOD JUSTICE CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1. A type of food rescue that involves collecting leftover fruits and vegetables from farms, with the food usually donated to school lunch programs, non-profits and food banks.

4. Large plantings of a single variety of a single crop.

6. Holistic and regenerative farming practices focused on the integration of plants, animals, soil health and biodiversity. They keep the ecosystem in balance by producing the nutrients needed to nourish all aspects of the farm with a minimum of inputs.

7. Seed _____: The farmer’s right to breed and exchange diverse open source seeds which can be saved and which are not patented, genetically modified, owned or controlled by emerging seed giants.

8. Food ____ : Areas with low access to healthy food, commonly low-income urban or rural areas without nearby supermarkets.

10. The development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable and self-sufficient.

11. Food _____: Food is a basic right for all people.

12. A collection of beehives

DOWN
2. Businesses and corporations involved in large-scale food production.

3. Food that was produced and distributed in one’s community.

5. Turning food waste into valuable nutrients that can improve soil and feed plants.

9. Food grown or made without the use of artificial chemicals.

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