KEEP THE SEA

PLASTIC FREE

COASTAL CLEANUP MONTH | SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION AT HSU | MCKAY FOREST HOUSING PROJECT

OSPREY FOREST TREE SIT | HUMCOAST BIOBLITZ | KIN TO THE EARTH: CUTCHA RISLING BALDY
NEWS From the Center

Larry Glass,
Executive Director

Our team at the office has just completed a successful first-ever Trash-a-thon! We want to thank everyone who participated or pledged. We couldn’t have done this without the support of our wonderful community. We have a list of teams and sponsors on page 3.

Chelsea Pulliam, our Administrative Assistant, Outreach Coordinator, and EcoNews Layout Coordinator has been busy boosting the social media profile of the Public Lands Act Bill, introduced by Senator Kamala Harris. The Public Lands Act includes the NEC-supported Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act by Congressman Jared Huffman. Chelsea has done a great job promoting these wild places with great visual media.

In addition, the NEC’s Coastal Programs Coordinator, Casey Cruikshank has been working hard to analyze our trash collection data. We are transitioning our data collection method to the NOAA data application, which will give us the ability to further engage with the information we receive. This will provide us with the opportunity to tell a story about the waste that is picked up, so that we can help change people’s behaviors in the future.

Issues We’re Tracking:

The 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule: Seeks to resolve decades of controversy over subsidized logging and road building on national forests. The fight to establish the rule took years of hard work but apparently the USFS has decided the time is right to test the Roadless Rule. In three cases that we know of; Tahoe, Los Padres, and Shasta Trinity National Forest, the agency is planning various activities in these special and protected areas. The Shasta Trinity is the one we’re focused on. The agency is in the pre-scoping phase on what they’re calling the “Hyampom Fire Resilient Community Project.” This is a project that has been talked about for several years and we have supported in concept, but the most recent version of it includes incursion into the Patterson and South Fork Trinity Roadless and proposed Wilderness additions. It’s hard to know at this point whether this is inadvertent or malicious. We will be meeting (by Zoom) with the Forest Supervisor soon. We’ll keep you posted.

USFS Bioregional Assessment: Evaluates existing information to identify key issues that span National Forest boundaries and helps guide the Forest Service in making strategic decisions about revising forest plans. The Bioregional Assessment identifies prominent shared issues, and associated urgency affecting these landscapes and communities and highlights opportunities to update management direction within the assessment area.

This Assessment represents an important development and builds upon a series of prior efforts to examine the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) amendment and its implementation. Beginning in 2015, the agency held public listening sessions to gather public and Tribal input for revising the land management plans within the NWFP area. The Bioregional Assessment reflects existing data gathered from many sources and relied on nearly 25 years of monitoring data, the 2018 Synthesis of Science to inform land management within the Northwest Forest Plan Area, other adjacent-area science syntheses, and other information sources such as fire-risk assessments and state action plans.

This Bioregional Assessment is not a decision document and does not impact current management activities. Rather, the Bioregional Assessment will be used to shape ongoing engagement with stakeholders, state, county, Tribal governments, and Forest Service staff in preparation for the next steps in the planning process.

Continued
Private Timberlands Watch: Shout out to the Redwood Forest Defense allies that have started defending another redwood grove a few miles north of Trinidad, CA (See pg 13). Green Diamond Resource Company plans to clearcut the forest under an active Timber Harvest Plan (THP). The 40.5 acres of the THP is almost entirely within the limits of the protection zone of two osprey nests (Pandion haliaetus). This bird of prey is a Species of Special Concern in California and is considered a key component of the ecosystem.

Forest defenders have raised a treesit in a redwood tree slated to be cut that is SEVEN feet in diameter! and is located on a steep slope above McNeill Creek. This sit has been raised on another day of heatwave in the Arctic Circle. The treesitters say their actions are connected to broader issues surrounding climate change.

“Deforestation is a major driver of climate change worldwide, and because temperate rainforests such as this one are especially powerful carbon sinks, logging within the redwood bioregion has global implications. Green Diamond’s management is devastating for the species that call this ecosystem home - but it also affects other biomes worldwide. We are calling for a moratorium on industrial logging during this climate catastrophe.”

Dunes Restoration: We have reviewed the Environmental Assessment for the proposed restoration of 300 acres of coastal dunes located North of the Lanphere Dunes unit of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. We have taken a look at the need and purpose of the action, and while we concur with the intent and goal of the project, we would normally not support the use of heavy equipment in sensitive areas. However, after reading the document and the purpose for which the heavy equipment will be used and how it will be used, and also due to the type work that needs to be done at these sites and the limits placed on it, we believe that in this particular case the use of this equipment will be beneficial.

The removal of invasive species from the project area is vital, and we will not support the use of chemicals to achieve this important goal. We are perplexed by the agency’s continued reliance on chemicals to do the removal work that can be done manually. Chemical pesticides pose an unnecessary risk to sensitive plant species, wildlife, soil health, air quality, and human beings. However, continuing to remove invasive species by hand year over year is not only a safer option, but will provide employment opportunities to members of the community.

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SINCERE GRATITUDE TO:
• All the teams and pledgers for our first annual Trash-a-thon! Thank you to everyone who helped us reach our goals!
• Humboldt Mutual Aid, for the very important civil and social rights work they provide to this community. They build resiliency by sharing information, getting involved with direct actions, creating collective projects, and providing support to people in Humboldt County. We see you, Humboldt Mutual Aid. Keep it up.
• Kris, a longtime NEC volunteer and EcoNews proofreader! We appreciate everything she’s done to support our team, and wish her the best in her new adventure!
• Zero Waste Humboldt for their continued hard work to bring waste issues to the conversation, and providing resources and solutions for these issues!
**TRASH-A-THON 2020**
**SINCERE GRATITUDE TO ALL OF OUR VOLUNTEERS & SPONSORS!**

We deeply appreciate you supporting this brand new fundraiser, direct-action volunteer opportunity, and citizen science project! This was such a fun and successful event! Thanks to our wonderful supporters we raised $4,250 and picked up 13,894 pieces of trash around Humboldt County.

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<th>CLEANUP VOLUNTEERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Team NEC (623 pieces)</td>
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<td>Tully Trashinators (369 pieces)</td>
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<td>Michael and Chelsea Pulliam (379 pieces)</td>
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<td>Trash Panda (201 pieces)</td>
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<td>Judy L. (108 pieces)</td>
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<td>Marth L. (108 pieces)</td>
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<td>Autumn L. (108 pieces)</td>
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<td>Movewell Arcata (50 pieces)</td>
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<td>Sunset Scavengers (1,029 pieces)</td>
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<td>Ren Brownell (10,436 pieces)</td>
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<td>Jason Slyter (583)</td>
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<td>Jace Baldosser</td>
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<td>Noah Meisel</td>
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<td>Jill Shepard</td>
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**Firework Beach Debris**

Dedicated NEC Adopt-A-Beach volunteer, Kim Tays, visited local beaches the days following 4th of July. She found and picked up thousands of firework pieces littering the shore. Photo source: Kim Tays and Casey Cruikshank.

Fireworks are quite litterally (pun intended) exploding waste packages. They splinter into thousands of tiny pieces that are difficult to remove from the beach and eventually wash into the ocean if they aren’t cleaned up.

One small group of individuals can make a HUGE impact (negative or positive). The debris left by these fireworks is immense. Which is why beach cleans and debris data tracking is extra important during this time. Consider joining Adopt-A-Beach!
Dear Confused Recycler,

The short answer is “yes” to the questions regarding reducing, re-using and recycling. Reducing and re-using is what we suggest to do first. Recycling is still much better than landfilling but has become challenging since many countries overseas have refused, and rightly so, to take recycling shipments from the United States. The reason being is that recycling overseas contained too much contamination. That resulted in recycling facilities, like the one in Samoa, having to retrofit the equipment and hire more people to sort through recycling to ensure it is clean enough to be sold to markets who in turn, make the materials into something else. The new recycling processing method is much more effective, but there is a lot of room for improvement.

There are several educational opportunities the community uses to get recycling cleaner. The one you encountered is a method that tells people how to use their recycling receptacles to meet today’s tighter standards. It is called an “oopsie tag.” The driver leaves a tag on the can to let the user know what was found that can no longer be placed in the recycling. We are always willing to come back, once removed, if you call the office.

In general we ask people to do the following things: Make sure there is no trash or food remaining on or in the recycling. Please rinse as best you can before placing the item into the recycling. Please place pizza or wax covered boxes into the trash. Grease and wax cannot be removed through re-pulping of paper. Please, no wishful recycling. Wishful recycling includes appliances, car parts, kitchen utensils, extension cords, furniture, clothing, garden hoses, film plastic, Styrofoam, plastic bags and baggies, etc. And please, only bags of shredded paper. Recycling should be placed loosely into the recycling can. If people did these things, it would help a lot.

Whatbin.com is a good resource if there are questions about what folks can do with their waste. We send the recycling to markets we research from Recology. We try to market it domestically when possible, but because the US has little infrastructure, it mostly goes to Asia. Depending on what material it is there can be several steps, and sometimes processing plants, before it’s made into another product. We’ve been one of the few who have been able to sell paper to China (after we installed machinery: they have very high standards now. That’s why clean at the curbside is important.

Hope this helps.
Linda Wise, General Manager of Recology

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Dear EcoNews,

Today was garbage day, and much like every other garbage day, my standard refuse was taken away without a hitch. My recycling container, though, was still full and it had a notice dangling from the handle. It appears that some non-recyclable items had somehow found their way into the bin, and I was being urged to inspect and rectify the situation. Things have changed, and I don’t like it or understand it. Is it even worth it to recycle? Should I just try to reduce and reuse instead? Help me understand why it has become such a mess. Also, what is the deal with compostable plastic cups and silverware? Is that for real?

Sincerely,
A Confused Recycler

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Is It Recyclable?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

What do you think?
Submit your thoughts to editor@yournec.org

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THE ECONEWS REPORT REPORT

Here’s a selection of some recent EcoNews Reports:

Treesits and Forest Defense in 2020
July 11, 2020 – Tom Wheeler (Environmental Protection Information Center) talks with Meredith of Redwood Forest Defense, a group conducting treesits on Green Diamond Land near Trinidad.

The State of the Klamath
July 4, 2020 – What’s the state of the Klamath River in July 2020? Not great. Mike Belchik, a senior water policy analyst with the Yurok Tribe, and Daniel Cordalis, a staff attorney for the Tribe, walk the Green Gang through what’s happening on the region’s largest river this season.

The Remarkable History and Uncertain Future of Abalone with Author Ann Vileisis
June 27, 2020 – Author, naturalist, and environmental historian Ann Vileisis talks to the Green Gang about the iconic California abalone.

Why Spring- and Summer-Run Salmonids are So Damn Interesting and Weird
June 20, 2020 – A discussion of spring-run Chinook and summer-run steelhead. With Bill Tripp of the Karuk Tribe, consultant Craig Tucker and fish researcher Sam Kannry.

Kristen Lark, Ranger of the Six River National Forest’s Mad River Ranger District
June 13, 2020 – Kristen Lark, ranger of the Six River National Forest’s Mad River Ranger District, virtually stops by to sing the praises of the beautiful stretch of land she oversees — from Ruth Lake to the Lassics and just into Humboldt County.

Removing the Eel River’s Scott Dam
June 9, 2020 – CalTrout’s Darren Mierau and Klamath dam campaign veteran Craig Tucker join the Green Gang to talk through the nascent plan to remove Scott Dam and restore salmon and steelhead to the upper Eel River.

Humboldt Social Media-Friendly Naturalist John Griffith

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Thanks to KHUM & Lost Coast Outpost!
In spite of COVID 19, we will still be hosting Coastal Cleanup Day (CCD) in Humboldt County. This year CCD will look very different than in years past. In order to maintain the safety of our community we've made some important changes that reflect our long-term goals. Instead of Coastal Cleanup Day happening on one day in September, we will be hosting CCD on every Saturday in September. We’re pleased to be encouraging sustained activism, which is more in line with our mission.

Coastal Cleanup Day will be entirely social-distance friendly. We are asking that all participants only participate with others in their home. We ask that you respect social distancing rules according to the current State of California guidelines. We encourage you to wear reusable protective gloves and trash pickers (when possible), and depending on the current situation with COVID-19 we may or may not be able to rent out trash picking supplies. We also encourage you to dispose of all trash outside your home in an outdoor receptacle.

This year as we navigate the pandemic, we're embracing the necessary changes and focusing on the bright side. Instead of there being site captains, each group (from the same shelter in place household) will participate on their own. By encouraging participation on every Saturday in September we are working toward creating sustained environmentalism and a trash-picking habit that will keep you coming back for more.

Our focus will be on education and data collection. Each year we encourage CCD participation both in our cities and on the beaches. This year, we highly encourage our participants to have a focus on their own neighborhood. How did the debris you’re finding make its way to the street? Where is it coming from? What items are you finding most? Track data during your cleanup to gain a better understanding of local waste patterns and add to our database. If you have any questions about participating in Coastal Cleanup Day please reach out to us at coastalcleanup@yournec.org.

Coastal Cleanup Day? More like Coastal Cleanup Month!

Casey Cruikshank, Coastal Programs Coordinator

Casey Cruikshank, Aly Krystkowiak and Leroy the hypedog remove large debris from Clam beach with smiles on their faces. Photo credit: Casey Cruikshank.
Cleaning Up Coastal Cleanup Day

Caroline Griffith  
EcoNews Journalist

For many of us on the North Coast, gathering together to pick up trash on the beach is a family tradition. But did you know that Coastal Cleanup Day, which is now sponsored by the California Coastal Commission and draws tens of thousands of volunteers every September, was inspired partly by clean-ups being practiced on Humboldt County beaches? Ever the trend setters, last year the NEC branched out again by going zero-waste and following our ideals to host an event free of virgin plastic and fast fashion from corporate sponsors. This year, there are more changes in store for Coastal Cleanup Day as we adapt to the changing conditions around COVID 19.

The Beach Beautification Project, started by locals, Anne Morrissey and Joe Abbott, began in 1979 as a grant funded program to clean up Humboldt County beaches. Morrissey and Abbott paired with the NEC to run the program for the duration of the grant. When that funding ran out, the program morphed into the Adopt-A-Beach program under the leadership of Wes Chesboro of the Arcata Recycling Center and Sid Dominitz, former editor of the EcoNews. Around the same time, up in Oregon, residents were also organizing to pick up trash on the beaches and the world’s first statewide volunteer beach cleanup would be held on October 13, 1984, under the title “Plague of Plastics”. California followed suit the next year when the California Coastal Commission sponsored the first Coastal Cleanup Day. Then, in 1986, the Ocean Conservancy began its Coastal Cleanup in Texas, eventually expanding worldwide.

As these cleanup events gained in size and popularity, the various organizations that sponsored them began looking to corporate backers for funding. A major sponsor of California Coastal Cleanup Day is CG Roxanne LLC, the company that bottles Crystal Geyser water. According to the California Coastal Commission data on cleanups, plastic beverage bottles were #8 on the list of items most often picked up on beaches from 1988-2017 and account for 2.72% of trash. Lids and caps are #3, accounting for 9.13% of items picked up on Coastal Cleanup Day. Among the major sponsors of the Ocean Conservancy and International Coastal Cleanup Day are the Coca-Cola Foundation, the Starbucks Foundation and Dow, makers of all things petrochemical, from industrial solvents to plastic packaging. Ironically, the tagline of the international event is “Ending the Flow of Trash at the Source.”

While we recognize that organizations need money to survive and that these companies may be trying to right some of the wrongs they are creating with their single-use packaging and plastics manufacturing, the NEC is working to truly end the flow of trash at the source by declining it in the first place. In many ways, this involves going back to our roots and doing cleanups the way they used to in the 70s: with a bucket, reusable gloves and no plastic water bottles. Our first zero waste Coastal Cleanup Day was a success and we anticipate getting better at it every year as we all break away from the status quo of accepting unnecessary things just because they are free.

In 2018, the latest year that data is available for California Coastal Cleanup Day, 71,756 volunteers cleaned up 819,323 pounds of debris, 59,969 of which was recyclable. According to the Ocean Conservancy, plastic beverage bottles and plastic bottle caps were the #5 and #6 top items picked up in 2018 (1,754,908 and 1,390,232 pieces, respectively) and 2018 was the second year that all of the top ten most commonly found items were made of plastic. That’s an impressive amount of plastic kept out of our waterways, but imagine if that trash didn’t exist in the first place.

As NEC Coastal Programs Coordinator, Casey Cruikshank, says, “We put so much work into debris removal and we appreciate the offer of financial support from these companies, but that doesn’t excuse the fact that they are part of the problem. By hosting a zero waste event and bringing a zero waste mindset into everything we do, we hope to spread awareness by being part of the solution and stopping the waste at the source. Last year’s event was a huge success and we hope to keep improving on it every year. By tracking marine debris data through citizen science we hope to gain a better understanding of local waste patterns and create long-term solutions for marine debris in Humboldt County.”

Enthusiastic Coastal Cleanup Day 2019 volunteers on the Eureka Waterfront Trail. Photo credit: Pam Halstead.
**Kin to the Earth: Cutcha Risling Baldy**

Carrie Tully,
NEC Admin. & Development Director

Upon my initial introduction to Cutcha, my attention was instantly sparked by her matter-of-fact way of speaking - like it is finally okay to be brutally honest and that anything is possible. I was stunned. I made an appointment to meet with her right away. As Native Cultures Fund's Senior Program Director, Lindsay Bear, puts it, "Dr. Risling Baldy embodies the radical imagination that she is constantly encouraging in others." Spot on.

Since then, I have been fortunate to be involved in several different projects with Dr. Risling Baldy. When I think of all that I am working on and towards, I feel motivated and whole. Dr. Sarah Ray, Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Humboldt State, states it perfectly, "Cutcha Risling Baldy is the kind of colleague who makes everyone around her feel totally empowered to do anything they set their minds to." Native American Studies professor, Dr. Kaitlin Reed, goes on to say, "Dr. Risling Baldy is a leading scholar in California Indian Studies & Native American Studies. She is an inspiration to her students and fellow faculty at Humboldt State and a constant source of support for community based research and Indigenous environmental and social justice." Yes, all of that...and more.

I had the opportunity to discuss Dr. Risling Baldy's projects with her, and I'll not be the first to say that she is one of those people who has a hundred projects happening all at once, and thrives. Dr. Ray elaborates that "she seems to have superpowers, and is everywhere at all times, achieving more things than seems humanly possible." If Cutcha did have a superpower (and I'm not entirely convinced that she doesn't), it would be that she makes people imagine the world in ways that seemed impossible prior to talking with her: everything is possible.

Dr. Risling Baldy is the Department Chair for the Native American Studies at HSU. She states that her goal in this position is to "get as many projects as [she] can on the burner in order to build the program," with the goal to create an NAS program that truly stands out. One of the current projects she has facilitated is the Native American Studies Food Sovereignty Lab and Cultural Workspace (NAS LAB). The NAS LAB started in Dr. Risling Baldy's NAS 331: Indigenous Natural Resource Management Practices course as a student-led research project. Cutcha reflected that this project is "what other students want to see on campus...which can be used as a model for how to do research." As a student in this class and a participant of this project, I can say sincerely that Cutcha truly values the motivation, energy, and efforts of the students who co-created it.

In addition to the work Dr. Risling Baldy does on campus, she also works with Two Feathers Native American Family Services and the Native Women's Collective. Two Feathers focuses on culturally-based programs to help support the needs of Native American youth and their families. Cutcha's work on the Acorns Project looks at the effects of the way culture, ceremony, and cultural practices interact with mental health. Through this important work, she is able to conduct research which proves the necessity of culture to mental health, which is represented in her book, We are Dancing For You: Native Feminisms and the Revitalization of Women's Coming-of-Age Ceremonies. Similarly, the Native Women's Collective supports the development of Indigenous art and culture. Co-founded by Dr. Risling Baldy in 2007, the organization brings in community members to perform, and holds community workshops to practice cultural activities. And, although COVID-19 has challenged some of the ways that these organizations have been able to gather and host events, the work has not stopped. Cutcha states that she believes "people miss that camaraderie or community" but commends people for their abilities to think outside the box and become innovative.

We all feel how much this pandemic has changed our realities. Yet, Cutcha chooses to see the silver lining, and how the youth are so very important to this phase of our experience. She speaks about the resilience of the younger generations and their ability to connect with the rest of the world online with short videos that go viral in a matter of days. Her faith in the future is encouraging...like we should all be doing more to create the changes that this world desperately needs.

The future is an exceptional topic to discuss with Dr. Risling Baldy. She states: "For me I've always wanted to inspire a sense of radical imagination, and to build radical futures. I don't consider 'radical' controversial. It's a way that's been stifled by the education system or the media...I want to think about a future in any way that we want." Dr. Ray highlights, "[Cutcha] is visionary, but also utterly pragmatic...If Dr. Risling Baldy is involved in something, I will show up." So, to echo that, Cutcha makes you want to change the future. How many people do you know that make you feel that way?

Dr. Risling Baldy taught me that in Hupa there is no word for 'thank you.' Instead, they say 'I am happy.' Well, I am happy to have had so many opportunities to work with such a visionary, community leader and collaborator, futurist, and youth supporter. I am happy that I can see her work bleeding into so many different aspects of our community. Many future generations of people will benefit from the work that she is building today. I am happy to know Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy, a true kin to the earth.

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**WE ARE DANCING FOR YOU**

*Written by Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy.*

**Kin to the Earth: Cutcha Risling Baldy**

Carrie Tully,
NEC Admin. & Development Director

We Are Dancing For You. Written by Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy.
Remembering Andy Araneo

Andy Araneo passed away peacefully on May 13, 2020 at age 76. He had lived in Eureka since 1983.

We remember Andy for his commitment and persistence in publicly challenging the North Coast United Air Quality Management District (NCUAQMD) to hold the Simpson Paper and Louisiana Pacific pulp mills responsible for complying with state emission standards. For more than 20 years, the pulp mills had operated essentially without oversight or accountability. In the early ‘90s, frustrated by Eureka’s terrible air quality and inspired by local environmental activist Ida Honorof, Andy founded a California non-profit, the Clean Air Network, with the support of the Northcoast Environmental Center Board of Directors.

Andy Araneo & Sid Dominitz at Pamplin Grove. Photo source: Richard Salzman.

Roz Keller

Andy educated himself on the chemistry of particulates and other technical details. When he attended variance hearings, he was able to challenge the industry lawyers on the discrepancies between their reports and the official emissions data.

Andy also received the support of California’s Assistant Attorney General Richard Roos-Collins, whom Andy kept informed about his findings. Finally, at one fateful variance hearing, a letter from Roos-Collins to the air district was delivered during the meeting, expressing support for Andy’s efforts and encouraging the district to do its job. For the first time in its history, a Simpson variance was denied. In December, 1992 Simpson closed its pulp mill, citing “costly environmental demands”. (They had also lost a $5.8 M suit brought by the Surfrider Foundation in 1989.) Louisiana Pacific adopted a chlorine-free, less toxic pulp process. The air in Eureka was breathable once again.

During this time, Andy also wrote the monthly Clean Air News to keep his supporters updated and served as vice president on the Northcoast Environmental Center Board of Directors.

Additional thought from Larry Glass

From the ‘60s through the ‘80s, when you arrived at the south end of Eureka on most days you were greeted with an overwhelming stench of chlorine and other foul-smelling chemicals. The local Chamber of Commerce would tell complaining visitors that it was the “smell of money”. The timber industry was so powerful in those days that few would dare to speak up. In the eighties, it was becoming more obvious to residents that this was not just a bad odor problem, this was a public health issue. It was during this time working with one of my heroes, Ida Honorof, that I was introduced to Andy Araneo. Andy was tireless in his search for the facts on the toxic pulp mill emissions. He cultivated relationships with regulators and even some in the industry who began leaking him facts and clues to pursue. Amidst all the controversy a citizen advisory committee was formed and I was appointed to it to represent the Environmental groups. I worked closely with Andy to make sure all of our issues and concerns were addressed. Andy always briefed me before every meeting to make sure I had the latest information and understood all the technical terms being thrown out at these meetings. We became good friends through this process. Andy played a key role in the demise of these toxic sources of pollution.

Volunteer Spotlight

Michael “Data” Le, M.A.

What inspires you to volunteer your time?
When I moved to Humboldt County from Southern California, I was awestruck by the natural beauty of the area. I want generations of people to be able to experience that same sense of wonder and amazement. I also want to preserve our natural world for the organisms that call it home. Organisms whose life cycle should be beyond the reaches of the impact of man, however, sadly are not.

What project are you working on at the NEC?
As a data science communicator, I have a passion for presenting visual analytics and sharing information to create a data-informed democracy. I am working on a project to make data accessible to a broad public audience through a data visualization of debris recovered from our community.

What words of advice do you have to people interested in volunteering at a local nonprofit?
Comedian John Mulaney has a bit where he says, “It is so much easier not to do things than to do them, that you would do anything is totally remarkable. Percentage-wise, it is 100% easier not to do things than to do them.” He is not wrong, especially when it comes to volunteering. We all have very busy lives, so choosing to give up some of your time for something you care about is remarkable. If you care about a cause, volunteering your time with a nonprofit is a noteworthy thing to do.

From the US Congress report Creative Ways of Using and Dissemination Federal Information, June 1991: Despite the inaccuracy of Louisiana Pacific’s emissions data, Andrew Araneo, Coordinator of the Clean Air Network, emphasized the importance of federal TRI (toxic release information) data in providing easy access to industry figures at a low cost: “specifically for areas which do not have cooperative regulators... right-to-know gives us the facts we need.”
When I first visited Humboldt State University (HSU), I found myself instantly admiring the Northern California redwood forest coast. I grew up and lived my whole life in Southern California, where it seems that everyone is moving non-stop, traffic congestion is unavoidable and most of the year the weather is warm. For my master’s degree, I wanted to go to a university that focused on sustainability and HSU has long been dedicated to conserving resources, advocating for social responsibility and reducing overall carbon footprint. Although HSU is devoted to sustainability, the campus faces challenges similar to those of other universities in terms of managing transportation demands efficiently. These issues include commuting infrastructure, limited access to public transportation, pedestrian safety and behavior towards forms of transportation other than a single-occupant vehicle.

Commuting to the HSU campus without a private automobile is a challenge for many students. As soon as I moved to Humboldt County, I had a hard time getting around outside of the university without the use of a car. I decided to try out public transportation, such as the Arcata & Mad River Transit (A&MRTS) and the Redwood Transit System (RTS). I came to conclude that the public transportation is not reliable because buses would run infrequently or, at times, not show up. Since Humboldt County has a much smaller scale of public transportation, I had to adapt to using other forms of transportation to get around the area.

My goal for this thesis is to understand the specific ways in which individuals within the campus community can access campus facilities without reliance on private automobiles, and how past and current behaviors play a role in individuals’ behavior, intention and choices in transportation. To address this broader research agenda, this thesis asks the following questions: (1) What are the main geographic, economic and sociocultural factors that limit transportation choices for students at HSU? (2) What factors motivate individuals to use alternative modes of transportation when accessing campus facilities? (3) What is HSU’s role in advocating for safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure for students within broader sustainable transportation frameworks?

In order to answer my research questions, I primarily used a socio-psychological framework to explore the relationship between travel access and behavioral intention within the HSU community; I draw primarily on Icek Ajzen’s (1991) framework, Theory of Planned Behavior, to investigate the behavioral intentions of the HSU community in relation to the limited sustainable transportation available for students at HSU. I investigate this relationship to understand at an institutional level the manner in which HSU is addressing underlying reasons behind single-occupancy vehicle travel and sustainable transportation infrastructure in order to meet the broader goals of the 2016 CSU Climate Action Plan (CAP).

This research is designed to provide further insight for the HSU Advisory Committee on Sustainability on how to not only analyze the state of sustainable transportation at HSU, but also to provide theoretical and empirical evidence that can be used to promote and encourage HSU commuters to change their transportation behaviors when accessing campus. If Humboldt State is truly dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, then there need to be stronger efforts in promoting more sustainable transportation choices and working with the community to increase the safety of roads for all community members. I hope this research will be a catalyst for expansion of the existing transportation programs at HSU to meet the future demands for its stakeholders. My goal is to analyze how understanding a broader theory of planned behavior in conjunction with existing material conditions at HSU and the surrounding community can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of sustainable transportation for the campus and its community.

The research provided evidence that safety and access are barriers to commuting in a more sustainable form. Many of the researchers argued that in order to make transportation sustainable, it should be able to meet individuals’ and society’s basic needs, be affordable and operate efficiently, and limit carbon emissions. Furthermore, in planning for sustainable transportation, it is necessary to have a balance between social equity and economy in order for it to be truly sustainable. In regard to barriers, the HSU Parking Market Demand study acknowledged that the location of the campus can impact students’ ability to get to the campus. Montigny, et al. (2012) concluded in their research on environmental barriers that it is necessary to provide the right infrastructure for commuting by walking in cold and wet weather climates, such as in Humboldt County. Walker (2012) argued for changing the barriers to using public transit with the seven demands of public transit. Lastly, research concludes that by providing incentives for the community, many individuals’ behaviors towards sustainable transportation can change.

I recommend that additional research is necessary for cycling and carpooling. I focused on walking and public transit because that was the form of commute I used in Humboldt County. There is much research on cycling and carpooling and current studies show that there are additional barriers and safety issues when it comes to commuting by cycling. I suggest that any future research on transportation at HSU assess the modes of transportation available to students, staff and faculty at HSU while considering that HSU is different from most campuses in its population, topography and climate – and how these factors create barriers to the use of sustainable modes of transportation.

I believe my research will make a difference at the Humboldt State campus. I found it satisfying to do research on a topic that focuses on sustainability because that is what the HSU campus is known for. I hope this will encourage future researchers to develop new ideas in transportation planning and find ways to overcome the barriers to sustainable transportation.
Humboldt County Residents Overwhelmingly Support Changes to Local Streets

Given the urgent need for ongoing public health measures in response to the pandemic, as well as the broad public support demonstrated here, we have been urging jurisdictions throughout the county to implement each of these measures as soon as possible. Several respondents noted, and we strongly agree, that when implementing these measures it is critical to ensure convenient access for people with various mobility limitations.

As of this writing, the cities of Eureka and Arcata have both already made it easier for restaurants to set up tables in the public right-of-way. However, where this means outdoor dining on sidewalks, it presents a new obstacle and health hazard for pedestrians. We are encouraging local governments to limit outdoor dining to parking lots and on-street parking spaces to avoid these problems, or to close certain blocks to traffic altogether and put tables in the driving lanes.

We’ve been in the pandemic era for a while now, but we believe that distancing and other public health measures will likely be necessary for many months to come. For that reason, we continue our advocacy for interventions to create safer, healthier streets for everyone in the COVID-19 era. The results of this survey only strengthen our resolve.

Field trips
Field Trips as of Mid-July are still not permitted by the state CNPS organization. Meanwhile, take your own field trips, avoiding crowded places. See the “Places to See Plants” page under the Activities tab of the website. Any trail in Prairie Creek State Park is guaranteed to awe and please. Horse Mountain area offers an alpine feel only an hour from town. See the Hiking Humboldt books by Ken Burton and Rees Hughes and redwood parks books by Jerry and Gisela Rohde. Share your photos on www.facebook.com/groups/NorthCoastCNPS/.

Evening Programs
Evening programs are not scheduled for June-August. Recent programs are archived under the Education tab on our website. For amazing photos of caterpillars and trying to get the thistle down with which to line her nest. Goldfinches also love thistle seed, so she would be back for those. Native bees would gather nectar and pollen, and certain native butterflies would lay their eggs on this host plant. To me this thistle was demonstrating the value of native plants to wildlife. To our visitor, who lumped all species of thistle into one, the spiny, uninviting aspect of this species eclipsed its beauty. Older visitors, experienced with gardens or with pastures, would also worry about bringing a new problem into their domain, thinking all thistles would be as aggressive as Bull Thistle (Cirsium vulgare) or Canada Thistle (Carduus pycnocephalus), bad pasture weeds. Western Thistle’s behavior in the wild, scattered in the roadside, serpentine soils on Horse Mountain, suggests it can not deal with competition from other plants and is not at all aggressive. Just as with people, racial profiling in the plant world can lead to the wrong conclusions. Recognizing the variation within a group can reveal beauty and useful function.

The survey also asked whether residents are having trouble social distancing while moving around and gauged support for various potential measures to accommodate new realities and make streets safer for the duration of the pandemic. Two hundred and one Humboldt County residents responded to the survey.

Countywide, 70% of respondents reported walking and/or biking the same amount or more since the stay-at-home order was issued in March, while 94% of respondents reported driving the same or less. This represents a significant and fundamental shift in the way local residents are using the streets. 37% of respondents reported little to no difficulty social distancing, these results demonstrate that a significant portion of the county’s population is having trouble complying with this public health mandate.

Slow Streets are neighborhood streets where through traffic is discouraged, so that people can walk, bike and even play in the streets more safely while social distancing. Large majorities of respondents supported the implementation of Slow Streets (80%) locally, as well as automatic walk signals for pedestrians to avoid “high-touch” buttons (72%), and reduced parking requirements for businesses to allow outdoor dining in parking areas (90%).

to learn why planting native plants is essential for the health of the planet see lectures by Douglas Tallamy at tinyurl.com/y7ljbgqyl and the first hour of tinyurl.com/y73xdmph. Or read his new book, Nature’s Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard.

For Your Native Plant Garden
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 writing northcoastcnps@gmail.com.

Why Would Anyone Plant A Thistle?!
Carol Ralph, North Coast CNPS President
These words from a young visitor at our in-person, by-appointment, masks-required spring plant sale in our nursery set me thinking. He was looking at a magnificent “stand” of potted Western Thistle (Also called Cobweb Thistle for the soft, fine, white, webbing enveloping all parts. Cirsium occidentale.) -- upright, elegant, gray stems topped with tufts of the brightest, deepest crimson. He clearly was seeing the unfriendly spines and thinking of the invasive nature of more familiar thistles. I was thinking of the White-crowned Sparrow that had made her nest at the base of one of these very thistles, recognizing an effective predator deterrent, and of the hummingbird that showed up within hours of my planting three of these thistles in my garden, and of the female American Goldfinch that showed up daily to tug at the flowers,
Dioxins In and Around Humboldt Bay: Slow but Steady Progress

Jennifer Kalt, Director

The Timber Industry’s Legacy

Since 2004, Humboldt Baykeeper has been focusing on the legacy of wood preservatives used at dozens of lumber mills that once lined the shores of Humboldt Bay and its tributaries and the region’s major rivers.

Contaminated soil and groundwater persist at many former mills that used the wood preservative pentachlorophenol (“penta”), which contained dioxins and furans. These extremely toxic, very long-lasting chemicals are known to cause reproductive damage and cancer and are components of Agent Orange.

Accidental spills and carelessness caused soil and water contamination around penta dip tanks, spray booths, and the conical burners used to dispose of treated lumber waste. In many instances, the contamination has never been remediated (cleaned up), and it continues to impact our environment.

Humboldt Bay’s sediment, fish and shellfish contain varying levels of these toxic compounds. Dioxins become more and more concentrated as they move up the food chain (known as “bioaccumulation”). Fish-eating birds such as eagles and osprey are at risk, along with sea lions and other marine mammals — and of course, people.

In 2006, the State Water Resources Control Board agreed with Humboldt Baykeeper’s evidence and formally designated Humboldt Bay as Threatened and Impaired by dioxins. The state scheduled a recovery plan for 2019, but that has since been delayed until 2025.

This Threatened and Impaired designation has enabled us to successfully advocate for dioxin sampling to be required before dredging operations and prior to permitting redevelopment of former industrial sites where ground disturbance has the potential to remobilize contamination and pollute waterways.

Dioxin Cleanups around Humboldt Bay

Several major dioxin sites have been remediated since 2006, mostly as a result of legal action or U.S. EPA Brownfield grants awarded to local government agencies and Tribes.

The Simpson Plywood Mill in Eureka was the subject of Baykeeper’s first lawsuit in 2006, when some of the highest dioxin levels ever documented in North America were discovered in a ditch connected to the bay. The cleanup stopped the discharge into the bay by removing contaminated soil from the ditch, although some contamination undoubtedly remains beneath the site.

The former boat yard on Tuluwat Island was remediated by the Wiyot Tribe, which received a U.S. EPA Environmental Stewardship Award for the project. This cleanup and restoration enabled the Tribe to continue the World Renewal Ceremony that had been interrupted in 1860 by one of several massacres coordinated by white settlers.

The former boat yard on Tuluwat Island was remediated by the Wiyot Tribe, which received a U.S. EPA Environmental Stewardship Award for the project. This cleanup and restoration enabled the Tribe to continue the World Renewal Ceremony that had been interrupted in 1860 by one of several massacres coordinated by white settlers.

The Sierra Pacific Industries Mill in Manila was partially remediated as a result of legal action by Ecological Rights Foundation, Baykeeper’s founding organization. The lawsuit put a stop to contaminated discharge into the bay, but contamination remains beneath the mill site. The lawsuit put

Penta was used for decades at the McNord Lumber Mill at the confluence of Hall Creek and the Mad River in Glendale. A cannabis manufacturing facility was proposed at the site in 2019, but the project is currently on hold pending soil and groundwater testing for dioxins. Photo credits: Photo ID: 2001.01.1837, Shuster Collection, Humboldt State University Library, 1954 at left; Humboldt Baykeeper, 2019 at right.

Remediation has been done in several sites, and more is being planned as a result of our advocacy.

Watchdogging Development

The former McNamara & Peepe Mill (later Blue Lake Forest Products) in Glendale was remediated in the 1990s, but rising groundwater pushed a plume of dioxins toward the Mad River about a mile upstream of intake wells that provide drinking water for two-thirds of Humboldt County.

In 2018, the Department of Toxic Substances Control announced it would develop a new cleanup plan, though unfortunately they are well behind schedule with this effort.

Little Lake Industries once operated on what is now part of the Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary. The City bought the site in the 1990s and later demolished the mill buildings on South I Street. In 2015, the area around the outlet of Butcher’s Slough at the Arcata Marsh was found to have the highest levels of dioxin ever documented in Humboldt Bay sediments to date. The City received an EPA Brownfield grant and is in the process of testing the site to determine the extent of contamination and develop cleanup plans.

At the Balloon Track in Eureka, a former rail yard, an inadequate cleanup and proposed shopping mall (“Marina Center”) was stalled by legal action and permit appeals by Baykeeper and EPIC. Dioxins, PCBs, lead, and other contaminants remain at the site and in Clark Slough, a tidal channel that supports juvenile Dungeness crabs. The City recently received a Brownfield grant to conduct testing and work toward a full cleanup of the site.

The former Louisiana Pacific (more recently Evergreen) Pulp Mill in Samoa is the site of Nordic AquaFarms’ proposed land-based fish factory. Soil testing has been done, and plans are underway for demolition of structures and debris removal.

Baykeeper staff, volunteers, and consultants continue to monitor these sites to ensure that cleanups and development proposals are protective of Humboldt Bay, human health, and the environment. For more info, visit humboldtbaykeeper.org.

Sign up for action alerts and other bay-related issues by emailing us at alerts@humboldtbaykeeper.org.

You can also like us on Facebook, follow us on Instagram (humboldt_baykeeper) and on Twitter (@HumBaykeeper), and visit our website at humboldtbaykeeper.org.
Vultures play an extremely valuable role in our ecosystem as scavengers. Their speedy, efficient disposal of carcasses does not allow harmful bacteria to develop and spread because vultures’ high body temperature and strong stomach acid allows them to ingest carrion infected by even such bacteria as anthrax, without any ill-effects.

In India in the 1990s, scientists noted a serious decrease in the number of vultures. The Peregrine Fund discovered the culprit in 2003: Diclofenac. Diclofenac is an anti-inflammatory drug given to livestock that was widely used in India beginning in the 1990s. However, the drug causes kidney failure in vultures, and they are exposed to a lethal dose of diclofenac if they eat from the carcass of a recently treated animal. Three “Gyps” species, White-rumped Vulture (Gyps bengalensis), Indian vulture (Gyps indicus) and Slender-Billed vulture (Gyps tenuirostris), were the most affected by diclofenac. Their populations fell over 97% between 1993 and 2002. Diclofenac use is now outlawed in India. Although declines in their numbers have slowed, these populations have not fully recovered.

The vast majority of cattle in India are not eaten by humans. Instead, dead cattle are eaten by scavengers like vultures. With the crash in vulture populations, millions of carcasses were left rotting. This collapse of the natural animal disposal system had multiple consequences, such as carcasses formerly eaten by vultures contaminating drinking water and an increased possibility of spreading diseases such as TB, anthrax, brucellosis, and foot-and-mouth.

The disappearance of vultures also allowed populations of mammalian scavengers such as rats and wild dogs to increase. However, these newly abundant scavengers are not as efficient as vultures. A vulture’s metabolism destroys many pathogens. Conversely, dogs and rats transmit diseases like rabies, anthrax, and plague from rotting carcasses. India has millions of wild dogs. This led to an increase in leopards invading inhabited areas to prey on these feral dogs, thereby causing increased leopard-human conflicts.

Unfortunately, India is not the only place where vultures are endangered: they are also declining in other continents including Africa, where a similar situation is occurring. Potent, inexpensive poisons are used in some countries there to control predatory pests, such as lions or jackals. These poisons then spread through the ecosystem and kill several other species, including vultures.

Throughout North America, condors, which are large vultures, used to be more prevalent. Long-term changes in climate and more recently, the arrival of Europeans, decimated the large prey animals that condors fed on. The condors’ range subsequently shrank and their populations declined. What about Turkey Vultures (Cathartes aura)? Why didn’t they decline as much as condors? Well, during the Pleistocene, Turkey Vultures fed on smaller animals, so their numbers did not decrease as much. Vultures were able to maintain their ranges. Condor populations have continued to decline as a result of poaching, shooting, lead poisoning, and habitat destruction. Both California Condors and Turkey Vultures still face survival threats, primarily due to poisoning and the loss of habitat. Their outlook could improve with greater environmental protections.

Our own California Condor (Gymnogyps californianus) went extinct in the wild in 1987. In Humboldt County, condors have not been seen since about 1980, but after significant conservation work, and captive breeding programs, condors have been making a comeback. The success of this work has now increased the condor population to several hundred in the wild. In 2008 the Yurok Tribe, along with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Parks Service, began planning for the reintroduction of prey-go-neesh (‘condor’ in the Yurok language), to Yurok ancestral territory surrounding the Klamath River.

If all goes well, California Condors could be released in the Klamath region, possibly as early as next spring.

Next Issue:
Return of the California Condor!
Thinking of Joining the National Audubon Society?

If so, please use the coupon below. **By sending in your membership on this form, rather than replying to solicitations from National Audubon, $20 is sent directly to our chapter.** This is how National rewards local chapters for recruiting. (Otherwise, the share of membership dues that RRAS receives is only a couple of dollars.) Thanks!

Yes, I’d like to join. Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter (RRAS C24), and send AUDUBON magazine and my membership card to the address below. My check for $20 is enclosed (introductory offer).

NAME ..............................................
ADDRESS ..............................................
EMAIL ..............................................

Local Chapter Code: C24. Please make checks to the National Audubon Society, and send with this coupon to Box 97194, Washington, DC 20090-7194.

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**President’s Column**

*By Gail Kenny*

Welcome to our second monthly edition. Even though as of mid-July, we still have field trips on hold, we had a virtual program in July on raptors and rodenticides and are having another in August on Sage-Grouse. All programs are recorded and can be accessed online on our website at rras.org. We will most likely continue these virtual Zoom programs into the fall.

Although many of you miss the regular bird walks, the upside is that we can have presenters from anywhere in the world! Please contact me at gailgkenny@gmail.com with your suggestions. In the meantime, we are exploring how to organize live field trips so we can start them up again. Our monthly Wigi Wetlands restoration workdays have resumed with physical distancing protocols, and I encourage you to come out and join in the fun.

**WIGI WETLANDS VOLUNTEER WORKDAYS**

Please join Redwood Region Audubon Society to help create bird-friendly native habitat and restore a section of the bay trail. Tasks range from muscling large plants out of the ground to cutting flowers heads from blooming invasives. There are plenty of options! Volunteer work days take place on the 4th Saturday of every month from 9 to 11 a.m. The trail section is located behind the Bayshore Mall and volunteers will meet in the parking lot directly behind Walmart. Until further notice, we will be using our COVID-19 protocol. Hand sanitizer, wipes, and packaged snacks are provided, as well as tools. Please bring your own water, gloves, and facemask. Although facemasks are not required, they are strongly encouraged. If interested, please contact Jeremy Cashen at jeremy.cashen@yahoo.com or (214) 605-7368.

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**» Featured Local Artist «**

**Patricia Sundgren Smith**

*An Artist’s Process*

Although my bird images are predominantly drawings or linocut prints, I am creating a series of lithographs of shorebirds. Lithography, from the Greek for “stone printing,” is a printmaking process based on the fact that grease and water resist each other. First, an image is drawn with a greasy material on a lithographic stone. A second stone is used for the background, which is a two-color blended rollup. Next, the stones are chemically treated to etch the drawings. Then, the stones are inked to print impressions on paper. I work with Gruenwald Press in McKinleyville for etching and editioning. If you would like to view more of my artwork, please go to: http://www.trinidadartgallery.com/patricia-sundgren-smith.html.

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*Waxy Checkerbloom, Smith River Recreation Area. Photo by Gail Kenny.*

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*Nesting Herons, by Patricia Sundgren Smith.*
My Birding Beginnings:

A Three-Part Series by Amaya Bechler

Golden-eyed, glossy black, and nervous, the scaup postures before diving into the murky depths. He slithers beneath the surface, nabbing a bivalve from the bottom. Then, he surfaces. Shedding rivulets of water off his back, he glances toward shore. There, he sees me – a scruffy, fourteen-year-old clutching a worn copy of "Sibley Birds," standing at the edge of Kloppe Lake. I’m on a natural history field trip with my freshman high school class and am innately drawn to the beautiful diving duck.

We all more-or-less remember when we discovered birds. And if that moment wasn’t too long ago, I’m sure we remember the sensations of awe and curiosity of beginning birding. There’s something simply thrilling about the steep learning curve that accompanies those first months or years of learning. Many people come to birding after their interest is piqued by a "spark" bird. Some see the bright hues of a Steller’s Jay at their feeder, while others become enamored with the mimicking ability of the Northern Mockingbird. For me, my spark bird was not a flashy or prominent species, but rather a subtly elegant duck: the Greater Scaup. I certainly can’t claim that I knew the bird I was looking at was a Greater Scaup. Flipping open my field guide, I found that there were two species of seemingly identical scaups. Head shape? Iridescent color? These field marks meant nearly nothing to me. But I was curious, and that curiosity was what made me, at that moment, a hatching birder.

The very first lesson I learned as a seconds-old bird enthusiast was that a good mentor is important, even essential. Our unofficial natural history class was taught by local birder Jeff Allen, probably best known for finding the mega-rare Common Pochard a few years ago. It was he who explained the difference between the scaup species to me and further encouraged me to pursue birding. That lesson on the differences between Lesser and Greater Scaups was the second lesson I learned as a birder. Instead of focusing on size or color, shape is paramount in identification. The scaups are told apart by the shape of their heads. While it’s difficult as a beginning birder to stop focusing on colors or apparent size, proportions set the foundation for IDing species.

For the next year, I was a novice birder. That time period was characterized by making a lot of mistakes, finding species I didn’t even know existed, and asking lots of dumb questions. One thing that immediately became important to me was field sketching. A casual artist at best, birding gave me a new reason to pick up a pencil and paper. No matter how terrible my sketches turned out, they helped me gain a better understanding of field marks and proportions.

I’m hesitant to say that I’ve become a better birder. As I’ve learned about birds, I’ve also realized that with everything you learn, you only become more aware about how much more there is to learn. Even though there are setbacks, I try not to forget what it felt like to be a true beginner. That sense of new discovery; the simple delight in seeing new species; the awe of the natural world: these are the things that should guide us, no matter how experienced or inexperienced we are.

So, my encouragement to you, no matter how long you’ve been birding, is this: try to see everything like a beginner again. If you’ve never done field sketches, take a notebook next time you step outside. Go to the North Jetty and do ten bad drawings of a Western Gull choking down a starfish. (This precise activity was one of my favorites in my first year of birding.) Attempt to see every bird anew. Recognize the uniqueness of even the most common species.

One last thing: three years later, I have yet to succeed at reliably identifying the scaups!

(Other parts of Amaya’s series can be found under “Newsletters” on our website at rras.org.)

Watermark: Female and male Greater Scaup.

Next Month:

Part II

"The Nestling"

Many thanks go out to Ralph Bucher for IT support, and Sue Leskiw for proofreading.
May we be Thunder, and Lightning our words

Killdeer circles up, featherly whirlwind, then flutters back toward the blowing grass, a leaf on the wind, crying wildly, The Thunder’s here! The Thunder’s here! The Thunder’s here! flashing white against Rising Thunderheads.

Each crazy flutter blows rainsmell. Summerdry grass whispers a rustling welcome.

Grounded, the bird hides in tall grass, as village criers sometimes must, while lightning becomes thunder, thunder brings rain, rain draws more lightning, and lightning becomes smell, spirits speaking to earth in charged words, raising hackles, charging fingertips, and if we only knew the meaning, they would raise us skyward, feathered whirlwinds crying in season.

Marlon D. Sherman

The Marbled Murrelet:
~ A New Biologist’s Conservation Guide ~

By Andrew Orahoske

Twenty years ago, as a young field ornithologist, while exploring Redwood Creek, just downstream of Tall Trees Grove in Redwood National Park, I first encountered the mysterious seabird with an affinity for old-growth forests. As with many new observers of the Marbled Murrelet (Brachyramphus marm- oratus), I heard them before seeing them. Faintly at first, and then as more birds streamed through, louder and louder, their unmistakable call pierced through the air: KEER, KEER, KEER! In the predawn hours, with the entire valley shrouded in thick fog, the ability to see much of anything was limited, let alone a small, camouflaged seabird zipping through the trees at speeds approaching 60 m.p.h. But as I waited patiently beneath the old growth with a clear view up through the trees from a gravel bar, I saw my very first Fog-lark, speeding past and disapp-
Large New Housing Project Proposed for McKay Forest

Tom Wheeler, Executive Director

A large new residential housing development is being proposed for the outskirts of Eureka, cutting into the McKay Forest in Cutten. The project proposes 320 new residential units, in a mix of single- and multi-family developments, together with 22,000 square feet of commercial space incorporated into the development across 81 acres of now-forested lands. The project would require rezoning and subdivision, bringing the project before the Planning Commission.

EPIC, together with our allies at the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities and Humboldt Baykeeper, have numerous concerns with the project. We support the development of appropriately-sited and well-conceived housing that supports a diversity of housing needs, particularly low-income, affordable by design, and accessible housing, however, this project needs work.

The development fails to adequately appreciate greenhouse gas emissions associated with construction and use of the residence, together with the loss of carbon sequestration potential. To compensate, the project would merely buy carbon credits. Not good enough. We can reduce carbon emissions by solarizing the project where feasible, and moving all home energy use to electric (and not running new natural gas lines to the project). We can reduce carbon emissions by diverting more car trips to foot, bike or bus through better incorporation of pedestrianization measures, including traffic calming, location of bus stops and provision of free bus passes, and dedicated bike lanes and connections to the Bay-to-Zoo trail. We can sequester more carbon (and reduce impacts from forest conversion) by requiring the incorporation of natural planting for all of the development.

If there are many concerning aspects of the project, there are also things to appreciate. The project proposes a diversity of housing types, including low-income and multifamily housing, in addition to standard-fare single family housing. The developer is also planning the incorporation of commercial space within the development, which will help to make the new development more walkable. The proposed project would be much better if it doubled down on these elements. Let’s build housing that integrates multiple income brackets together, that more closely incorporates neighborhood commercial space, that provides for affordable housing by design, that allows for a car-free lifestyle and promotes healthy behavior.

The development of housing in California is a statewide priority and our development decisions now will affect our communities and our environment far into the future. Let’s get it right.

EPIC Challenges Take Permit Issued to Green Diamond

Tom Wheeler, Executive Director

In late May, EPIC submitted an opening brief in the case to overturn a permit that threatens California’s last remaining Humboldt martens. With fewer than 200 likely in the state, the marten is teetering on the edge of extinction. Necessary to the long-term survival of the species is to connect the largest population of martens, found on Six Rivers National Forest in Del Norte County, to prime habitat in the Redwood National and State Parks complex to the southwest. Standing in the way is Green Diamond, which owns the majority of this area.

Green Diamond’s clearcut-heavy management is antithetical to the needs of the Humboldt marten. Martens require mature forests and a thick layer of herbaceous undergrowth to sink through the forest undetected by predators. Clearcutting destroys this undergrowth and leaves martens exposed. Clearcutting also provides prime habitat for the marten’s number one predator, bobcats, whose populations explode because of the woodrats and rabbits that enjoy clearcuts. With so many bobcats present, Green Diamond’s lands become uninhabitable for martens and, where clearcuts are near occupied marten habitat, bobcats begin to tread further into these occupied areas. That’s why it is curious that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife gave the company a free pass to “take” martens through their management.

Through funny math and a promise to relocate martens, Green Diamond convinced higher ups at the Department to issue a permit. And as we’ve now discovered through Public Records Act requests and through litigation, the actual scientists who work closely with Green Diamond were aghast—one writing that “this [Safe Harbor Agreement] sounds absolutely Orwellian” and that the permit “will, as a whole, actually be harmful.” Political interference to benefit a powerful timber company and plodding through the objections of staff scientists is something that we’ve come to expect from the Trump administration, not California’s wildlife agency.
The Perspective From Up Here: A Note From Our Local Treesitters

Redwood Forest Defense

We write to you from our perch among the branches of a redwood grove in Tsurai (near so-called Trinidad). We've been living here for four months now, actively protecting this forest from being clearcut by the notorious Green Diamond Resource Company. We will not tolerate Green Diamond clearcutting our backyards! Green Diamond manages nearly 400,000 acres of our forests in Humboldt and Del Norte County, and they intend to clearcut the forests upstream from your home, too. We call for Green Diamond to cancel their destruction of this forest and, more broadly, to take responsibility for the generations of harm they have caused - the legacy of colonization they benefit from and their profit-driven destruction of habitat.

Green Diamond is rapidly turning this biodiverse land into a massive, monocropped redwood tree farm. Across their 1.5 million-acre West coast timberlands, they cut everything on 45 year rotations - meaning every forest will be clearcut before it can even begin to mature. The company reported using 2800 lbs of pesticides, bought from Dow Chemical, Bayer and Monsanto, in Humboldt and Del Norte County in 2019. They use these pesticides not to control invasive species, but to suppress native trees that aren't profitable. Green Diamond sells "greenwashed" timber - a subtle and dangerous marketing strategy portraying environmentally irresponsible, capitalist extraction as a "sustainable" solution. We know that a profit driven corporation will never truly prioritize the land and their meager attempts at stewardship are actually ploys to placate concerned consumers and the public.

During the last four months aloft we have witnessed the world shut down in response to COVID-19, a virus that acutely affects our respiratory systems, while the "essential" work of corporate timber companies are decimating the planet’s lungs for profit. Through this pandemic we have seen how the government prioritizes economy over people’s lives, with Black and Indigenous communities the hardest hit. When George Floyd was murdered and lifetimes of justified anger at the police boiled over into the streets, the agents of oppression murdered and lifetimes of justified anger at the police economy over people’s lives, with Black and Indigenous communities the hardest hit. When George Floyd was murdered and lifetimes of justified anger at the police economy over people’s lives, with Black and Indigenous communities the hardest hit. When George Floyd was murdered and lifetimes of justified anger at the police boiled over into the streets, the agents of oppression attacked us with tear gas and pepper spray. These layered attacks on life itself sadden and anger us, but shouldn't surprise us. This Uprising reminds us of the power of decentralized movements, and inspires us to keep resisting. We know that industrial logging is a death sentence, for the Northern spotted owl, for the Humboldt marten, and for humankind as we rely on rainforests in a multitude of ways.

The world we see is one where carceral systems have been abolished, where policing and prisons are not a life or death struggle for our Black comrades. The world we see is one where the land is returned to its Indigenous stewards. Where the practice of forestry doesn’t mean the extinction of a species. These visions are not dreams. The fires of change are lit and burning now. We have the power to make the changes needed to dismantle this oppressive, destructive system by standing in solidarity with our Black and Indigenous comrades. We intend to continue protecting these groves and resisting corporate dominance and ecocide in this community and everywhere.

With love, rage, and land back!
Your local treesitters
Redwood Forest Defense
www.redwoodforestdefense.org

Get Ready For Local Election Season!

Caroline Griffith,
EcoNews Journalist

The deadline to file to run for local City Councils is August 7, so by the time you are reading this, we may already know who our candidates are for the November election. As of press time, very few candidates had announced their intention to run, so if you are reading this before August 7 and are interested in local politics, now is your chance!

Though they aren’t paid much (compensation ranges from $0/month plus mileage reimbursement in Rio Dell to $668.64/month plus medical/dental/vision insurance in Arcata) City Councilors have a lot of influence over the character of our communities. They approve the budgets that determine where and how our money is spent; they bring forward ordinances that determine city policies, for example, banning single-use plastics or closing certain city streets to car traffic; and they have the power to determine how development happens in our communities.

Every City Council in Humboldt County and most Community Service Districts have seats up for election in November. Many of these have had uncontested elections in the past, meaning that one person runs unopposed, robbing voters of the opportunity to hear a diversity of opinions. If you have ever thought of serving in elected office, or if you know someone you think would be good at it, now is the time.

In addition to directly passing policy, City Councils also have the ability to refer issues to the voters in the form of ballot measures. Here in Humboldt County, there are a few interesting ballot measures to keep an eye on.

Arcata voters will have the opportunity to vote on a tax of $37 annually per parcel to benefit parks and open spaces. It is anticipated this will raise approximately $175,000 per year “to protect and preserve natural open space areas for future generations by: improving and maintaining parks, open spaces and trails; protecting land around creeks, rivers and streams to prevent pollution and improve water quality; protecting redwood forests, wildlife habitat, working lands, scenic hillsides and agricultural land; expanding public access and trail systems.” If approved in November, this tax would last until ended by voters. Putting more public money into preserving open, natural spaces is an opportunity for us to do for future generations what those who had the foresight to establish Redwood Park did for us.

Arcata voters will also be deciding whether to raise the percentage of public housing from 5% to 7.5%. Countywide, voters will also be voting on an affordable housing measure.

Voters in Eureka will be able to decide whether to change the way they vote for City Councilors. In June, the Eureka City Council referred Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) to the ballot, a method in which voters rank candidates, rather than just voting for one. This allows voters to choose the candidate they like the best, rather than voting strategically for “the lesser of two evils.” If one candidate doesn’t receive a majority of votes, the candidate with the least amount of votes is eliminated and the second choice of all those votes is then counted. This goes until one candidate wins a majority. Cities that use RCV have had increases in voter turnout and in the diversity of candidates running for office. Bringing more voices to the table, especially voices that have historically been marginalized, has been shown to excite voters and invigorate the democratic process.

Though the national election is high-stakes this year and commands a lot of attention, it’s important to remember that the outcome of our local elections has an enormous impact on our day-to-day lives. And, because of our small population, we have the potential to make an enormous impact on our local elections.
Solidarity Economics: A Path Forward

David Cobb,
Co-founder of Cooperation Humboldt

In the inaugural “Nexus” column, we shared our belief that we could not create a sustainable and regenerative society under capitalism. Almost all the responses we received were in agreement, but pushed us to describe a path forward. So this month’s column is dedicated to concrete, achievable policies grounded in cooperative, democratic and sustainable values. This framework is often described as a “solidarity economy” that would place people and planet before profit.

Worker-Owned cooperatives

Thanks to COVID, the unemployment rate is soaring and most of us are teetering on the brink of personal financial disaster. Worker-owned co-ops could change that. Studies show that on average worker-owned cooperatives outperform traditional businesses in terms of industry average wages and benefits, productivity, job stability and satisfaction

• Worker co-ops are locally rooted and tend to prioritize giving back to the community (7th Cooperative Principle).
• Co-ops tend to boost civic engagement, a spillover effect of workers running their own business.
• A growing movement:  
  » A number of cities (NYC, Madison) are investing millions of dollars in worker co-ops as part of a strategy of inclusive economic development.
  » A recent $32 million grant was awarded to 4 national co-op developers to encourage and support the wave of baby boomer small business owners who are approaching retirement, to sell their businesses to their workers.
  » Locally, Cooperation Humboldt has launched a program called “Worker-Owned Humboldt” to support existing co-ops and to incubate new ones.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

In a country as wealthy as the U.S., the level of homelessness is appalling. Over ½ million people experienced homelessness in a single night in 2018 (and that was before COVID and the wave of evictions and foreclosures coming.)

Housing is unaffordable because it is being treated as a commodity (something to be bought and sold) rather than a basic need and a right. Speculation (gambling) on the housing market plays havoc with the availability of affordable housing, and leads to speculative bubbles that crash the economy such as the meltdown in 2008. Community Land Trusts could change that.

• CLTs decommodify land and housing by taking them out of the speculative market, thereby creating permanently affordable housing.
• CLTs enable low and moderate income individuals/families to own their own home by leveraging grants and subsidies as well as providing a long term land lease at a nominal cost.
• Foreclosure rates for CLTs is as much as 90% lower than conventional housing.
• Generally, at least 30% of the CLT Board is composed of community members, thereby ensuring democratic, community control.

Local Energy Democracy

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change projects catastrophic impacts on human and environmental systems unless world governments can transform global energy infrastructure within the next 12 years. Despite the existential threat, fossil fuel industries continue to exploit human and environmental resources for shareholder profit, with impacts on the health and livelihoods of low income and other vulnerable communities worldwide. In fact, two hundred years of extracting natural and human resources to fuel a global economy have created dual crises: a climate crisis and a crisis of inequality. Locally developed and governed renewable energy systems (energy democracy) could change that.

Energy democracy can encompass various strategies and look different in different places, but is driven by a common set of principles and broad vision. By capitalizing on the decentralized potential of renewable energy resources, energy democracy transfers control over the energy economy to communities/stakeholders, for example through community-based public entities or cooperatives.

• By democratizing as well as decarbonizing the energy economy, local renewable energy systems make it possible to share the benefits of moving off fossil fuels. Energy democracy can channel energy assets, employment opportunities and cost savings to disadvantaged communities where they are most needed, reversing histories of dispossession.
• Energy democracy requires institutional, social and economic innovation, which disrupts business-as-usual practices with pathways to a more just and sustainable future.

Public Banking

Privately-owned banks operate to maximize shareholder profit. They frequently invest in projects that accelerate the climate climate crisis and exacerbate income inequality in pursuit of short-term profits. In addition, investment decisions for local communities are often made by Wall Street bankers who have never even visited that community. Public Banking could change that.

• A Public Bank is operated in the public interest and owned by the people through their representative governments. They are a way to democratize public financial decisions.
• A Public Bank can be used to finance climate change solutions.
• Public Banks can make low-interest loans for affordable housing, local businesses and student loans.
• Public banks can reduce taxes. Their profits are returned to the general fund and they do not need to charge interest to themselves. Eliminating interest reduces the cost of such public infrastructure projects as much as 40%.
• California already allows the creation of local and regional public banks. Pending legislation (AB 310) would create a statewide CA State Bank.

Participatory Budgeting

Public budget decisions have enormous impact on our lives, but the process for how those budgets are created is incomprehensible and inaccessible to most people. Budget decisions often fail to address community needs, and instead meet the demands of those with the most power or loudest voices. This disconnect fuels some of the biggest problems with our democracy, especially record-low participation and trust in government. Participatory Budgeting could change that.

Participatory Budgeting ensures that all voices have a place at the table by allowing participants to work together across partisan divides for the good of their communities, while increasing government accountability.

• Participatory Budgeting makes government more effective, fair and innovative. It connects residents’ local knowledge with technical expertise, directing resources toward public priorities. Low income people, people of color and youth participate at higher rates than in typical elections, and learn valuable civic skills and knowledge. This participation often leads to creative new projects that push broader policy change.
• People all over the world are using Participatory Budgeting, proposing, developing and voting on legislation. Some are using “citizen assemblies” to change the way government works. In the U.S., many cities have allowed hundreds of thousands of people to directly decide how to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in public funds via Participatory Budgeting.

None of these policies alone are transformational. Together, they represent an opportunity to reshape our world.
Where are they now?

Madison Peters, Former NEC Coastal Programs Coordinator

My time at the NEC began as a work study student at the beginning of my second year at HSU while pursuing my degree in Ecological Restoration. I joined in at a pretty busy time, too! It was August 2014 and everyone was very occupied with prepping for Coastal Cleanup Day. As a San Francisco/Bay Area transplant, I had participated in a few throughout my childhood and knew of the event, but never could I have imagined the scope or the amount of work that goes into creating such a wonderful event. Since it was a particularly busy time of year and I was a fresh, new work study student, I was mainly working on small office or event tasks like painting signs or stuffing envelopes for our annual membership survey. As I observed all of the hard work happening around me, I was given a new drive to aspire to be as passionate and enthusiastic as my coworkers. I fell in love with environmentalism and knew that I wanted to help educate people about ecological problems and solutions.

As I continued to work at the NEC I was excited to learn about the organization and its roots in the creation of the Coastal Cleanup Day. I couldn't believe that the actions and ideas of a few could transform into an international event! This taught me to value the work of those around me and the importance of our work. Over the years my role at the NEC also grew from stuffing envelopes into assisting with and then finally coordinating the very event I was so inspired by. It was my first “big time” job and responsibility, and WOW was it really! As I was still going to school full time and working a second part time job, I quickly realized the importance of work/school/life balance. I learned some valuable life lessons and a lot about myself while at the NEC.

I have been ecstatic to see what Coastal Cleanup Day has evolved into since my tenure as its coordinator for the NEC. I encourage everyone to participate in this year’s Zero Waste Coastal Cleanup Month that they are planning to help create a more accessible event during this pandemic and promote sustained activism.

Since leaving the NEC and graduating, my partner Shohei and I were very fortunate to be able to take some time to slow our lives down before we committed to forging our careers. We purchased and converted an old Brio Breadworks delivery van and turned it into our own tiny home on wheels! We and our cat, Frisca, all squeezed into our Lil’ Loaf Van and lived life on the road. We were primarily based out of Arcata since we needed income to maintain that lifestyle, but had the freedom to save money and travel as we wanted. We were even able to visit Shohei’s parents and family in Japan and explore his home country together. We ended up living in our Lil’ Loaf Van for an entire year, before moving from our beloved transplant home of Arcata to Olympia, Washington for Shohei to pursue his Masters in Environmental Studies. While we are no longer living in our Lil’ Loaf Van full time, we are still able to take it out for some fun weekend travel when we can get away.

After what seemed like a long and emotional search trying to find a job in Olympia, I happened upon two which eventually led me to my current position. I started working part time at the Puget Sound Estuarium as an Educator Lead for school field trips, teaching about the ecology and history of Puget Sound. The second was as a temp greeter for the LOTT WET Science Center, which is the main wastewater/sewage treatment center for Olympia, where I helped educate visitors about the process of wastewater treatment and the environmental hazards and benefits. Both of these wonderful part time jobs felt like a little step away from my hard earned degree in Ecological Restoration, but at the same time opened a new door for me into a passion I had explored at the NEC, environmental education. While being able to work at jobs where I loved what I was doing, I needed a more steady and full time position to be able to make ends meet. I felt like the job search in Olympia was never going to come to an end until I found a position at a place called the Hands On Children’s Museum (HOCM). I again struggled with the feeling like I was stepping away from the path that I had carefully cultivated at both HSU and the NEC. I was hired as a Visitor Engagement Coordinator and stepped on this new path helping to create and run programming following STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics) education standards for the Museum. I was amazed at how much I loved it! I have always been a firm believer in art and science being intricately entwined and this was my first time being able to balance both through educating the public.

I am very grateful for my roles at the HOCM and am curious where this path along my garden of life will take me. I can look back down the path at where I’ve been and appreciate the growth and opportunities I have been granted. I am incredibly grateful for the NEC being a part of that journey.

Our current civil rights movement has also led me to explore and reflect upon the privileges and opportunities I have had and try to become a better ally and activist. This has also brought me to learn more about systemic racism/oppresion and the need for more intersectionality in the environmental movement. I think of Arcata as a fairly progressive place, but we need to strive to do better for our communities that have been left out of the conversation. In order to save our planet we must also protect its people and remember that climate justice is social justice.

Madison Peters

Do you know a former NEC intern, volunteer, board member, or employee who continued on an environment or social justice related path? Email editor@yournec.org.

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The Moon Snail (Euspira lewisii) is one of the largest intertidal snails that can be found in the Northwest. Found in mud flats and sandy intertidal areas from Ketchikan, Alaska to Baja California, Mexico, their shell can get up to 5.5 inches and the extended body can be up to 12 inches long. Males are smaller than females and they can live up to an impressive 14 years, which is often attributed to their lifestyles as voracious predators and their ability to quickly protect themselves against predation.

Similar to most other marine snails, the Moon Snail has a muscular foot that is used not only to glide on top of the sediment, but also plow below the surface. Movement is accomplished through waves of muscular contractions passing down the foot. They move with their foot partially extended in front of the shell, acting like a snow plow to push through the sediment and search for prey. This fleshy foot can also do something that most other snails can’t; it fills with water to expand, practically covering it’s large bulbous shell. When they sense danger or are disturbed, they release water from sinuses in the mantle and withdraw the foot into their shell. They seal the opening with something called an operculum (basically a hardened door) so that their vulnerable fleshy foot is fully protected. The moon snail can’t stay fully wrapped up inside of its shell for long because it cannot breath while fully enclosed.

Moon Snails feed on clams but do not seem to search for cockles, which is thought to be related to their thicker shells. When they find a clam they often drag it farther into the sand and envelop it in their inflated foot. A gland on their proboscis secretes enzymes that helps the radula with seven rows of teeth to burrow a hole into the clam shell. They can bore about 1/2mm per day and suck the clam tissues out of the shell over a period of days. Clam shells are often found with a tell-tale “countersunk” drill hole, however it is also thought that the snails sometimes feed on clams by wrapping their foot around the entire shell to suffocate them enough to come out. Their feeding on clams during a red tide can result in an accumulation of poisons in the Moon Snail that can cause paralytic shellfish poisoning to humans if eaten. Hunting of Moon Snails by humans in the past has been prolific, so in 1984 they were protected by California Law: the daily limit is 5 and none are to be taken north of the Golden Gate Bridge.

They are large enough that they do not have many predators except for the occasional Sunflower Star attack, though the Moon Snails themselves will occasionally turn cannibalistic. Moon snails emerge from deeper waters to the shallow intertidal habitats in the summer to breed on sandy shorelines. Their eggs are laid in sandy, firm gelatinous collar-shaped masses that contain thousands of embedded eggs. In midsummer the eggs hatch into free-swimming larvae which feed on plankton and ironically often become food for bivalves in the area. These goopy, slow moving friends are quite the site to behold in the intertidal habitat.
Single-Use Plastic Isn’t Safer

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

As the COVID 19 pandemic drags on, many environmentally conscious people have become frustrated by the amount of plastic and single-use packaging they are being compelled to consume in the name of public health. At the outset of the outbreak, the plastics industry claimed that reusable bags and mugs could transmit the virus, therefore constituting a public health risk. Many states and municipalities followed suit by banning reusable bags and containers. But as more research has been done on how the virus spreads, public health experts from around the world are now saying that no known cases of COVID 19 have been linked to surfaces, including reusable bags. This research comes just in time for the expiration of California’s 60 day ban on reusable bags.

According to Dr. Ben Locom, a healthcare executive and consultant with the FDA and CDC, who is working on the front lines of the national coronavirus pandemic, “As far as reusable bags are concerned, the likelihood that bacteria or viral particles on your bag – if they exist – are going to transfer from your bag to your hand, to an object that you touch in the store, and infect someone else who touches that same object, is extraordinarily low.” Moving from reusables to a disposable culture is, as Dr. Locom notes, “pure scientific nonsense.”

In fact, the risk associated with the production of plastic seems to be more of a danger than the risk of the virus being transmitted via reusables. At a July 7 hearing of the House Oversight Committee’s Subcommittee on the Environment, titled, “Plastic Production, Pollution, and Waste in the Time of COVID-19,” experts put a spotlight on expanding plastic use and the pollution that comes with it, highlighting the fact that many plastic manufacturing plants are located in and near communities of color and low-income communities.

One example is Cancer Alley, an 85-mile stretch along the Mississippi River that is home to over one hundred oil refineries and petrochemical plants. People living in Cancer Alley are more than 50 times as likely to be diagnosed with cancer as the average American, and they have been hit hard by the coronavirus. One speaker at the hearing, Dr. Kimberly Terrell of Tulane University, cited research she has participated in which found that, in Louisiana, the parishes with the highest per capita COVID-19 death rates are found in this industrial area between Baton Rouge and New Orleans, where long-term particulate pollution is well above the national average. “While many factors contribute to COVID-19 risk, the study from Harvard and more recent research from University of Cambridge provide clear evidence of a link between air pollution and death from COVID-19,” Terrell said. “The relationship is pretty intuitive – air pollution damages our lungs, and people with lung damage face greater risk of death from COVID-19 and other respiratory diseases.”

According to the American Chemistry Council, as of February of 2020 there were 343 new plastics production plants or expansions planned for the near future. Much of this boom in plastics manufacturing is because of fracked natural gas and shale oil, the feedstocks of the plastics industry. After the twin blows of a global price war and the coronavirus pandemic, which slashed demand, the U.S. fracking industry found itself in dire straits and multiple large producers have filed for bankruptcy protection in the last couple of months. Whether this will have any effect on the rates of plastic production in the U.S. remains to be seen. The U.S. produces more than 300 million tons of plastic per year, the vast majority of which is not recycled and ends up in our oceans.

Pipeline Victories: How Long Will They Last?

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

Oil pipeline opponents celebrated two victories in early July when the embattled Atlantic Coast pipeline and Dakota Access Pipeline were shut down within 24 hours of each other. But, as conservation lawyers and environmental activists know, victories like these are often fleeting and the fossil fuel industry doesn’t give up that easily. The final fate of these projects, and others like them, remains to be seen.

On July 5, Duke Energy Corp. and Dominion Energy, Inc., announced they would be abandoning the Atlantic Coast pipeline (which would have carried natural gas through West Virginia, Virginia and North Carolina, traveling under the Appalachian Trail) due to ongoing delays, legal challenges, and concerns about the project’s financial feasibility.

Then, on July 6, a federal judge ordered the Dakota Access Pipeline, which transports “light, sweet crude oil” from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota, underneath the Missouri River, to Potoka, Illinois, be shut down and emptied of oil by August 5. Judge James Boasberg of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that the pipeline be shut down until a more extensive environmental review of the pipeline’s passage beneath Lake Oahe could be performed. Pipeline opponents celebrated. Advocates, including the American Petroleum Institute, the Association of Oil Pipe Lines and other trade groups, screamed that this would ruin the economy of North Dakota. And then, July 14, The U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued a temporary freeze of that shutdown, setting the stage for further litigation.

This back-and-forth battle over the black snake, as opponents from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe call it, started almost exactly four years ago; the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe took its first legal action to stop the pipeline on July 27, 2016.

The fate of these pipeline projects, and fossil fuel projects in general, hinges on the courts, the 2020 election, and investor portfolios. The bottom line is that these projects need to make money, and as long as the consumer demand and profitability remain high, they will continue. Many pipeline and energy project advocates have complained that the environmental review process laid out in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a burdensome and costly obstacle to major construction projects.

Pipeline proponents received a boost on July 15 when the Trump administration finalized its rollback of NEPA in an attempt to fast-track development projects, from highway construction to pipelines. The NEPA process, with its requirement to weigh environmental and community concerns, including considerations of the project’s impacts on climate change, is often used by communities and conservationists to slow down or stop approval of pipelines, highways, drilling permits, new factories or any major action on federal lands. “With today’s Trump administration rule, fossil fuel corporations will be able to ram harmful projects through without considering the pollution dangers to people in nearby neighborhoods. NEPA gives our very vulnerable communities across the country an opportunity to make our voices heard and stop pollution in our own backyards,” said Nanette Diaz Barragán (D-Calif). “President Trump is trying to rob us of our voice. We will not be silenced.”

Environmental groups have already pledged to file lawsuits challenging the legality of the rollback. It could also be repealed legislatively, depending on the outcome of the 2020 election.

Broadway Corridor Outreach Continues

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

The process of redesigning the Broadway Corridor to increase safety and reduce congestion has entered the next phase. The City of Eureka, CALTRANS and HCAOG have come up with eight potential plans for redesigning the artery which has been the site of multiple fatal pedestrian/car interactions in recent years. The agencies are seeking public input on these plans, which will then be narrowed down and presented to the public at a workshop scheduled for August 25. Some of these potential redesigns involve building new roads west of Broadway in environmentally sensitive areas. Citizens can find more information about upcoming workshops and give input at eurekabroadwaycorridorplan.com.
FOR GRIZZLY BEARS AND THEIR FANS:
GOOD NEWS — BAD NEWS

Yellowstone grizzlies got some good news. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals panel upheld a determination that the US Fish and Wildlife Service must reexamine its rule to remove the Yellowstone population of grizzly bears from the Endangered Species listing. The courts found the Service’s 2017 delisting rule did not use the best available science and did not utilize new data to inform future decisions for the bear’s long-term health.

“[B]ecause there are no concrete, enforceable mechanisms in place to ensure long-term genetic health of the Yellowstone grizzly, the district court correctly concluded that the 2017 Rule is arbitrary and capricious in that regard,” wrote Senior Judge Mary Schroeder in the court’s opinion.

“The court rightfully rejected the misguided proposal to subject Yellowstone grizzlies to trophy hunting for the first time in 40 years,” Earthjustice attorney Tim Preso said.

Sadly, grizzlies fared worse at the hands of Sec. of the Interior Bernhardt who put the kibosh on an Obama-era study to restore grizzlies to the North Cascades of Washington State. Although there was strong support for the reintroduction by local and national conservation organizations, the Interior Department cited local opposition in their decision to abandon the reintroduction project. “Homeowners, farmers, ranchers and small business owners in our rural communities were loud and clear: We do not want grizzly bears in north-central Washington,” said Rep. Newhouse (R-WA.). Grizzlies have been reported only a few times in the Canadian North cascades in over the last ten years.

EQUITABLE PUBLIC ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER

Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) introduced the “Water for Tomorrow Act of 2020,” S. 4188 to assure water sustainability during drought conditions with an emphasis on low-income and disadvantaged communities. The bill, which includes $3 billion for implementation, incorporates some provisions of Rep. Huffman’s (D-CA) “FUTURE Drought Resiliency Act” such as water recycling and reuse. “Every American has the right to clean water,” Harris said. “Unfortunately, our nation was already facing a water safety and affordability crisis.”

Preliminary 2021 Federal Budget Hearings

Various subcommittees, primarily in the Democratically-controlled House, are moving budgets for programs and agencies related to conservation and land management that are more favorable to those programs in defiance of the President’s proposed budget.

In particular, the House Democrats beefed up funding in several areas:

• $65 million toward the Pacific coastal salmon recovery program.
• $5.45 billion for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that includes millions more on climate research, new weather forecasting technology and fisheries management. Budgets were also increased to fight harmful algal blooms and to pay for additional Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) education.
• $819 million for aeronautics research to improve fuel efficiency, passenger safety and air traffic noise reduction.
• $8.55 billion for the National Science Foundation, an increase of $270 million for help pay for additional Artificial Intelligence (AI), quantum information science, cybersecurity and neuroscience.
• $36.76 billion for the Department of the Interior and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA.) That figure is $5.11 billion more than requested by the Trump administration.

There are areas of common ground between the two parties, especially regarding firefighting in western states and additional funds to address the community impacts of the coronavirus on indigenous communities. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funding was increased in these preliminary budget proposals. “I’m really pleased to see that the bill continues to reverse past cuts to the EPA,” said Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME). “These are so critically important. Clean air, clean water, environmental justice...” EPA’s environmental justice program would receive almost five times more funding than proposed by President Trump.

In a surprisingly bipartisan push to increase the overall budget for the Dept. of Agriculture, legislators largely ignored the Trump administration’s requested deep spending cuts.
Discover a Joint Powers Authority: The California Cannabis Authority

Ali Ong Lee

As part of our local governance series to invite public participation, we discover one of the newer Joint Powers Authorities (JPAs) to which Humboldt County belongs: the California Cannabis Authority (CCA).

Last month in EcoNews, we briefly reviewed JPAs, operating mostly within Humboldt, whose decisions have lasting impacts on the environment. Those JPAs are:

- Humboldt Bay Fire,
- Humboldt County Association of Governments,
- Humboldt/Del Norte Hazardous Materials Response Authority
- Humboldt Transit Authority,
- Humboldt Waste Management Authority, and the
- Redwood Coast Energy Authority.

The exception to the above list is the third JPA, the Humboldt/Del Norte Hazardous Materials Response Authority (HMRA). It is an example of joint governance between two counties.

The goals of JPAs — whether or not they operate within county borders or beyond — are to form a legal entity and make long-term agreements to work together to provide services. Consolidation of services can lead to efficiencies like combined purchasing power. It can also lead to consolidated legal and political powers. California Government Code Section 6500, the Joint Exercise of Powers Act, allows JPAs to either exercise common powers, or form a separate legal entity.

Here is a deeper dive into the California Cannabis Authority (CCA), a public JPA, whose inter-county decisions have long-term impacts on Humboldt’s environment. As its own legal entity, CCA was established by:

- 1996's Proposition 215, "The Compassionate Use Act," charging local governments to regulate medical cannabis, and
- 2016's Proposition 64, "The Adult Use of Marijuana Act" legalizing cannabis in California.

In 2018, CCA was formed by participating counties to combine data needed for legal cannabis industry regulation and taxation. CCA understood that they needed real-time information for monitoring the processes of financing, growing, selling, and distributing marijuana. This JPA signed a five-year agreement with National Compliance Specialists Analytics (NCS) www.ncsanalytics.com to use their computer platform for data collection and analysis. Its founder and CEO, Adam Crabtree, is CCA’s Technology Consultant, based in Colorado (the first state to legalize the recreational use of cannabis, in 2014).

Also in 2018, EcoNews re-printed a press release from Friends of the Eel River about its lawsuit against the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors for not adequately protecting watersheds when it came to the cannabis industry. The release addressed the cumulative negative impacts of what can be lucrative pot cultivation: Adverse watershed impacts associated with marijuana cultivation include increased sediment from roads, stream crossings and grading activities; dewatering salmon-bearing streams; and introduction of toxic pesticides and fertilizers.

These impacts still threaten watersheds large and small snaking through Humboldt. Associated issues related to the resource-intensive marijuana industry can have adverse impacts, from unsustainable energy use; non-biodegradable, re-usable, or recyclable packaging; and carbon emissions related to distribution and transportation.

CCA was designed to manage local financial compliance. Also, the purpose of CCA is to transition the cash-industry into a more formalized banking and financial industry. CCA was established by the California State Association of Counties’ Finance Corporation.

On April 1, 2020, one of the cannabis industry’s national newsletters www.mjbizdaily.com reported the need for data to provide to the marijuana banking industry. In 2019, the national cannabis industry paid 1.6 billion in taxes. Leafy.com estimates that, in 2019, California received $635 million in state and local cannabis tax revenue.

According to CCA, “Our purpose is to provide local jurisdictions with access to all cannabis data in one location so that cities and counties can have an accurate understanding of what commercial cannabis activity is happening in their jurisdiction.” CCA’s primary goals are to provide counties with both the tools and a consortium of local governments.

This newer JPA is led by Humboldt’s Second District Supervisor, Estelle Fennell, who is CCA’s first president. John Bartholomew, Humboldt County Treasurer-Tax Collector is the alternate for CCA.

CCA is a state-wide JPA with county government entities. CCA’s original two participating counties were Monterey County and San Luis Obispo County. Today, there are six.

California Cannabis Authority (CCA):

- Website: www.cca.ca.gov
- Email: Californiacannabisauthority@gmail.com
- Meetings & Agendas: cca.ca.gov/licensing-agencies/meetings-and-agendas
- Board Meetings: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., the fourth Friday of every month

During the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- Conference call: 916-407-1517 (no password is necessary)
- Video conference: uberconference.com/californiacannabisauthority

2020 Meeting Calendar:

- August 21
- September 25
- October 23
- November 20
- December 18
Get on Board for the Climate: Hope in the Time of Corona

Martha Walden, What Now Coalition

We climate activists have one-track minds. Just about every issue, activity and idea on earth can be boiled down in our brains to the essential component -- greenhouse gas emissions. Even in the midst of a pandemic we are thinking about emissions. Of course, we’re not the only people who wonder if the COVID disaster can somehow lead to solutions for the climate emergency.

There has been a lot of buzz about the appearance of blue skies in big cities that have been a hazy gray for decades. The cause of this miracle is simple -- a lot less industrial activity, driving and flying. Of course, blue skies are already dimming in places that have opened back up for business.

But the silver lining is that the abrupt drop in emissions has given scientists an unprecedented opportunity to precisely measure the impact of emissions on air quality and the atmosphere. Some of this data can serve as evidence when arguing for better air quality regulations to aid public health. The link between air pollution and mortality is more evident than ever now. The Coronavirus, for example, can dive deep into the heart and lungs by hitchhiking on fine particulates in the air. Republican Governor of Maryland, Larry Hogan, has used the new pollution data to promote policies such as telework and electric vehicles.

Despite the social and economic disruption of the pandemic, and the Republican-controlled Senate doing its best to torpedo clean energy, the world is on track in 2020 for record-breaking installations of wind, sun and battery power. Unfortunately, distributed solar energy installers have lost thousands of jobs in the U.S. However, big utility-scale solar installers are busier than ever. Eighteen new gigawatts of PV are due to come online this year.

The world is on track for record-breaking installations of renewable energy. Pexels Creative Commons.

Now I must conclude with a stern reminder that replacing fossil fuels is not a ticket to Utopia. All energy production exacts an environmental price, so please be conscious about how much energy you use. There are so many of these technologically up-to-date installations in the U.K. now that grid operators can seamlessly juggle the energy and keep it flowing to where it needs to go.

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The world is on track for record-breaking installations of renewable energy. Pexels Creative Commons.

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Snapshot HumCoast BioBlitz 2020: August 17 - 31

Suzie Fortner, Friends of the Dunes

Calling all beach-goers and nature-lovers! We need your eyes and your smart phones to gather observations for the Snapshot HumCoast BioBlitz taking place from August 17 - 31. A BioBlitz is a community science effort to collect and share data on plant and animal species within a defined area and time period. This effort is a collaboration of local organizations seeking to create a snapshot in time of species observed along the Humboldt County Coast. In order to do so safely while preventing further spread of COVID-19, the Snapshot HumCoast BioBlitz will be taking place over a 2-week period at any and all coastal locations in Humboldt County. Data will be collected using iNaturalist, a website and phone app that is user-friendly whether you are nature-curious or a knowledgeable naturalist. No expertise of local plant and animal species is required! iNaturalist can offer suggestions based on your photos and location. Once recorded, other users can confirm the species or offer an alternative identification.

Snapshot HumCoast is hosted locally by Friends of the Dunes, Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, Humboldt Baykeeper, and California State Park North Coast Redwoods. This local BioBlitz is part of the annual Snapshot Cal Coast, a statewide effort to record coastal biodiversity, put on by the California Academy of Sciences. To participate, download the iNaturalist app - then simply explore some coastal areas from August 17-31, taking photos of plants and animals along the way, and upload your observations to iNaturalist. Observations can also be added at a later time (when connected to wifi) or from a camera or computer if preferred. Keep an eye out on our social media and e-newsletters in early August for more information about this BioBlitz event and iNaturalist instructions.

House Passes Wilderness Bill as Amendment to National Defense Authorization Act

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation July 21 to protect public lands and rivers in California. The Protecting America’s Wilderness Act (PAW), combined Huffman’s “Wilderness, Recreation and Working Forests Act” with similar bills for other parts of California with a bill authored by Rep. Degette of Colorado to become the larger PAW Act. That Act was added as an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), seen by many as “must-pass” legislation that is more likely to be passed by the Senate and signed into law by the president. Locally, this would lead to the establishment of about 262,000 acres of wilderness in Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino and Trinity counties and the designation of 480 new miles of wild and scenic rivers. Collectively, amendments to the NDAA would establish nearly 1.5 million acres of new wilderness designations in California, Colorado and Washington.

Gregg Foster, Executive Director of Redwood Regional Economic Development Commission said, “Local economies in Northwest California benefit when people come to visit our spectacular, world-renowned public lands and rivers. I greatly appreciate and am excited to again celebrate House passage of this legislation that will protect and restore some of the region’s most cherished landscapes.”

Also added to the NDAA was the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act. The CORE Act amendment also includes a provision that would permanently ban new mining claims around the Grand Canyon National Park. House Republicans had also pushed an amendment that would have given the Air Force control over Desert National Wildlife Refuge lands in Nevada, but that amendment was ultimately pulled from the bill.

In addition to protecting public lands, the House bill also includes $1.5 billion for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, remediation on military installations and would require that the Department of Defense use the most stringent standards for cleanup.

President Trump has threatened to veto the bill for a number of reasons, one of which is a provision included in both the House and Senate bills that would require the renaming of military bases named after Confederate generals. If passed, it would require that bases be renamed within a year of passage. The Trump administration has called this an attempt to “erase” history. Another bone of contention for the White House is the inclusion of a provision which would require coordination between the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy for the National Nuclear Security Administration’s budget request. The differences between the House and Senate versions of the NDAA will need to be reconciled in a conference committee between the two chambers before it is sent to the President for signature.

Submission by Devi Genuone

I wanted to share these pictures of my Trash Crown series I am making out of trash I pick up & natural things I have found & broken jewelry.

For example, one is an old flip flop I found in the woods, another is a broken phone cable, and another is a broken piece from an earring. I like to mix nature and trash and waste together like this. I believe it makes a powerful statement.

We must stop throwing away our bits...to eventually the ocean. I thought making crowns out of these bits could be another answer to our garbage! Wake people up to our WASTE!
ZERO WASTE CROSSWORD

ACROSS
2. To extend the life of an item by using it repeatedly.
6. To make new products from used materials.
9. To fix something to extend its useful life.
10. The breakdown of matter by bacteria and fungi.
13. To carefully create something while thinking about the product’s impact on our environment.
14. To make less waste by using less stuff.

DOWN
1. The mineral that is mined and used to produce aluminum.
3. Reducing the use of new raw materials by using the whole of an old material for a new purpose and to give it more value.
4. Waste ____ : The act of preventing waste from being disposed into landfills and incinerators.
5. ____ Waste: Waste materials derived from living organisms (i.e. food and garden waste) which can be turned into compost.
7. An area of land designed to handle the disposal of solid waste.
8. A method for the destruction of waste by controlled burning at high temperatures.
12. ____ Waste: The philosophy of 10% or less of everything we use ending up in the landfill.

STUMPED? VISIT YOURNEC.ORG/AUGCROSSWORD FOR THE ANSWERS!

EcoNews  August 2020  www.yournec.org

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BY JOEL MIELKE
CARSON PARK DESIGN

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