HUMBOLDT MARTEN PROTECTED!

REDUCE SINGLE USE PLEDGE | COASTAL CLEANUP MONTH RECAP | CREATURE FEATURE: FRESHWATER ALGAE
RECYCLING CONCERNS | TRINIDAD TREESITTER UPDATE | END OF BILLBOARD BLIGHT IN SIGHT
Sometimes during the last two decades climate scientists warned that a tipping point would be reached when carbon emissions passed 400ppm. It’s now been above that level for more than two years, and we’re entering into the point of no return. We’re seeing large numbers of hurricanes in the Atlantic, extended record-breaking heat waves on the west coast, and now extreme wildfire conditions with unseasonable high winds and low humidities. All of these disastrous outcomes are what you would predict as the climate destabilizes.

Here in Northwest California, we now find ourselves on the front lines of an episode of “extreme” wildfire. We say “extreme” to differentiate these events from common wildfires which can, in many cases, have beneficial results. Extreme wildfires are outside the normal fire regimes that the forests and grasslands need as part of their ecological function. These fires can be so intense that rather than being potentially beneficial, they incinerate everything in their path. This is not what we mean when we say we want to bring “natural” fire back to the forest. A natural fire burns with varying degrees of intensity, creating a mosaic on the landscape which removes the ground fuels and brush, and in some cases entire groups of trees. This is the type of fire that has been suppressed since colonization, and it has created the extremely unnatural and volatile conditions in our forests. In fact, many of our forests were actually oak woodlands and prairie before fire suppression created the great conifer invasion. Fires must be a consideration in every aspect of forest management.

The Northcoast Environmental Center has joined with Humboldt Alliance for Responsible Planning (HARP) in filing an appeal with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the lead agency for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in regards to the proposed five-story hotel amongst other developments on the Trinidad Rancheria. The NEC provided thorough comments in the scoping process and joined with HARP in submitting extensive and exhaustive input after the BIA issued its draft Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Those extensive comments were submitted by Greenfire, a well-known California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and NEPA expert law firm.

Now the BIA has issued a final FONSI based on a weak and inadequate environmental assessment. Our contention has always been that only a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would satisfactorily reveal the many environmental impacts wrought by this development. The document improperly segments issues on a piecemeal basis to completely avoid considering the many effects of these foreseeable aspects of their entire development project. When the BIA approved this FONSI it failed to discuss or adequately discuss required issues. This decision is not supported by the Administrative Record, nor does it satisfy the “rule of reason”. The required procedures were not adhered to in making necessary documents available for the public to review. The NEC wants a full and complete environmental review of all activities connected to this project so that the public can adequately weigh the impacts and reach an informed decision.

Back “at the office”, the NEC Coastal Programs Coordinator, Casey Cruikshank has hosted another incredible Coastal Cleanup “Day” this year! Though there were many alterations to the original style of the event, and despite delays due to poor air quality, the community adjusted to these changes in stride. We had a fun, rewarding month of community-focused cleanups and citizen science data collection! We want to once again thank all of our participants and sponsors who made this year’s Coastal Cleanup Day successful. We will provide details about the winners of each prize in next month’s EcoNews!
News from the Center
Continued from prior page

While Coastal Cleanup Day is one of the tactics the NEC utilizes to bring awareness to reducing single-use plastics, we are constantly striving to find more ways to encourage changing this behavior. Our very own Administrative Assistant and Outreach Coordinator, Chelsea Pulliam, has been working to develop a “Reduce Single-Use” pledge to be adopted by local restaurants. Often the default for restaurants is to provide single-use utensils, napkins, condiments, etc. without asking. This pledge campaign would shift the default to only providing these accessories upon customer request. Since COVID-19 shelter-in-place rules have been in effect, most to-go orders are being eaten at people’s homes where they already have utensils, napkins, and condiments. Hence, providing all of those accessories is redundant and wasteful. Learn more at www.yournec.org/pledge.

Want to join the “Reuse Revolution” and take your sustainability practices a step further? Check out Zero Waste Humboldt’s webinar trainings at zerowastehumboldt.org/workshops/

In addition to business as usual, the staff has been representing the NEC at meetings on local environmental topics. We feel that it is essential to be informed on all the items, issues, projects, proposals, and changes that are happening so that we can keep our members and followers up to date. Despite COVID-19 slowing many parts of our lives down, there are still many actions to take, and much to be engaged in. With staff participating in topics such as forest management, oceans and Humboldt Bay, energy, rivers, and transportation, there will be plenty of information to share. Please keep a look out for action alerts and EcoNews Roundup Reports, as well as social media posts which will contain much of the information we encounter!
To the EcoNews Editor,

I was pleased to find a couple of articles in the September edition profiling young, dynamic, hard-working women. Amber Jamieson and Regina Chichizola are among a bevy of younger women and men moving into leadership positions within Northcoast environmental groups and tribal governments. It has not always been easy, especially for the women.

The younger leadership within environmental and tribal communities has already made important contributions as part of the movement to protect and restore the forests, watersheds, fisheries and wildlife of the Klamath Mountains and North Coast Ranges. I expect in the years ahead they will do even more; learning from the mistakes I and my generation made. Perhaps they can heal some of the longstanding divisions that weaken us and restore the clean water that should be every human’s birthright.

These young leaders give me hope for the future. We need to find ways to support and encourage them. I’m glad EcoNews is doing its part.

Felice Pace, Age 73

Jaime Carlino

I have been enthralled with animals since I was a young girl. Birds caught my eye before I was old enough to grasp how special they are. Because of my fascination with birds, I obtained an undergraduate degree in Wildlife Management and Conservation and am now pursuing a graduate degree in Natural Resources (Wildlife) at Humboldt State University. As I’ve matured, it has become apparent how poorly people understand and value our relationship with wildlife. My ultimate goal is to dispel the imaginary gap between humans and the environment. Hatching HUM-RATS in 2019 was inspired by my passion for birds, specifically raptors, and my desire to effect positive change for wildlife in and beyond Humboldt County.

Rodenticide use is pervasive world-wide and its costs to rodent-consuming wildlife species, as well as pets and children are high. HUM-RATS is educating people about the dangers of rat poison in the food web, as well as the ecological role of raptors. We work to provide people with non-toxic alternatives to rodenticides. We also work to eliminate toxic rodenticides in our community to prevent further poisonings of wildlife, children, and pets. My passion for birds and wildlife conservation keeps me motivated to do this work. I am also driven by our success stories - people who have decided to no longer use poisons after being equipped with the knowledge and tools to do so.

Jaime holding an owl fitted with a GPS tag as part of ongoing research efforts on Barn Owls in Napa Valley’s wine grape vineyards.

Mindful Mondays

A selection of some recent Mindful Monday Posts:

Lung Health
September 14 - These past weeks we have been experiencing smoke drift from the many California and Oregon fires in our neighboring communities. How are you staying well during this time? Do you have an air filter in your home? A special herbal tea?

Rest is Resistance
September 7 - Rest is a radical form of resistance. Enough said. “We believe rest is a form of resistance and name sleep deprivation as a racial and social justice issue.” – The Nap Ministry

Ecology of Perception
August 31 - “It seems to me that falling in love outward with the more-than-human earth is the deepest medicine for this, because if there’s anything that the local earth wherever you live teaches, it’s the need for diversity, the need for the whole, weird multiplicity of shapes of life and styles of sentience—all of them shaped so differently from you and from one another—to be interacting with one another in order for the land to be strong, to be healthy, to be resilient.” – The Ecology of Perception, David Abram

Fire’s Constructive Energy
August 24 - As fires rage across our state we are reminded of how fire works to destroy and consume everything around it. Today we’re asking you to hold space for the constructive energy of fire, as it creates space and fodder for new life to spring from the ashes. Indigenous peoples from around the globe have lived with this instrumental knowledge of fire for thousands of years. Finding the balance of creation and destruction, working with fire for the purposes of sustaining both Land and People.

Meditative Cleanups
August 3 - Cleaning up your neighborhood, favorite trail, campsite, or beach is not only good for the planet, it’s good for your mental health too. During a time when we may feel disconnected from our wider community, we can engage with our local spaces in an act and show of solidarity by cleaning up. This means we care about ourselves. Even just picking up a few pieces of trash here and there boosts our confidence, bolsters our feelings of worthiness and reminds us that we have agency in the movement toward a cleaner, healthier planet.
Dear EcoNews,

I’ve heard that a decentralized household energy system can help cities be more efficient and resilient than using the huge for-profit power plants & transmission lines that are so common. How exactly would something like that work? How can I talk to my city about transitioning away from "the grid"?

Sincerely,
Energy Independent

Dear EcoNews Independent,

EcoNews asked Redwood Coast Energy Authority to provide a response to your questions. Here’s a joint perspective from RCEA’s Richard Engel, who oversees the Community Choice Energy program to supply clean and renewable electricity, and Stephen Kullmann, who runs RCEA’s energy efficiency programs:

There is a lot to be said for meeting our resource needs through small, decentralized systems, and RCEA supports this with our net energy metering program that pays people for surplus energy they generate with rooftop solar and other household-scale, grid-connected renewable energy systems. RCEA is also preparing to enter a partnership to make energy storage systems available for homes and businesses. As you say, such decentralized systems can be efficient and provide resiliency by keeping the lights on when central grid power becomes unavailable – something we have seen more of in recent years, for a number of reasons.

However, a centralized grid does offer some important benefits. Watt for watt, a few large utility-scale solar and wind projects can provide power at a fraction of the cost of hundreds or thousands of rooftop systems, which often require costly custom design and configuration for each location. And consider the fact that the sun is always shining somewhere, the wind is always blowing somewhere, but not necessarily here when you need the energy. A regional transmission network provides the means to move energy from these intermittent resources over long distances, providing greater reliability for all energy users as an ever larger fraction of our power comes from renewable resources. For these reasons, RCEA sources most of the power for Community Choice Energy from larger, centralized renewable and carbon-free power projects.

In addition to supply-side solutions (where we get our energy), it’s important to address demand-side solutions (how we use that energy), and this is where you as an energy user have the most power to make change. While centralized energy production has economy of scale advantages over smaller, decentralized generation, eliminating the need to produce the energy in the first place is the most cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution overall.

There are both technological and behavioral solutions to reducing energy needs, and these can happen at both the individual and societal level. An example of a behavioral decision on the societal level is on how much street lighting is needed and when. Technological solutions can include choosing the most efficient types of street lighting and installing smart controls. There are also many technological upgrades possible for our distribution grid, which can reduce the need for new generation. On an individual level, technological solutions involve choosing more efficient lighting and appliances, while behavioral solutions include turning off lights when not in use and making choices to dry clothes outside instead of a dryer. RCEA has long offered programs to assist Humboldt County residents and businesses make energy saving choices, and we will be rolling out some new ones soon.

Through its Community Choice Energy and demand-side management programs, RCEA has taken on the challenging task of providing energy solutions that are affordable, efficient, reliable, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental impacts. Our analysis shows this is best done through a combination of centralized and home-scale strategies.

Please have a look at our RePower Humboldt strategic plan, updated in 2019 through extensive public input, which details the many measures we are now working to implement in Humboldt County. Please let your city leaders know which of these strategies are most important to you!

While we do not recommend an elimination of the grid or centralized energy production, there is much that can be done to increase its efficiency and resiliency, including the promotion of distributed generation. And everything we can do individually and collectively to reduce our energy consumption is the most cost-effective and efficient way to reduce greenhouse gases and the need to produce and move electrons through the grid.

Sincerely,
-Richard Engel, Director of Power Resources
-Stephen Kullmann, Director of Demand Side Management

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THE ECONWS REPORT

A selection of some recent EcoNews Reports:

Interpreting the Parks
September 21 – hear from California State Parks, North Coast Redwoods District staff about their interpretive programs, how they are working to tell unique stories, uplift diverse voices, and how use of digital technology has increased access to learning about these incredible public lands.

It’s Coastal Cleanup … Month?
September 12 – Casey Cruishank, Coastal Programs Coordinator for the Northcoast Environmental Center, talks with us about Coastal Cleanup Day’s month long activities.

Building Cities for People, Not Cars
September 5 – Three major phenomena are shaping the future of the transportation system in Humboldt County and nationwide: climate chaos, autonomous vehicles, and the road safety crisis. A new report from the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities documents local transportation issues and identifies specific actions local governments should be taking.

‘Dog Ranch’ Dunes Saved from Development
August 22 – Guest Mike Cipra of Friends of the Dunes, a local conservation organization, discusses how FOTD is in the process of acquiring the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Property (a.k.a. the Dog Ranch and Poovey Tract). The 357-acre property is scheduled to be purchased from Security National this fall.

How to Become a Community Scientist with iNaturalist
August 16 – Michelle Kunst of the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust talks about the Snapshot Hum Coast BioBlitz 2020 project and how you can use the iNaturalist app to gather observations for this “bioblitz” community science effort.

ROUND-UP SHOW! Billboards, Birdwatching and the Trump Administration’s Attack on Federal Environmental Laws
August 8 – A lightning round on various environmental developments around the region and around the world. Eel River dam removal, billboards and more!

KHUM 104.3 SAT @ 10AM

Thanks to KHUM & Lost Coast Outpost!
Casey’s Community Coastal Column

COASTAL CLEANUP DAY RECAP

Coastal Cleanup Day 2020 flyer. Thank you to Mir De Silva for the beautiful original whale artwork!

Dream team LeeAnn Mozeak (right), Zahara Fayth Mozeak (left) and loyal pup Sasha pose during their family Coastal Cleanup Day excursion. Photo by Megan Bunday.

Markay Everett and Bryon Duty stand near their trash bounty at Samoa Beach. Photo by Megan Bunday.

Data collection from a Coastal Cleanup Day volunteer using the NOAA Marine Debris Tracker app.

Casey Cruikshank and Bryon Duty work on debris removal at Samoa Beach. Photo by Megan Bunday.

Casey Cruikshank
Coastal Programs Coordinator

This year, Coastal Cleanup Day has been a success. Despite the many challenges that 2020 has brought us, our dedicated volunteers persevered. As a cleanup volunteer myself, participating every Saturday felt good for the mind and body. We had an assortment of prizes, donated and purchased from local businesses, that were raffled off to participants and a lot of photos were submitted through our data reporting form.

Due to the nature of EcoNews production this article was written before the event is over which means there are still results coming in and the breakdown of the data will come in the November edition. Without our dedicated volunteers and local sponsors, this event would not be possible. Thank you to each and every one of you who took the time to participate in Coastal Cleanup Day. Thank you to our sponsors: Eureka Natural Foods, Pierson Building Center, Edward Jones Investments, The Heart of Humboldt, Coast Central Credit Union, Humboldt Cider Co., Sierra Club, Recology, HWMA, Visual Concepts, Pen & Pine, Plaza: Be Inspired, Humboldt Distillery and Adventures Edge.

I would like to give a special thank you to Eureka Natural Foods (ENF) for making us the recipient for the Change4Change program in September. Thanks to the very generous fundraiser donation match from Rick Littlefield and his wife Betty Littlefield, ENF raised $4,000! As a frequent shopper at ENF, I witnessed great marketing for the fundraiser in the store, the cashiers asking every customer all week long and all of the hard work from the ENF team to make this such a successful fundraiser. Thank you to the entire ENF team, the NEC is extremely grateful!

Though there were many changes that needed to be made to host Coastal Cleanup Day this year, I am ending September with a feeling of accomplishment, hope and resiliency. Even though these changes were introduced during a time of fear and challenge, hosting a month-long event is more in line with our mission and our community showed us solidarity even in the darkest of times. Through pandemics and wildfires, we persevere with a collective goal of caring for the environment. If you missed the opportunity to participate in Coastal Cleanup Day, the NEC has coastal cleanup opportunities year round. Email me at casey@yournec.org to learn about how to get involved.

THANK YOU!
Casey’s Community Coastal Column

Thank you to our sponsors

$4,000 check from Eureka Natural Foods from their Coastal Cleanup Day Change 4 Change fundraiser.

Many Thanks to our Cleanup Teams!

- Alix De Gravelle
- Aubrey Lloyd
- Bandana Ghimire
- Barnacle Broad Ford
- Cassidy Lloyd
- Chad Lloyd
- Coastal Litter Getters
- Coral Reefer
- Dawn Nystrom
- Debbie Williams
- FishRfriends Ford
- Garbage Patch Kids
- Jennifer Lloyd
- Kez Wang
- Klara Hernandez
- Lenny-lyn Vuelta
- Luckyfin Ford
- Mirek Veach
- Mishu Kopiej
- Pamela Nance Lee
- Pod 352 Freedlund
- Robin Praszker
- Sara Goodwin
- Team 124 Redwood Rangers
- Team MRC
- Team NEC
- Team Rowers Unite!
- Team Sandy Clams
- The Heart of Humboldt
- Tim Howard
- Wave Savers

Glen Everett stands with the largest find of the day, the end of a picnic table! Photo by Megan Bunday.

Stan Binnie pulls apart an abandoned and broken down mattress found at Redwood Creek. Photo by Kim Tays.

$4,000 check from Eureka Natural Foods from their Coastal Cleanup Day Change 4 Change fundraiser.
History Lesson: How 40-Year Old EcoNews Articles Inspired a Master’s Thesis on the Green New Deal

Saul Levin is a climate activist focused on racial, economic, and environmental justice. He studied Environmental Planning at Harvard and Environmental Studies at the University of Chicago.

Saul is interviewed by NEC Board Member and former member of the Emerald Creek Committee, Dan Sealy.

Saul, How did you make the connection between the current Green New Deal and the efforts of the NEC and Emerald Creek Committee (ECC) in support of the 1978 Redwood National Park Expansion Act?

I have always been interested in the redwoods, but I am especially interested in developing a socially "just transition" to support the current workforce which is linked to fossil fuel extraction on public lands as we move towards the pro-environment, conservation jobs embraced in the Green New Deal. When searching for positive examples of that kind of transition in the United States, I was directed to "what happened in the Redwoods" and was fascinated to learn that the Redwood Employment Protection Plan (REPP) which was included with the Redwood National Park Expansion Act is a tremendous, and in some ways the most complete, example of extractive industry workers receiving enough compensation and benefits that they eventually advocated changing jobs.

You and I met while I was bartending at a Northcoast Environmental Center Open House in Arcata. How did you make the connection to the NEC and the infamous Emerald Creek Committee?

When I was in Arcata looking for further resources on the expansion legislation, I found the NEC website. I felt it might be deeply connected to this story and found in the Resources tab EcoNews issues going back almost 50 years could be accessed onsite. I decided to just go to the NEC personally and other places like EPIC and see if I could meet people who were involved and look at archives. The warm NEC staff readily offered me an opportunity to look at all the back-issues of EcoNews, which was perfect. The invitation to the Board mixer was a big bonus – I met you guys and got a feel for your community!

Who are some of the people you interviewed that are, or were, connected to NEC and ECC and what did they provide you?

NEC’s second Executive Director, John Amodio, told me about his and others’ work on the political side in Sacramento and Washington, DC. Steve Madrone and you told me about the adventures in Emerald Creek watershed with HSU Professor Rudi Becking and other ECC folks to document the forest ecosystem destruction and designation of cultural tribal sites. Suzanne Guerra, who worked with ECC and NEC, gave me details about archives that would help, and Tom Wheeler of EPIC told me about the lawsuits and history of the region. There were others, of course, including faculty at HSU, members of the Yurok tribe, and on the organized labor side. Park Service staff gave me essential information about the restoration work that followed the expansion bill. People were friendly and helpful even when I walked into places without warning.

What is a big take-home from all your work that we can learn from?

First, building coalitions outside of your first priority is critical and can be done. I was inspired by the class consciousness of your organizing and the environmental focus of unions such as the International Woodworkers of America. Some of those unions knew there were not many years left of traditional redwood logging and their jobs were contingent on the survival of the forests. Second, we can learn from the Redwoods that what is needed and possible is to develop a dignified path away from the fossil fuel industry that is most preferable. That means significant wage replacement, a bridge to retirement, benefits during that time, and options for retraining and relocation money where relevant. Then, just as was done in the Redwoods, a low-carbon economy needs to be built employing the skills that industry workers still have so at least some can work in the area.

It has been a pleasure to work with you, Saul. Tell us more about your work.

There are three points I would like to emphasize about what this project adds. First, the role of you and other activists in driving this process was obviously fundamental, but has been frequently overlooked by historical accounts – I tried to remedy that, including it because it serves as inspiration to climate activists today. Second, I highlight the political process that made this outcome possible, which relied on immense skill and courage from a huge range of advocates. Among them were lawyers who both successfully defended the benefits of REPP recipients, and proved that claims of fraud and overuse of benefits were ill-founded and played up by conservatives and moderates unhappy with the outcome. Third, I highlight the complex and central role of Indigenous people in this story, which is often glossed over or ignored by historical accounts – I tried to remedy that, including their role. I also highlight the central role of unions such as the International Woodworkers of America. Some of those unions knew there were not many years left of traditional redwood logging and their jobs were contingent on the survival of the forests. Second, we can learn from the Redwoods that what is needed and possible is to develop a dignified path away from the fossil fuel industry that is most preferable. That means significant wage replacement, a bridge to retirement, benefits during that time, and options for retraining and relocation money where relevant. Then, just as was done in the Redwoods, a low-carbon economy needs to be built employing the skills that industry workers still have so at least some can work in the area.

Saul Levin is a senior climate advisor in the office of Congresswoman Deb Haaland.

(On the next page you can see one of the archive articles Saul found and referenced for his thesis.)
BIG YEAR FOR REDWOOD NATIONAL PARK

In early August, HR 3813, now known as the Burton bill, cleared the House interior committee by voice vote. Senator Alan Cranston introduced the Carter administration's bill, S 1976, after concluding that there was no ecologically sound way to reduce the expansion area below 48,000 acres.

This fall, S 1976 passed out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee on a strong bipartisan vote, 15-2. The Burton bill cleared the House Appropriations Committee in September.

After days of effort to move the House bill through the Rules Committee, it became obvious that a hitch had developed. According to newspaper accounts, AFL-CIO head George Meany had asked House Speaker Tip O'Neil to kill the redwood legislation. O'Neill agreed as "a favor" not to schedule it until 1978.

In the meantime the State Board of Forestry has begun denying selected timber harvest plans in the proposed expansion area. This "partial moratorium" remains in effect today pending congressional action. Several other THPs have been halted by water quality regulations. However, the eleven plans currently held up comprise fewer than one-quarter of the THPs filed by the companies with Burton's original 77,500-acre proposal.

THIS MONTH IS CRITICAL

Both House Speaker O'Neil and Senate Majority Leader Byrd have announced that the legislation will receive top priority in January, making early passage probable but by no means assured.

Pressure on Congress should be increased to assure passage of these bills. At the same time, timber company proposals to increase the allowable cut on neighboring national forests via amendments to the park legislation must be defeated.

As many as four people have lobbied in Washington for park legislation during congressional sessions. Their compensation is little compared to the $135 per hour salary being paid to at least one timber industry lobbyist.

Yet there has been no substitute for a knowledgeable person from Humboldt County in Washington, ready to provide data and guidance to both congresspersons and sympathetic environmental groups. In order to keep it up, at least $1,500 must be raised for transportation and subsistence for the next two months.

John Amodio, with over six months of lobbying experience under his belt, has volunteered to leave home again for the final push. Please help pay John's way with a donation to the Emerald Creek Committee, P. O. Box 4133, Arcata, Ca. 95521.

Hiking in the redwoods
Hear the birds sing
Leaves rustling under
Our tired feet

Flowers bloom
Warm, sweet berries
Stain our tongues
Sorrel tastes lemons in our mouths

The blue stream gurgles
The ferns make a canopy
Dry leaves crackle and crunch
Twigs snap and crack

Raindrops speckle my glasses
We hurry home, racing the rain
Afterwards, in the car,
Reading my book,
I think of the woods

Always there for me
Protecting me
Singing and talking
Just like one of us

But better.
The 43rd Annual EPIC ‘Virtual’ Fall Celebration: Bringing The Wild To You

Rhiannon Lewis-Stephenson, Communications & Development Coordinator

On behalf of the staff and board of EPIC, you are cordially invited to the 43rd Annual EPIC ‘Virtual’ Fall Celebration starting at 6pm on Friday, November 6th, 2020 on Zoom. Despite not getting to see your lovely faces in person, we are certainly looking forward to this event! We will be featuring a wonderful online schedule, complete with break-out happy hour groups, live music, catered meals, and a great silent auction. Please join us this November 6th!

Sempervirens Award Ceremony
Honoring Eileen Cooper

EPIC will be awarding the Sempervirens Lifetime Achievement Award to Eileen Cooper. Eileen is a fighter: for peace, for the common person, and for the environment. Through her decades-long work to save wild places and spaces, she has made her little corner of California a better place.

Musical Performances by
Joanne Rand & Casey Neill

We are excited to have two longtime EPIC favorites performing live during our Zoom event. We look forward to hearing some beautiful acoustic sets from Joanne Rand and Casey Neill.

Guest Speaker: Rep. Jared Huffman

Our event will be the weekend after the big upcoming presidential election. We are sure that no matter what the outcome, Representative Jared Huffman will have a lot to say. Find out what the next Congress has in store, details of the Green New Deal, and more!

Silent Auction

We will have an exceptional online array of beautiful arts, crafts, locally made products, experiences, and getaways that will make perfect gifts for your friends and family.

Catered Dinner Options

We will be expecting to offer two different and delicious catered dinner options featuring local and organic ingredients for pick-up in both the Southern Humboldt area and in Northern Humboldt (reservations made in advance). More details coming soon!

Donations and Sponsorships

If you are an entrepreneur, consider sponsoring the event! A sponsorship costs $300 and includes a feature in EPIC’s 10k member newsletter, website, social media, and provides a charitable tax-deduction for your business. If you would like to donate an item for the silent auction, we will promote your items online and at the event. For inquiries into either of these options, please contact rhiannon@wildcalifornia.org.

Stay tuned for more information. We can’t wait to see you on the Wild Web! - Amber, Rhiannon, Tom & Kimberly.

Victory! Old-Growth Redwood Saved from Caltrans Project

Josefina Barrantes, EPIC Intern

In response to EPIC’s blog post about an old-growth redwood at risk of removal through a Caltrans project, Caltrans has reached out and decided to modify its project plan to be more mindful of the environment in the surrounding area of the proposed project. Before this intervention, its project titled “HUM-36 Three Bridges Project” was set to rebuild a bridge that went over Hely Creek at Van Duzen County Park.

The original plans for the Hely Creek bridge would have negatively altered a half-acre of the forest, a six-foot-wide old-growth redwood, other large trees along with their root systems, as well as pruning sacred old-growth redwoods. We are pleased to announce that the liaison between Caltrans and EPIC has informed us that it will now be cutting the previous eight-foot shoulder down to a four-foot shoulder on the new bridge to preserve the lives of several large trees including the six-foot-wide old-growth redwood.

In addition to this, their plans that previously would have impacted the root zones of another large redwood tree have been altered so that a temporary access road will not be intruding on them. In response to stakeholder input, Caltrans has modified its project of replacing a 93-year-old bridge on State Route 36 so that it is accessible to standard California legal trucks, without harming our first line of defense against climate change – old-growth trees. Thank you to all who submitted comments on behalf of preserving this incredible redwood!

- Stay Connected -
www.wildcalifornia.org
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IG @epic_wildcalifornia
Tom Wheeler, EPIC

After 10 years, two lawsuits, and many new gray hairs, it finally happened. In September, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed the Humboldt marten as “threatened” under the Endangered Species Act. Now our favorite furball is protected by the most effective environmental law on the planet.

The Humboldt marten is a slinky little fuzzball about the size of a cat that lives in the old-growth coastal forests of Oregon and California. A history of overtrapping and habitat destruction has nearly wiped out the species. The marten is so rare that scientists once thought they were extinct. In 1996, researchers rediscovered a population on Six Rivers National Forest. Now there are 4 recognized populations, each small and isolated from each other. In 2010 EPIC filed a petition to list the species under the Endangered Species Act because of the precariously small populations and the host of threats—from clearcuts that increase predation of martens by bobcats to rodenticide from trespass cannabis grows on public land.

While this is a moment for celebration, our joy is tempered by efforts already made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to defang the teeth of this listing decision for the biggest private landowner in the range of the Humboldt marten. To understand the chicanery, you need a brief understanding of the inner workings of the Endangered Species Act. Under the Act, a species can either be listed as “threatened” or “endangered.” (Generally endangered species are worse off than threatened species, although there is no clear dividing line.) Endangered species receive the full suite of protections afforded by the law as a default. Threatened species, by contrast, have historically received the same protections as a matter of policy, although this is not guaranteed by the law itself. Protections for threatened species can be reduced through what are called 4(d) “special rules.”

In listing the Humboldt marten, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a special rule that exempted individuals or corporations who have obtained a state-issued “Safe Harbor Agreement.” While seemingly ambiguous, this was a sweetheart deal written for one entity: Green Diamond, who received a Safe Harbor Agreement from California in 2019. Because of this special rule, Green Diamond is not subject to the Act’s prohibition on “taking,” meaning that Green Diamond’s forestry can kill an unlimited number of martens so long as Green Diamond meets the terms of their state permit—which ain’t much!

As part of EPIC’s full court press defense for the marten, we are challenging that state-issued Safe Harbor Agreement in Humboldt County Superior Court. And EPIC feels good about its chances. Documents obtained through a Public Records Act request have shown that agency scientists at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife were overridden by their superiors in issuing the permit. If EPIC can strike down the state permit, Green Diamond won’t get special treatment under the federal Endangered Species Act.

What’s next for the marten? After ensuring that it will enjoy the full protections of the Endangered Species Act, it is on to protecting habitat corridors in between remaining blocks of high-quality marten habitat. Currently, California’s martens are marooned in land managed by Six Rivers National Forest. To ensure the longterm survival of the species, we need to link populations together and encourage the development of new, successful populations on other well-suited lands, like the Redwood State and National Park system along the coast.
End of Billboard Blight in Sight?

Jennifer Kalt, Director

Since 2010, 18 billboards along Humboldt Bay have been removed through hard work and advocacy by Keep Eureka Beautiful, Sierra Club, Humboldt Bay Billboard Bye Bye, Humboldt Baykeeper, the City of Arcata, and many others. And on September 15, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors voted 3-2 to approve a limited 5-year permit to rebuild a billboard that fell into the Elk River wetlands along Highway 101 last November – after which it must be removed. Supervisors Wilson and Madrone agreed with the Planning Commission, which denied the permit in May. However, Supervisors Bohn and Fennell supported approving a new permit that would grant the landowner a “vested right,” which doesn’t exist today, since billboards are not allowed except on commercial and industrial lands.

Left in the “miserable middle,” as she calls it, Supervisor Bass pressed for a limited term for the billboard and called for a plan to remove billboards from coastal wetlands and scenic open space. The board eventually settled on 5 years, requiring removal at the end of the term. The landowner still needs Coastal Commission approval before rebuilding this sign.

The Campaign Against Billboard Blight

In 1965, the Highway Beautification Act limited billboards to commercial and industrial lands, and many counties and states eliminated billboards from open space soon after. In Humboldt County, people have opposed billboard blight for decades, fighting over them one at a time.

In 2010, Baykeeper launched its campaign against billboards built in coastal wetlands along Humboldt Bay. Our goals were to clear the way for the Bay Trail and to restore scenic views along Highway 101 between Arcata and Eureka. Many of these billboards were on public lands, but a myriad of barriers prevented their removal despite having no landowner permission. Other billboards were on private property, but violated highway safety laws, local zoning ordinances, and the Public Trust Doctrine.

Lax Enforcement of Billboard Regulations

Our research revealed a tangled web of regulations – most of which were not being enforced. The biggest obstacle to removing billboards turned out to be the failure of the CalTrans Outdoor Advertising Agency to enforce the California Outdoor Advertising Act. Once we shifted our focus, we began to have real success (see A History of Humboldt Bay Area Billboards Removed Since 2012.)

Victory at the Coastal Commission

In 2013, CalTrans applied for Coastal Commission approval of the 101 Safety Corridor Project, a plan to build an overpass at Indianola Cutoff. The Humboldt Bay Trail was still a 20-year old dream, and more than 20 billboards blocked scenic views of the bay. In response to public outcry, the Coastal Commission approved the project with caveats: the Bay Trail must be built, and the billboards must be removed to mitigate the scenic impacts of the overpass on former bay wetlands. Local Caltrans staff finally took an interest in the Sacramento-based Outdoor Advertising Agency’s lax enforcement of billboard regulations.

Comprehensive Plan to Eliminate Billboards in Coastal Wetlands and Scenic Areas

County residents have long demanded an end to billboard blight. The 1984 General Plan called for a study that would regulate billboards along scenic routes, but the study was never done. The 2017 General Plan includes several policies regulating billboards, but those policies have not been implemented.

At the September 15 hearing, Supervisor Bass argued for “a comprehensive plan” to remove the remaining old “nonconforming” billboards rather than fighting over them one at a time. We look forward to working to ensure that this long-overdue plan comes to fruition. We will keep you informed of opportunities to express your views. To join our email list, send a message to alerts@humboldtbaykeeper.org.

A History of Humboldt Bay Area Billboards Removed Since 2012

1. These two billboards were removed in 2014 from property CalTrans bought for wetland mitigation in 2006.
2. These two billboards are on private land.
3. These five billboards were on public lands without landowner consent, and occupied those lands without payment for more than a decade. In 2015, the City of Arcata requested removal to make way for the Bay Trail. The northernmost sign was destroyed in a car accident in 2015 and was not rebuilt. The other four were removed as part of a settlement between CalTrans and Outfront Media.
4. These two billboards on public lands were cut down in the dark of night in January 2014. They were not rebuilt when Outfront Media could not provide evidence of landowner consent.
5. These four billboards on private property were removed as part of a settlement between CalTrans and Outfront Media.
6. This billboard fell down in a storm in Dec. 2012 and was not rebuilt, since billboards are not allowed on agricultural land.
7. These four billboards on private property are slated to be purchased by the County for the Bay Trail. One received a notice of violation for repair and maintenance without a permit, and fell down in Nov. 2019 due to lack of maintenance. It was not rebuilt and its permit was revoked.
8. These three billboards were on public land without landowner consent, and occupied those lands without payment for over a decade. Keep Eureka Beautiful and North Coast Rail Authority advocated for removal for years. CalTrans revoked the permits in 2014, and the signs were removed in 2015.
neighborhoods on their way through cities and towns. This—among many other consequences—enabled dollars to build massive networks of auto-only highways, financially, and were eventually scrapped. By the 1950s, (including one in Eureka) were undermined legally and who were to blame for their own demise. Streetcar systems from innocent victims into ignorant rubes or “jaywalkers” efforts, they transformed American streets and geography. Through their legislative, economic and public relations efforts, they transformed American streets and roads from public spaces open to anyone into “motorways” that were meant only for cars. Pedestrians killed by speeding cars—including many children—were converted from innocent victims into ignorant rubes or “jaywalkers” who were to blame for their own demise. Streetcar systems (including one in Eureka) were undermined legally and financially, and were eventually scrapped. By the 1950s, federal and state governments were spending billions of dollars to build massive networks of auto-only highways which—among many other consequences—enabled the rise of the suburbs and destroyed thriving Black neighborhoods on their way through cities and towns. This story is told in fascinating and troubling detail in Peter Norton’s Fighting Traffic and other historical accounts.

Evening Programs
October 14, Wednesday, 7:00 p.m. “Beauty and the Beast: California Wildflowers and Climate Change.” Professional conservation photographers Rob Badger and Nita Winter present their story of falling in love with California’s spectacular wildflower blooms and how they have applied creative photography and artist’s patience in converting it to an award-winning book and exhibit. Register for this Zoom event on our website.

Field trips
State CNPS still requests that we not schedule field trips. Enjoy a mid-October drive on the Titlow Hill Road-Friday Ridge Road-299 loop to see fall colors of Big-leaf Maple. Watch for the great assortment of fruits in our brushy thickets. Test yourself on recognizing plants by their seed pods or fruits. The seeds within are the ultimate reason for the flowers we love.

Garden Diversity for Your Health
by Carol Ralph
A book about the uninvited life that inhabits our homes seems an unlikely place to find the message to plant a diverse, native garden. As recounted in Never Home Alone diversity is the main theme that has emerged from the decades-long, varied work of microbiologist Rob Dunn and his diverse colleagues. One of the fascinating stories in his book is about a study in Finland that tested teens for allergies by measuring their IgE antibodies, documented their bacterial flora using DNA analysis of samples from their forearms, and characterized their homes by counting the number of kinds of non-native plants, native plants, and rare native plants in their backyards.

The researchers found that teens living with higher diversity of rare plants had different bacteria, a greater diversity of bacteria, and a reduced risk of allergies compared to the other teens. This summary does not explain why they distinguished rare from common plants for this study, but the very complete notes reference the original publication so the reader can follow up such questions. A diverse, native garden can make you feel good in more ways than one!

Missed the Plant Sale?
Do not despair! Our native plants are available every day, 12-6 p.m., at the Kneeland Glen Farm Stand at Freshwater Farms Reserve, 5851 Myrtle Ave. If you don’t see what you want, contact us at northcoastcnps@gmail.com.

Stay Updated:
www.northcoastcnps.org facebook.com/NorthCoastCNPS
CNPS welcomes anyone interested in native plants to join our events. No expertise required.

The Future of Transportation and Communities in Humboldt

Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities

Colin Fiske, Executive Director

In the early twentieth century, a coalition of “automotive interests” consisting mainly of car manufacturers and driving clubs dramatically re-shaped American culture and geography. Through their legislative, economic and public relations efforts, they transformed American streets and roads from public spaces open to anyone into “motorways” that were meant only for cars. Pedestrians killed by speeding cars—including many children—were converted from innocent victims into ignorant rubes or “jaywalkers” who were to blame for their own demise. Streetcar systems (including one in Eureka) were undermined legally and financially, and were eventually scrapped. By the 1950s, federal and state governments were spending billions of dollars to build massive networks of auto-only highways which—among many other consequences—enabled the rise of the suburbs and destroyed thriving Black neighborhoods on their way through cities and towns. This story is told in fascinating and troubling detail in Peter Norton’s Fighting Traffic and other historical accounts.

Today, our transportation system and our local communities are confronted with forces just as powerful as those which completely reshaped American society a century ago. In a new report called “Elephants in the Road,” the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP) identifies three such phenomena and how they apply here in Humboldt County:

1. Climate chaos. Not only does transportation contribute the majority of local climate-harming pollutants, but the transportation system will be heavily impacted by climatic changes. Coastal roads and trails will be inundated by sea level rise, while infrastructure in inland parts of the county will be dramatically affected by increases in the frequency and severity of wildfire.
2. Traffic violence. As the history above shows, death and destruction have accompanied cars from the beginning. But over time, while cars have become (somewhat) safer for their occupants, they have only become more dangerous for pedestrians and bicyclists. Today, pedestrian deaths are rising again, and the people most impacted are the elderly, people of color, and people in low-income communities. Humboldt County ranks among the most dangerous in California for people on foot and on bicycles.
3. Increasing automation. Cars and trucks are increasingly equipped with features which take over tasks once left to human drivers, and “self-driving” vehicles of one kind or another will be widely deployed in the near future. The early twentieth century experience with cars shows that if we don’t make autonomous vehicles adapt to our communities, our communities will be forced to adapt to them—often in ways we won’t like.

CRTP’s new report documents these phenomena in much greater detail and provides a clear prescription for what exactly needs to be done to respond. The report is both a wake-up call and a call to action for local citizens, planners and officials. It clearly shows that climate chaos, traffic violence and automation need to be at the center of all transportation decision-making in Humboldt County.

The window is rapidly closing for Humboldt County and its local communities to shape the future of our local transportation system. If we don’t start taking these phenomena seriously now, we’ll be struggling to react to overwhelming challenges for decades to come.

Read the full report on CRTP’s website at transportationpriorities.org.
Uncertain About Recycling? You're Not Alone

Recycling is easy, right? You just look for the little triangle symbol that says the material is recyclable, then you toss it in the blue bin and away it goes to be magically transformed into a new product. For many of us who live in the era of the 3 Rs, that is the extent of our relationship with our recyclable waste. For a long time we implicitly trusted that all was well with recycling, that the system was working and that we, as consumers, were helping to clean up the planet. Then, in 2013, China’s Operation Green Fence began putting on notice all international shipments of contaminated recyclable materials. Finally, in 2018, China announced a ban on importing scrap plastics for recycling and many of us thought, “Wait a minute? We send our plastic all the way to China? And then what happens to it? And what is going to happen now that they don’t want it?”

One of the reasons for the Chinese ban on plastics was contamination, something that is still a problem in our local recycling system. Contamination can mean either recyclable items that contain food residue (like that peanut butter jar you didn’t clean out), or non recyclable items, i.e. actual trash, being mixed in with recycling. According to Linda Wise, general manager of local waste-hauler, Recology, at the time of the Chinese ban (a decision they called National Sword) U.S. contamination rates were as high as 30%. This left waste hauling and recycling companies in the tough position of figuring out how to reduce contamination rates and deal with the mountains of plastic we produce every day. Locally, Recology responded by opening the Samoa processing plant and since September of 2018 has processed over 17,000 tons of recyclable material from Humboldt County, Del Norte County and as far north as Ashland, OR.

Through this processing facility, which employs individuals (most of whom are paid around minimum wage) at massive conveyor belts sorting through our commingled recyclables, Recology has been able to reduce local contamination. In fact, our local facility was the first in the state to be able to meet the <5% threshold for contamination that makes our waste more marketable (though, since the onset of COVID-19, contamination rates have risen to around 20%). From the Samoa processing center where it is sorted and baled, our recyclables then head to market. One issue that Recology is facing right now is that it often costs more to process recyclables and bring them to market than they actually receive when selling those materials. The fact that recycling is tied to the market rather than being the responsibility of the producer has left consumers and waste haulers with the onus of dealing with this waste and, as is often the case, developing nations and those at the bottom of the economic spectrum bear the burden.

Because what happens to our waste after it hits the commodities market is that it often ends up being shipped to developing nations for processing. According to Recology, 50% of recycled commodities stay in the domestic market, but 15% go to Vietnam, 11% goes to both South Korea and Myanmar, 5% ends up in Thailand, 4% in Taiwan, 2% to Indonesia, 1% each to Malaysia and China and less than 1% goes to Mexico. Do a quick internet search for “Malaysia/Vietnam/Myanmar plastic recycling” and you will find page after page of photos of people sifting through mountains of plastic. You’ll also find accounts of crime, human rights abuses, and shocking pollution. The plastic is sorted by type (according to Recology, there are 48 thousand different types of plastic, enough of which is produced per year to circle the earth four times), shredded, washed, “compounded” (melted and smashed together) and made into nurdles, the raw material that will become new plastic products. In the process, plastic shreds befoul waterways and the fumes from melting plastic affect those in close proximity. Another way that plastic is “recycled” is by being burned as fuel. As Wise pointed out in a recent presentation to the Arcata City Council, one reason that China decided to reject our recyclables was “We were marginalizing this country by sending them all of our trash.”

According to Maggie Gainer of Zero Waste Humboldt, one of the things that got us to this point was a shift about 10 years ago to make recycling easier for consumers in the U.S. Waste hauling companies introduced commingling and automated trucks and consumers no longer had to think about their waste, where it came from and how it tied into their...
Uncertain About Recycling?

Continued from prior page

consumption habits; they could simply throw it in the bin and away it went. Policy makers and those in the waste industry also moved away from talking about recycling as a way to conserve natural resources to talking about it as “landfill diversion.” The first principle of Zero Waste is, “The conservation of all resources by means of responsible production, consumption, reuse, and recovery of products, packaging, and materials without burning and with no discharges to land, water, or air that threaten the environment or human health.” When we changed the definition and motivation of why we recycle, it changed our relationship to our waste. When recycling is simply about diverting waste from the landfill, then baling it up and shipping it somewhere else accomplishes that mission.

What is often left out of the discussion about recycling is the responsibility of those who are creating the disposable materials in the first place. Ever since the 70s, the plastics industry has sought to place the blame for pollution on the consumer. The now-famous “Crying Indian” commercial made by Keep America Beautiful and the Ad Council in 1971 taught a generation of Americans that, “People start pollution. People can stop it.” Again, no mention of the producers, which is not surprising when we learn that Keep America Beautiful was founded by American Can Co. and the Owens-Illinois Glass Co., who were later joined by the likes of Coca-Cola and the Dixie Cup Co.

The modern day equivalent of this is the non-profit Alliance to End Plastic Waste whose members include Dow Chemicals, Exxon Mobil, Formosa Plastics, and PepsiCo among other petrochemical and plastics companies. Though the name sounds great, this is another case of diverting attention away from the real cause of the problem; if these companies really wanted to end single-use plastic waste, they could simply stop making it in the first place. What they are really seeking to do is make a profit off of plastic waste. According to its website, “Our members are committed to share investment in the zero waste industry.” But these companies make money through the extraction of fossil fuels that become plastics, and now they are looking to make a profit, and win public support, by getting in on the recycling industry.

Gainer advises that what we need to do to break this cycle is revisit the principles of Zero Waste and rethink our systems. She also advises that we stop putting all of our brainpower and financial resources into recycling. “When I give talks about Zero Waste, I tell people to close their eyes and I play music from 1974. That was when the first recycling drop-off services began in Humboldt County,” she says. “A home cost $30,000 then. Now it’s 40 years later. The whole world has changed. It’s time to rethink recycling. It’s time to shift toward other systems, some of which have been around forever but are now improved.” There are alternatives to the current system, she reminds us. “Reuse, returnable, refillable systems. Let’s focus on what we can do now. We can change our behaviors and change our systems.”

One thing we can do now is support the Plastics Free California Initiative which will charge corporate plastic manufacturers a penny tax on single-use plastic packages to fund plastic recycling and environmental clean-up of plastic pollution. The initiative has qualified for the ballot in 2022 and will reduce the amount of single use plastic sold in California by 25% by 2030, reduce the amount of plastic pollution in California by ensuring that all single-use plastic packaging be reusable, recyclable, or compostable by 2030, and institute a statewide ban on non-recyclable plastic Styrofoam® food containers.

Though China’s decision to reject our plastic waste has thrown our system for a loop, this may be a blessing in disguise. We now have to take a hard look at our production, consumption and waste systems and figure out how to bring them into the 21st century. We have the power and the opportunity to stop this flood of plastic at the source, and it’s past time that we do.
An Open Letter by Felice Pace

President Trump has a point about western wildfires. He claims that the manner in which western forests have been managed causes the catastrophic fire effects now experienced nearly every year. Trump is, for once, correct: western forest management on timber industry and national forest land has had a profound impact on whether or not catastrophic fire effects are experienced.

Of course, climate change, which Trump denies, is also a factor. As is drought. And as Californians have learned in recent years, it is often strong wind that causes wildfires to “blow up” into firestorms.

But while Trump is right to focus on forest management, he is wrong about the solution: even if it were feasible, “raking” the forest would not significantly impact how prone western forests are to catastrophic fire effects. That’s because forest “debris” is not the culprit but rather the manner in which western forests, whether on public or private land, have been managed since the end of WWII.

The dominant method of western forest management can be summarized in two words: clearcuts and plantations. Whether managing green forests or those which have been scorched by fire, the timber industry and US Forest Service have clearcut and planted, replacing diverse old forests with trees that are packed tight and all of one age. Research confirms what firefighters see on the ground: tree plantations are the most prone among all western forest types to blow-up into firestorms when the wind picks up. During Redding’s Carr Fire, for example, 1900 acres of tree plantations were totally incinerated.

In spite of these facts, one does not hear Governor Newsom speak much about the fire risk created by forest management. He is in denial on that score just as much as Trump is in denial about climate change. But our governor is not entirely to blame. He is being educated on these matters by the owners of Sierra Pacific Industries, California’s largest timber company, and folks from The Nature Conservancy.

The Nature Conservancy promotes national forest “thinning” as the solution to our fire problem as well as a way to increase water supplies. Their solution is based on simplistic models and backed by the US Forest Service and the Newsom Administration. All are claiming that we can log our way out of catastrophic fire danger.

The bulk of truly independent science, however, confirms what I have seen walking and studying every large fire that has burned in Northwest California since 1987: While wind blown fire can kill most trees in any forest, old growth forests are the least prone to catastrophic fire even as they store the most carbon. Clearcuts and tree plantations, on the other hand, are prone to blow up into firestorms which then roar out of the forest threatening and often devastating nearby communities.

The best way to reduce catastrophic fire risk from western forests is to change the manner in which those forests are managed. Restoration forestry can accelerate development of old forest characteristics while maintaining tree canopy shade to moderate fire behavior. “Thinning” western forests could also be effective in reducing fire risk but that would require following-up with managed fire or mechanical treatments every decade or so to control new trees and sprouting shrubs, a commitment the US Forest Service is institutionally incapable of making. The timber industry shows no interest in thinning the industrial forests they manage; clearcut-plantation forestry remains dominant on industrial forest land and with it the threat of extreme fire risk.

President Trump and Governor Newsom should get out of denial. Climate change is real and continuing to deny it just delays addressing the effects. The role forest management plays in generating catastrophic fire effects is also real and the sooner we end clearcut-plantation forestry the safer we will be. The cost in lives and property of denying these key facts of modern western life is just too great.

Felice Pace has been a forest, river and public land activist in far Northern California since 1980. He was prominent in the Ancient Forest struggles of the 80s and 90s. Currently Felice coordinates the Grazing Reform Project and serves as Water Chair for the North Group Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club. He resides at Klamath Glen near the mouth of the Klamath River.
OCTOBER 2020 ECONEWS

THE VIEW FROM UP HERE: AN UPDATE FROM THE TREESITS IN TSURAI (TRINIDAD)

Lupine from Redwood Forest Defense

For six months we have lived aloft in a grove of redwoods slated to be clearcut by Green Diamond Resource Company. After a few months of quietude in the canopy, Green Diamond began logging in July in the units we are defending, avoiding the trees we live in but clearcutting close to 100 acres surrounding Strawberry Rock. For three weeks we watched and mourned from the treetops as heavy machinery constructed roads and loaded logs below us, twelve hours a day, seven days a week. Now, despite having completed work, Green Diamond refuses to file completion on their Timber Harvest Plan, which means these trees are still under threat. Until they do, we are remaining aloft in our two tree villages.

Recently, one treesitter witnessed a rare Pacific fisher moving through the canopy in the area we are defending. The fisher is a nocturnal, carnivorous mammal the size of a housecat, dependent on old growth forests and quietly headed for extinction because their habitat is being decimated by industrial logging. Fishers are closely related to the Humboldt marten, who just recently were granted listed status under the Endangered Species Act after decades of work by the Environmental Protection Information Center and other orgs. EPIC has been campaigning for protections for the fisher, too, but in May the Trump administration denied listing of the Northern California/Southern Oregon Pacific fisher population to which the one we saw belongs.

We are gravely concerned with the rapid population declines suffered by creatures such as the marten, fisher and Northern spotted owl, which are the deadly consequences of habitat fragmentation. At the time of colonization there were two million acres of intact redwood forest on the north coast, which Indigenous people had been stewarding since time immemorial. Settler land mismanagement has reduced the old growth redwoods to 5%. But all over so-called Humboldt County are second growth redwood forests that could mature into the next generation of old growth - if we let them. Instead, what is happening is these groves are being logged by billionaire-owned corporations and converted into tree plantations.

If Green Diamond continues unchecked, the entire 400,000 acres they “own” in Humboldt and Del Norte counties will be logged and replanted in rapid rotations, never growing beyond 45 years, creating vast monocultures of the most profitable tree species. This is not only a nightmare for biodiversity and habitat value, but it is also an incredibly dangerous forest management strategy from the perspective of firefighters and fire ecologists. Young, dense tree plantations are highly flammable. As the west coast is engulfed in smoke from yet another year of unprecedented fires, let’s not forget what caused these fires - not a cigarette butt or a gender reveal party but a century of extractive, profit driven timber harvest and the suppression of traditional Indigenous fire management strategies and natural wildfires.

Our health is inextricably linked to the health of these forests. We know that intact forests are not only home to rare and endangered species, but are also protecting us from the effects of climate change, with their ability to sequester carbon, keep our air breathable, and resist catastrophic fires.

This isn’t merely about saving the Pacific fisher or an individual redwood tree. This is about ending this capitalist death culture that is killing all of us.

Please reach out to us to get involved in our efforts in Tsurai or to build a coalition with other climate defense projects!

Email: info@redwoodforestdefense.org
Website: redwoodforestdefense.org
Instagram: @redwoodforestdefense
Venmo: @redwoodforestdefense

Despite the industrial clearcut right outside their front door, one treesitter saw a rare Pacific fisher in the area they are defending.
Dan Sealy, NEC Legislative Analyst

PRESIDENTS TRUMP’S FIRST TERM: A LOOK BACK

It is possible that the first term of President Donald J. Trump is the most destructive to conservation since President Ronald Reagan. President Reagan appointed anti-government lawyer, James Watt as Sec of the Interior. Watt became infamous within the conservation world as a cabinet member who would do anything to weaken environmental laws. Many conservationists were relieved when he was forced to resign after making insensitive remarks about minorities and for using the Arlington House Memorial, administered by the National Park Service, for private parties at taxpayer’s expense. Fast-forward to summer of 2020 and President Trump held part of the Republican National Convention on the grounds of the White House, also administered in part by the Park Service, also at taxpayer’s expense. Most occupants of the Oval Office have a history of both positive and negative actions.

Under President Reagan carbon monoxide emissions and particulate pollution were actually reduced. Reagan signed the Montreal Protocol to phase out ozone-layer-depleting, climate change-promoting chlorofluorocarbons. Reagan’s environmental legacy, however, is better embodied by his appointment of Anne Burford Gorsuch as Director of the EPA. Gorsuch did everything in her power to defund the agency. Now Trump appointed her son to the Supreme Court. Reagan appointed Sagebrush Rebellion lawyer James Watt as the Secretary of the Interior. Watt attempted to allow new oil drilling off the coast of California and in wilderness areas and opened 80 million acres of federal lands to energy exploration. Congressman Udall (D-UT) joked that Watt’s idea of a wilderness area “is a parking lot without the yellow lines.” Watt blocked land protections and defunded the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for over 20 years. The LWCF enables the government to purchase critical lands for parks and wildlife refuges.

President Carter doubled the size of the National Park Service but failed to implement a sustainable energy policy during the nation’s crippling Energy Crisis of the 1970’s. President Clinton reintroduced wolves to Yellowstone and created the Northwest Forest Plan to save the endangered Spotted Owl while allowing timber production on public lands. He created Grand Staircase of the Escalante National Monument in Utah. He also mistakenly allowed his Interior Secretary, Babbit, to divert money to the new National Biological Survey (NBS). Babbitt failed by taking much-needed biologists from other Interior agencies but never provided adequate funding and the NBS disappeared.

President George W. Bush created the 580 million square mile Papahānaumokuākea (or Northwestern Hawaiian Islands) Marine National Monument, the largest marine reserve in the world. Bush also allowed Vice President Cheney to hold private meetings with oil and gas lobbyists to push a fossil fuel extraction program on public lands that left a legacy of gas wells and infrastructure easily seen as plane passengers fly over the nation’s landscape.

President Obama signed the Paris Climate Accord and in the last days of his presidency set aside 550 million acres by expanding existing National Monuments such as our local California Coastal National Monument and a record 29 new monuments such as Cascade-Siskiyou and Bears Ears. But Obama allowed the State Department to move forward with the Keystone XL Pipeline and was criticized for over-reliance on executive orders which can be easily reversed without congressional legislation.

Looking back each Presidency is a mixed bag of accomplishment, some better than others, but it is difficult to find much positive that has come from the past four years of the current administration other than the recent signing of the Great American Outdoors Act. Ironically that Act permanently funded the LWCF, reversing the damage of Sec. Watt. On the negative side, however, President Trump:

- Immediately removed the United States from the Paris Accord calling the climate Crisis a “hoax.”
- Directed the Sec. of the interior to begin a study to allow offshore oil and gas exploration along the entire coast of the US.
- Quickly signed executive orders to reduce the size of the new Bears Ears National monument and Grand Staircase of the Escalante.
- Gave a green light to the Keystone Pipeline and pushed a Cheney-like agenda for exploiting public lands for energy production.
- Stopped a successful 40-year ban on drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve (ANWR) as part of his Tax Act.
- Created confusion in conservation leadership by using “acting” and deputy positions to implement major environmental regulations and administer public lands rather than abiding by the traditional vetting and approval of nominees through Congress.
- Attempted to plow a loophole into the Migratory Bird Treaty Act by allowing developers to avoid liability for killing birds unless proven they did

Continued on page 21
Humboldt County Boards and Commissions: A Call for Fresh Air & Diverse Thinkers

Ali Ong Lee

Most of us are thinking about breathing clean air and the upcoming presidential and congressional elections--whose outcomes deeply affect our rural lives in Humboldt County. Consider this: the hyper-local politics of boards and commissions deeply impact our lives and environment, too. It is time to breathe new air into them.

Members of the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors both sit on and appoint people to 27 current boards and commissions, according to Deputy Clerk of the Board Tracy Damico. The number and kind of boards and commissions can change yearly, as needs arise. Continuing our local governance system, where we first reviewed local Joint Powers Authorities (and forgot to mention the inter-county Eel Russian River Commission) and then explored special districts, we now learn about local boards and commissions.

In Humboldt, boards, commissions (and committees) advise the board of supervisors and staff by studying issues and then making recommendations. These advisory boards and commissions range from the Aviation Advisory Committee to the Human Rights Commission. They may address the expenditures of a county-wide, local sales tax (Measure Z Citizens Advisory Committee), social services for eligible elders and people with disabilities (In-home Supportive Services Advisory Committee), or work on policies and programs for children (First 5).

The most infamous commission involving Humboldt may very well be the divisive North Coast Railroad Authority, formed in 1989, whose dissolution was initiated by California Senator Mike McGuire in 2018.

Since each board and commission has specific requirements for its members being eligible to be appointed (not elected), it is worth researching at https://humboldtgov.org/168/Boards-Commissions and contacting the Clerk of the Board’s office before applying: 707-476-2390 and tdamico@co.humboldt.ca.us. For example, the Mayors City Selection Committee contains only mayors who appoint city representatives. The Assessment Appeals Board contains only certified public accountants, public accountants, real estate brokers, attorneys, and appraisers both licensed in California and having five years of experience in their respective professions.

The Human Rights Commission application, however, does not state eligibility requirements, but asks for an occupation, two personal references, any previous board experience, and a statement of interest: https://humboldtgov.org/documentcenter/rview/54496/Human-Rights-Commission.

Of particular interest to EcoNews readers may be the following three boards and committees to which the Board of Supervisors appoint members and from which it takes recommendations. Among these boards and commissions, there are six seats currently open for appointments:

- **Fish and Game Advisory Committee (One, District 3 vacancy)**
  15 appointed members make recommendations regarding “all matters concerning fish and wildlife, in Humboldt County.” The only listed qualification is: “Interest in county issues regarding fishing and game hunting.”
  https://humboldtgov.org/2328/Fish-and-Game-Advisory-Commission

- **Forestry Review Committee (One, at-large vacancy)**
  Since 1952, seven voting members and two, non-voting members commit for four years to review “technical forest-related matters of concern” to both the planning commission and board of supervisors.
  https://humboldtgov.org/193/Forestry-Review-Committee

- **Resource Conservation District (Four vacancies November 30, 2020)**
  As a special district, seven members provide technical assistance to landowners regarding conservation and development.
  http://humboldtrcd.org
  https://humboldtgov.org/2458/Resource-Conservation-District

The following six boards and commissions may also be of interest, even though there are no vacancies on them through December 2020. Most of these boards and commissions are meeting by Zoom and by phone during the pandemic.

- **Aviation Advisory Committee**
  Nine members meet monthly to make recommendations regarding local aviation in Humboldt.
  https://humboldtgov.org/AgendaCenter/Airport-Advisory-Committee-10 (agendas)

- **Cannabis Micro-Grant & Loan Advisory Committee**
  Seven members select applications for micro-grants and loans from Project Trellis and for Humboldt’s Local Equity Program. Members are appointed by district, with two at-large members ("one from the cannabis industry, and one from the lateral industry such as finance or banking.").
  https://humboldtgov.org/2483/Cannabis-Micro-Grant-Loan-Advisory-Committee-25 (recent agendas)

- **Eel Russian River Commission**
  Eight Humboldt, Lake, Mendocino, and Sonoma county supervisors meet quarterly as an inter-county Joint Powers Authority.
  https://humboldtgov.org/2453/Eel-Russian-River-Commission

- **Headwaters Fund Board**
  Six members commit to meeting monthly to "improve economic prosperity and quality of life in Humboldt County" by offering loans and grants from the Headwaters Fund, a 1999 settlement with Maxxam Corporation regarding the Headwaters Forest.
  https://humboldtgov.org/2198/Headwaters-Fund-Board (Board Information)

- **Planning Commission**
  Seven appointed members spend four years making recommendations on such matters as the general plan update, cannabis ordinances, conditional use permits, and recently the environmental impacts of measuring Motorized Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) for densely populated and less densely populated areas of Humboldt.
  https://humboldtgov.org/194/Planning-Commission

- **Williamson Act Committee**
  Upholding the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (the Williamson Act)
  https://humboldtgov.org/1302/Williamson-Act-Committee
  Preferences for the committee, as listed on the website: 
  "2 Cattlemen (1 from the North part of the county and 1 from the South), 1 Dairyman, 1 Field or Row Crop Producer, 1 Fruit, Orchard or Vine Producer."

Besides voting for people with more diverse backgrounds -- Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), people with disabilities, and other non-traditional candidates in upcoming local elections, we might also consider advocating for even more diverse thinkers on the above local boards and commissions. We might consider applying for these boards, commissions, and committees ourselves, too—to put into further action our politics on the local level to affect change and protect the environment—to breathe new life into local politics.

- **Clerk of the Board’s Office**
  https://humboldtgov.org/455/Clerk-of-the-Board

- **Humboldt County Boards and Commissions**
  https://humboldtgov.org/168/Boards-Commissions
Get on Board for the Climate: In Need of a Climate Action Plan

Martha Walden, What Now Coalition

Fiscal policy makers -- from the local level all the way up to the International Monetary Fund -- agree that the economy needs not just a major stimulus but a major green stimulus. A viable future will rest on green energy and green infrastructure. Business as usual was shunting us into a crisis worse than the pandemic. We have ten short years to decarbonize.

Besides emitting far too many greenhouse gases, the old status quo has also been deeply unfair. The wealth barely trickles down to the bottom of the heap. Many low income people live in polluted, degraded environments in order for everybody to have abundant, dirty energy. People all over the world recognize these harsh realities, and they are demanding a just recovery from the global recession caused by Covid. Health for everybody is the top priority. Economic relief should go directly to people instead of corporations. Investment should be in a regenerative, resilient economy instead of boom and bust.

On July 21st, The Board of Supervisors gave a nod to this global movement when they sent a wish list to Senators Feinstein and Harris and Congressman Jared Huffman. It began with calling a green stimulus an "opportunity to encourage a just recovery that promotes a healthier, more equitable economy of the future."

So what would Humboldt County do with a nice fat check from the federal government? The projects outlined in the letter fall into four categories.

Offshore wind energy. The feasibility of offshore wind depends on expensive port infrastructure improvements and an upgraded electrical grid. Special funds could help mitigate unavoidable impacts.

Decarbonization of transportation. Convert HTA buses and school buses to electricity and build more charging stations for private vehicles. Build a network of bicycle and pedestrian trails.

Restoration of natural ecosystems. Thanks to local watershed groups and public-private partnerships between forest service and nonprofits in the area, we have a rural restoration economy to build on. Doing so would enhance carbon sequestration and create jobs.

Decarbonization of buildings. Improving public buildings -- municipal, university, schools, and hospitals -- would reduce energy needs and greenhouse gases. Block grants could fund energy efficiency for private housing, particularly low income housing.

The trajectory between great ideas and reality is usually long and complicated. The rubber doesn't hit the road until the money arrives and the county disburses the funds. How exactly the county will decide the details and priorities would be dictated by Humboldt’s Climate Action Plan (CAP).

Some of you who attended CAP workshops last year may wonder when it will be finished. The original deadline was the end of this year, and the public is supposed to get a chance to weigh in before the Board of Supervisors approves it. According to an unofficial report, it’s far behind schedule.

We're in a bad spot here with one disaster piled on top of another. But the Climate Action Plan is more crucial than ever because we need to get ready for an influx of vital resources. Where are you, CAP?
Outside News Source

Esselen Tribe of Monterey County Regains Ownership of Ancestral Land

The Esselen Tribe of Monterey County, a historic Native American tribe made up of Indigenous Hokan speaking People, inhabited land across the Big Sur coast of California for more than 6,000 years — until several centuries ago, when Spanish colonizers seized their territory. Now, after 250 landless years, the small Native American tribe is finally getting some justice, as they have just regained ownership of their land. The purchase was made possible by Western Rivers Conservancy (WRC), a group that works to conserve western U.S. rivers and land. The group partnered with the Esselen Tribe, and for $4.5 million.

World’s Largest Garbage Dump Turned into a Green Oasis That Also Powers Homes

Fresh Kills landfill, once the dumping site for all of New York City’s garbage, was a place that once terrorized Staten Islanders with odors and the sight of trash mounds said to have reached 20 stories high. The world’s largest landfill, once home to 150 million tons of trash, has now been converted into a 2,200 acre state park. Trucks of iron-rich soil were brought in from New Jersey to cover plastic sheeting that “capped” the garbage mounds, while methane extraction pipes channeled the fumes of the underground detritus into Staten Island homes to power heating and stoves. The dump closed in 2001 and the transformation has been ongoing since then. The park will open to the public in stages, with 21 acres open to the public next spring and the rest opening incrementally over the next decade and a half.

House Democrats Reveal Clean, Just Economic Recovery Plan

Top Senate Democrats outlined a sweeping economic recovery plan that focuses heavily on climate action and making progress on environmental injustices which they say will be an early priority next year if Democrats win in the 2020 election. The proposal, known as “Transform, Heal and Renew by Investing in a Vibrant Economy (THRIVE),” is a nonbinding resolution that will serve as the template for legislation Democrats plan to write next year if they win control of the White House and Capitol Hill. The plan is backed by a wide range of environmental and progressive groups.

Millions of Litres of Expired Beer Turned into Electricity

The community of Adelaide in South Australia turned tragedy into triumph by converting expired beer into biogas to run its wastewater treatment plant. When coronavirus shut down the city’s pubs and breweries, millions of litres of beer expired. As of last month, the treatment plant had been accepting around 150,000 litres of beer each week, which was converted into enough electricity to power the equivalent of 1,200 houses. The process entails discharging the beer into the site’s “digester” tanks, where it is mixed with sewage sludge, producing biogas. The biogas is then used to feed the site’s gas engines, creating electricity.

Not What We Hoped For

BY JOEL MIELKE
CARSON PARK DESIGN

Eye on Washington
Continued from page 18

- so intentionally. US Fish and Wildlife Director, Skipwith, announced Sept. 2 that her agency would continue to pursue reversal of that decision by the end of this year.
- Announced, through Director Skipwith, the Trump administration is similarly committed to removing endangered species protections for gray wolves across most of the nation by the end of the year.
- Is now moving to redefine “habitat” as it relates to protecting endangered species in spite of the fact habitat protection is key to species conservation. Most of the successes of the last four years have been through lawsuits and political action to halt bad law and policy put forth by this administration. The successes in slowing or halting actions such as offshore energy exploration, drilling in ANWR, giving industry a pass on killing migratory birds, and removal of swaths from National Monuments have all been accomplished by conservationists taking this administration to court. Sadly, without new legislation and laws, those court victories can be temporary and uncertain.

Though it is always difficult to nail down the true motivation of actions, the actions of this administration clearly seem to favor extractive energy and mineral industries to support economic growth at the expense of conservation and environmental laws that sustain the health of the people and the planet.
Freshwater algae gets a bad rap. It can be slimy, unsightly, and heck... sometimes even toxic. During the summer months where the temperatures rise and water flow drops, we sometimes get cyanobacteria blooms in our local freshwater bodies. The cyanobacteria (sometimes called blue-green algae) produce cyanotoxins that are normally not abundant enough to produce any ill effects, but when a bloom happens it can make swimming in and drinking water from one of these bodies of water a risky proposition. Microcystis sp. is one of the most abundant cyanobacterial species responsible for these harmful algal blooms (HABs). While it's a very small celled alga, they clump together in mucus and grow and grow in population.

The thing is, freshwater algae are so cool! I don't want to downplay the magnificence of seaweeds and other macroalgae, but as far as visual stunners are concerned... freshwater algae are some of the tops. Probably some of the showiest specimens come from the Chlorophyta (the green algae). Problem is, they're tiny and you need a microscope to really appreciate them. Lucky for you, our plucky reader, I spend hours and hours under a microscope looking at piles of freshwater muck for algae.

Spirogyra, as its name suggests, has beautiful coiling chloroplasts running through its cells. Chloroplasts are organelles within a cell where photosynthetic pigments are held. These are punctuated by clearish round structures called pyrenoids that are the site of carbon fixation. Spirogyra can be found in ponds, gutters, and slow-moving streams.

Another alga in the same group as Spirogyra is Zygnema. Where the former has spiral chloroplasts, the latter has a pair of starbursts. It can be found in a variety of freshwater habitats around the world.

An interesting group of freshwater green algae are the coenobial (a colony whose shape and number of cells are genetically fixed) colonies such as Pediastrum. The colony is formed of many cells that create a gorgeous spiked star. The curious thing is that each of the cells, when undergoing asexual reproduction, will produce another colony with the same shape and number of cells as the original. The new colony bursts forth from the cell as a miniature facsimile of the mother colony and will then balloon up to the normal size. Pediastrum can be found floating in the freshwater plankton where its numerous projections help to keep it from sinking.

Surely one of the most mesmerizing of the green algae are the colonies of Volvox. These green orbs will dance around the water under a microscope with all of their many flagella beating in concert. An interesting fact about Volvox is that it is a model organism for research on the evolution of multicellularity. The sphere of cells will begin growing folded in pockets of daughter colonies within itself that eventually evert and separate from the mother colony. Volvox is widely distributed in freshwater environments.
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