Econews Distribution Volunteers Needed

We are looking for monthly volunteers to help distribute EcoNews to southern Humboldt, northern Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity County. Are you interested in helping? Email NEC staff at Carolinenecmail@gmail.com

Bouquets

Sincere Gratitude To:

- A giant thank you to the California Interagency Incident Management Team 5, Humboldt County Sheriff’s Emergency Operations Department, Hupa Fire Department, Yurok Fire Department, Smith River Hot Shots, and so many others for their support with knocking out the Knob Fire. Additionally, thank you to everyone who was instrumental in caring for the community: Food for People, McKinleyville Seventh Day Adventist Church, Hooopa Rodeo Grounds, and Allie Hostler.

- Shout out to Jeff Black and participants of the North Coast Otters Public Art Initiative. The goal of this project is to celebrate life, water and otters, support local businesses and raise funds for student projects. Congratulations on a successful project!

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Cover: Container freight train accident. Source: Freepik.com

NEC 50th Anniversary
- Call for Video Submissions -

Matt St. Charles of Great Minds Production is producing the N 50th Anniversary video. With interviews, photos, audio clips, video clips, and archival materials, Matt is recording memories of key events of the redwood coast region's environmental movement over the last fifty years. Mark Larson, Edie Butler, and others have provided photographs and resources for the video. Many photos and archives that document 1971-2001 were lost in the NEC’s July 25, 2001 fire. If you are willing to share photographs or videos of people and places central to a significant environmental issue, please contact Matt at greatminds@gmail.com.

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NEC Member Groups

Humboldt Baykeeper
www.humboldtbaykeeper.org
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Redwood Chapter
www.redwood.sierraclub.org/north/
California Native Plant Society
North Coast Chapter
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Redwood Region Audubon Society
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Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)
www.wildcalifornia.org

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For more information talk to your financial advisor or contact Carrie Tully, NEC Administration Director at carrienecmail@gmail.com
News From the Center

Larry Glass, Executive Director
Carrie Tully, Admin. Director

Coastal Programs

The staff here at the NEC couldn't be happier about the way Coastal Cleanup Month went! With transitioning from a one-day mega event, to a month-long series of cleanups, we weren't sure how the community would respond. We are so happy with the turnout, commitment, and support from our community. While we await all the final numbers from September's cleanups, we want to be sure to thank all of our sponsors, volunteers, and organizations that came out or showed up for us in order to make this event possible. For a full list of participants and sponsors, please be sure to check out the Community Coastal Column on pages 5 & 6.

In case you have been out of the loop on the NEC's other Coastal Programs, we have been working hard to beef up the ways you can get involved. Whether you've never done a cleanup before or you're a seasoned expert, we have opportunities and tools that can help you contribute to our citizen science data while caring for our beautiful planet. Be sure to check out the NEC's Coastal Programs by visiting www.yournec.org and clicking on our programs tab.

Fire

Living with the smoke and terror of wildfires this summer has been bad enough. To add insult to injury, the Shasta Trinity National Forest's performance has ricocheted from totally unprepared to overly aggressive, heavy-handed and just plain reckless.

First their heavy-handed use of bulldozers in roadless areas and designated Wilderness areas where the resource desecration and damage will be long lasting. These special areas call for a much lighter touch.

Next on my list of grievances is the reckless use of burnouts or backfires. Don't misunderstand me, I fully promote returning fire to the landscape, but just not like this. They admitted at a public meeting in Hayfork that they will light these off in the afternoon intentionally so they can take advantage of the lowest humidity and gusty winds (WTF?). What a horrible thing to say to all the people south of Hyampom Road who had to flee for their lives when the Forest Service burnout got away from them and jumped the road, unnecessarily burning thousands of extra acres.

Then there's been the overly aggressive and unnecessary use of hand crews practicing what is sarcastically referred to as "sport falling" of old growth trees along trails miles deep in the Wilderness areas, resulting in additional ground fuels and unrecoverable resource damage. The Forest Service admitted at the Trinity Board of Supervisors meeting that this was done to protect timber values.

People in the agencies need to be held accountable for these decisions and destructive actions. It is the lack of accountability with both USFS and Cal Fire that allows these actions to get worse every fire season.

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ECONEWS OCTOBER 2021
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Letters to EcoNews

OpeD: Distributed Solar Deserves a Closer Look

Ken Miller

Amidst the largely uncritical celebration of offshore wind (EcoNews, 9/21), Widespread Distributed Solar Photovoltaics (WDS) deserves an accurate representation.

WDS produces electricity from solar panels installed on the built environment where impacts have already occurred, close to where the electricity will be used: public and private roofs, parking lots and other already developed or “improved” spaces, including brownfields and abandoned mill sites.

Panels networked into solar and community nano-grids, micro-grids charge batteries and electric vehicles (EVs), heat and illuminate buildings, and sell electricity to PG&E, all the while retaining resilience during natural disasters. Many of us would share in networked energy wealth, selling excess electricity to the grid, adding equity to our buildings, and increasing our access to reliable electricity during grid disruptions. Renters (and owners) benefit from lowered electricity bills as owners benefit from equity and tax credits. Government buildings, spaces and vehicles would become power-generating revenue centers offsetting the need for tax proceeds.

The EU is currently implementing WDS in order to balance the reliability and resilience of the main grid, among all the other benefits.

The unique benefit of WDS is its relation to EVs. Over half of our emissions are due to transportation, so we must electrify it. Without WDS charging EVs, in order to avoid relying on nukes and fossil fuels we would have to saturate precious habitat and vital agricultural lands with solar panels and wind turbines. The rooftop solar-EV combo pays for itself rapidly, as EVs become mobile storage devices that can power your home, business or our dialysis centers (and proliferating cannabis grows) during grid shutdowns.

Funding mechanisms for rooftop solar and WDS are readily available, including grants, but our County has prioritized central electricity generation, sold to us by remote investors, and so it has not summoned the solar industry with their various options.

One of many examples of what we are missing because of this bias: A low-income friend here is receiving free Tesla Powerwall battery storage units for rooftop solar panels to charge, in exchange for supplying the grid with electricity when needed.

Introducing a 30 percent microgrid tax credit bill in Congress recently, Rep. Jimmy Panetta explained, “Expanding and deploying microgrids can harness clean energy sources, keep our homes and critical infrastructure connected when the larger grid fails, and lead to reliable and consistent electricity for our homes and safety for our communities.”

Contrary to RCEA’s propaganda, all roofs need not be “angled in the same direction” nor do we need to cover 90% of roofs, just the appropriate ones and spaces. My panels face south and west, and east facing ones are not uncommon. If our infamously foggy airport microgrid is any benchmark, we’ve got plenty of feasible spaces. Best of all, no endeavor creates more local jobs, with fewer environmental impacts.

There is no argument that we must transition to non-carbon energy sources, and offshore wind is a good bet, albeit not without reason for caution. Most concerning locally are the ongoing social and environmental impacts associated with an industrialized port and sea-lanes, and the transmission infrastructure. The manufacture, assembly, transport and ocean traffic maintaining the floating turbines in highly corrosive seawater will all be conducted with specialized labor, creating a permanent industrial environment.

The transmission infrastructure necessary to connect to the grid is not easy on the landscape, seabed or eye, sending its power through cables emitting electromagnetic fields, affecting benthic and pelagic habitats, and incendiary transmission wires, often using sulfur hexafluoride (SF6) in thousands of electrical switches. SF6 is 23,500 times more potent than CO2 as a greenhouse gas, and persists for a thousand years (there are safer alternatives); hydrogen production at sea could avoid some of these problems, but that would require a floating factory.

Effects on our fog, air and ocean wave patterns from downwind turbulence, heat, and pulsating sound are largely under-evaluated causes for concern. Due to the energy extracted from the wind, the upstream air behind the wind turbines is lower pressure and turbulent, mixing air up and down, stirring up fog, and influencing winds.

Most alarm focuses on impacts to birds, which is not easily monitored, prompting this pertinent caveat from avian scientists at the American Bird Conservancy: “Only focusing on large, industrial-scale wind projects, whether on or offshore, does not consider potential, less harmful alternatives, including distributed solar generation on existing structures (e.g. of buildings, homes, parking lots, canals, etc.) that do not harm wildlife or alter pristine habitat.”

Wind turbines produce electricity with enormous blades turning either gears or direct drives. It is 19th century technology (so are nuclear, biomass, coal and gas that boil water, and hydro, all gear turners). WDS on the other hand electrifies in the same way that we living to satisfy the off shore project because it can be done tomorrow, benefit all of us economically, electrify and quiet our transportation, and stimulate even sunnier and more densely built regions of the state and nation to follow suit.

Underlying these choices is the concept that climate change solutions must prioritize habitat protection, a lesson that should have been learned from the Terra-Gen ordeal.
DIFFICULT DECISIONS: SHOPPING ETHICALLY WITHIN YOUR BUDGET

As someone working in the grocery industry for over 25 years, ranging from working at tiny independent natural food stores and cooperatives to representing unionized grocery workers in both natural food cooperatives and national grocery chains, I was excited to read the Difficult Decisions: “Shopping Ethically Within Your Budget” article to see what criteria were looked at in the decision-making process. I have found these types of assessments can ignore the conditions of the workers in favor of consumer considerations (i.e., the cost or availability of products over the wages, benefits or security of employees). I was encouraged to see “fair employment” was listed in the first sentence, but unfortunately that would be the last it was mentioned in the article. The second to last paragraph again lists other unexplored criteria, but “fair employment” is inexplicably dropped from the list.

All too often we forget how the conditions of workers impact so many other aspects of our lives and not just the cost of the foods they grow, produce or stock on the shelves. Fair wages allow workers housing security and to have greater financial freedom to choose local or organic groceries, to list a few. When employers don’t provide their workforce with affordable health insurance, those workers’ healthcare is subsidized by our tax dollars. Until we have universal healthcare, affordable employer-based healthcare plans improve health outcomes, and our taxpayer dollars can be used for other societal needs like addressing sea level rise or increasing the amount of CalFresh supplements for assistance. During COVID-19 and with the expansion of the “gig” economy into retail grocery, we have all learned the importance of job security, flexible leave of absence policies, and fair work scheduling. All these examples of impacts on workers and of their need to be considered in shopping ethically fit right into the author’s takeaways: ethical shopping not limited to the upper class, and access to affordable and ethical options for all. And these areas (wages, benefits, terms & conditions of employment) are also mandatory subjects of bargaining in a Union contract.

I appreciate the article calls for further exploration of the other criteria and emphatically encourage continued research so we can have all aspects of what shopping ethically means when we make our “Difficult Decisions”.

- John Frahm,
UFCW Local 5

I recently read an interesting opinion piece in EcoNews from Matt Simmons, (Redwood Coalition for Climate and Environmental Responsibility), titled “The Link Between the Environment and Police Reform”. It was a great letter and well worth the read. Because of the space limitations they were only able to list a few instances of the long and disturbing history of police abuses and protection of extraction industries throughout Humboldt. However, the overall assertion for the need for Civilian Review of Police is totally correct and we need more people to speak out to our elected local officials to make this happen.

As a former employee of both the Sheriff’s Office and the Eureka Police Department, it is my absolute belief that accountability and transparency are vital for our local agencies. As a police officer, I had witnessed officers lie and use unlawful force. I complained internally. Often nothing was done, and I faced serious reprisals. This isn’t an uncommon occurrence in our local Law Enforcement community. Whenever an incident of potential police misconduct has happened in the past 20 years, there has never been an “independent” citizens review of the incidents.

I won’t go through all of the most recent allegations, but if you take time to do a internet search for theft allegedly committed by Humboldt County Sheriff’s Coroner Office, you will see that even the State Attorney General’s Office doesn’t always investigate fully, or act in a transparent way when they are asked to investigate crimes by our local Law Enforcement. Afterward, you can search for the Eureka Police texting scandal. From that search you will see that any “independent” review of the anti-poor, racist, misogynist and disgusting texts will be handled by a firm paid by the City and only accountable or transparent to the Police Chief and City Manager.

Civilian Review Boards come in many formats. I won’t suggest which format the community should choose. However, at the very least there should be a straightforward and known way for citizens to be able to lodge complaints, review investigations, and have at least a modicum of independent investigation of our local police.

Incidentally, I aligned myself with your Executive Director Larry Glass when he was on the city council while he was conducting his campaign to reform the Eureka Police Department. I hope someday Law Enforcement work can be seen in the light of truth, as opposed to the current obfuscations and deceit displayed by the local Chiefs, Sheriff and their departments.

-Adam Laird,
Retired Eureka Police Sergeant,
Current Licensed Private Investigator

POLICE REFORM AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Walking in the Footsteps of Roosevelt and Muir

September 4, 2021 – What would Teddy Roosevelt and John Muir talk about if they were alive today? Best-selling author, naturalist and painter Obi Kaufmann joins Gang Green to talk about his friendship with California Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot and the premiere of a short film where they following in the footsteps of Muir and Roosevelt on a camping trip in the Sierra Buttes.

The Climate Crisis is Here

August 21, 2021 – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s most recent report is clear: the climate crisis is here and humans are causing it. The threat of climate change is immense. Can we change the trajectory in time to avoid run-away warming?

It’s Coastal Cleanup Time!

August 7, 2021 – Folks, it’s that time of year again! Time for Coastal Cleanup Month! Northcoast Environmental Center Coastal Programs Coordinator, Ivy Munnerlyn, and Co-Director, Caroline Griffith, join us to talk about the tradition of beach cleanups on the North Coast — did you know that this worldwide event started at the NEC?

To Save an Owl, We Kill an Owl?

July 31, 2021 – The barred owl’s presence is bad news for its cousin, the northern spotted owl, the iconic species of the Timber Wars. The barred owl outcompetes the northern spotted owl and quickly takes over its territory. With the northern spotted owl on the road to extinction, now is the time for desperate measures. To save the northern spotted owl, researchers have tested whether killing barred owls makes a difference. The grim but good news: when barred owls are removed, population declines of the northern spotted owl stabilize.
Coastal Cleanup Month 2021 is a wrap! Our first cleanup at Eureka Public Marina was a big success, with over 1,000 pieces of trash removed from the area. Our second weekend was even better, with dozens of volunteers attending cleanups at Samoa Boat Ramp and Mad River Beach. Week three saw heavy rain, but our volunteers still made a big difference at Cooper Gulch and Clam Beach. We expect similar success in week four, with several cleanups throughout Trinidad, Arcata, and the Peninsula. We want to extend a big thank you to our generous sponsors, and the hundreds of volunteers who cared for our beautiful coastline this September. The trash data below is from the first two weeks of Coastal Cleanup Month. The November issue will have an update with data from the entire month.

**Thank You!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tobacco/Cannabis Waste</strong></td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food/Beverage Packaging</strong></td>
<td>1362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tiny Trash &lt; 1 in</strong></td>
<td>749</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other Trash</strong></td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Materials</strong></td>
<td>268</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Items</strong></td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fishing/Hunting Debris</strong></td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Total:** 4,901 pieces of trash!
Thank you to our 2021 sponsors

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- Jesse Mendez
- Sophie Reich
- Cheyenne Zabinski
- Taylor Carrington
- Rose Johnsena
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- David Garcia
- Christian Wood
- Jack Menard
- Amelia Marks
- Kealey Scott
- Madison Henderson
- Eli Moloney
- Maddie Pineo
- Hannah Pereira
- Megan Franco
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- Emily Marsolais
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- Dana Foley
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- Brooke Schryver
- William Cook
- Jennifer Brown
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- Paula Hafsdahl
- Christine Fiorentino
- Aliyah Townsend
- LaWanda Townsend
- Amari Townsend
- Anaih Townsend
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- Tammy Morgan
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- Kirsten Thuerossen
- Margaret Kellermann
- Gino Granados
- Amber Richards
- Florence Parks
- Emerson Kanawi
- Ian Bran
- Bruce Maxwell
- Susan Cawthorn
- Taylor Cawthorn
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- Paul Mencos
- Ashley Taylor
- Conner Rohrbach
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- Jayda Carbajal
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- Blake Abeln
- John Saldens
- Baron Parks
- Maria McFarland
- Paul Bugnacki
- Tammy Morgan
- HSU Softball Team
- HSU Mens and Womens Rowing Team
- Humboldt Period Project
- Coastal Grove Charter School
- Trinidad School
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the North Coast
- Friends of the Dunes
- Alder Grove Charter School
- Humboldt Trails Council
- Humboldt Area Center for Harm Reduction
- Surfrider Humboldt Chapter
- Trinidad Coastal Land Trust
- Redwood Community Action Agency
- CalTrans

Samoa Boat Ramp cleanup on September 11. Left to right: Ivy Munnerlyn, Chelsea Pulliam, Michael Pulliam.

Emma Leach at the with a bucket full of firework debris on September 4 at the Eureka Public Marina.
End Of The Line: A Spur Track To Nowhere

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

Here we go again. A Sept. 2 article in Lost Coast Outpost left many north coast residents wondering if they had been magically transported back to yesteryear: a shadowy LLC based in Wyoming is petitioning the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to gain control of and rebuild disused rail lines along the Eel River and ship coal - yes, coal - out of Humboldt Bay. Not only have the rail lines in question, particularly along Eel River Canyon, fallen into severe disrepair since 1996 when flooding and landslides finally closed the line, but coal? Seriously?

Over the last decade there have been numerous attempts of varying seriousness to revive rail service on the north coast. Unlike previous efforts that failed due to being undercapitalized, this one appears to have enough funding to make it a more serious threat. The corporation, called the North Coast Railroad Company, LLC claimed in a filing with the STB to be "capitalized to the tune of $1.2 billion" a number which it claims is sufficient to bring the rails up to operating standard. That claim is disputed by many who have observed the state of the tracks, such as the North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA) who conservatively estimates it would cost at least $2.4 billion to rehabilitate the track. In a statement, NCRA Executive Director Mitch Stogner said, "This is absurd. Over the last 30 years, we have seen numerous ill-conceived plans from people who say they want to run a railroad here on the North Coast, and not once has it worked out. They usually disappear as quickly as they arrive, and I'm guessing this proposal is no different... We suggest this LLC stop the secrecy and do their homework."

The NCRA, the entity who assumed ownership of the line in 1992, believes the tracks are beyond repair and has initiated the process of railbanking, which is when disused rail lines proposed for abandonment can be preserved for future rail use through interim conversion to trail use. In this case, the lines have been proposed to be railbanked in favor of the Great Redwood Trail, a 320-mile, multi-use rail-to-trail project running through some of the wildest and most scenic landscapes in the country and connecting San Francisco and Humboldt Bays. Legislation converting the NCRA to the Great Redwood Trail Agency, and giving it authorization to conduct master planning and design, construct, operate and maintain a trail, SB 69, has passed the California Senate and Assembly and, as of press time, was on the governor's desk waiting for approval.

Unfortunately, federal rail law gives precedence to rails over trails, so the fate of the Great Redwood Trail remains to be seen, but both State Senator Mike McGuire and North Coast Congressman Jared Huffman have come out strongly against this proposed coal train. On Sept. 21, McGuire introduced SB 307 which would prohibit state money from being used to rehabilitate the tracks north of Willits or being used to build out a coal storage facility in Humboldt Bay. Coal has catastrophic environmental impacts, from the way that it is mined, to the dust that is dispersed as it is transported in open train cars, to the mercury and carbon dioxide that are released when it combuts. The rail line in question runs along geologically unstable cliffs above the Eel and Russian Rivers, from Novato through Santa Rosa, Healdsburg, Ukiah, Scotia, Rio Dell, Fortuna and Eureka, then along Humboldt Bay where it would be loaded on ships to be exported to China. There are countless opportunities along the way for coal or coal dust to contaminate ecologically and economically important waterways as it is transported in open-top, uncovered rail cars. This isn't even including the potential for derailment, which has happened in the past along Eel River Canyon.

Despite 1st District Humboldt County Supervisor Rex Bohn's assertion that the LLC mentioned shipping the coal in "clean coal cars" that are completely covered, there is little evidence that such cars are used anywhere in the country to ship coal. According to Burlington Northern Santa Fe railway, each car on a coal train releases 500 to 2,000 pounds of coal dust, which contains arsenic, lead, mercury, chromium, nickel, selenium, and other toxic heavy metals. So, over the course of its journey a typical 125-car coal train could release up to 250,000 pounds of coal per trip. The Eel River is not only home to chinook salmon and steelhead, which are both listed as Threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act, and Northern California Summer Steelhead which was recently listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act, but it is also a source of drinking water for communities along the proposed route. Humboldt Bay is currently one of the cleanest bays on the west coast, which is why we have a thriving oyster and oyster seed industry. Burning coal and coal dust contaminate fish with mercury at levels that can harm human health, particularly children. There is a lot at stake if this project were to move forward, both locally and globally.

Activists along the west coast have done a good job of shutting down or phasing out coal export facilities and plans, from Oakland to northern Washington, which may be why this company has resorted to Humboldt Bay. The good news is that there are many lessons to be learned from our friends and allies who have worked on these efforts. The NEC will be working in coalition with other groups throughout the north coast to protect our air, water and communities from coal and to make sure we all have the opportunity to see the Great Redwood Trail to fruition. Stay tuned and visit yournec.org/action-alerts to stay up to date.
CAL FIRE Shirks Responsibilities by Delaying Surveys

Matt Simmons, EPIC Legal Fellow

EPIC has noticed a disturbing trend in California's private timber regulatory scheme. CAL FIRE has been approving Timber Harvest Plans (THPs) prior to conducting necessary biological surveys for endangered, rare, and sensitive species. This practice prevents public and state agencies like the Department of Fish and Wildlife from adequately being able to review and comment on proposed Timber Harvest Plans. By failing to conduct these surveys prior to public comment and interagency review, CAL FIRE is shirking its responsibilities as California's private timber regulator.

EPIC teamed up with the California Native Plant Society, Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club California, and Forests Forever to write a letter to California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot. The letter, which you can read at wildcalifornia.org, documents numerous instances where CAL FIRE has employed this problematic practice. Many of these instances have been documented during EPIC’s role in the campaign to save Jackson Demonstration State Forest. However, we have also encountered these issues on other forests throughout the state.

The letter goes on to explain why this behavior violates the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the Forest Practice Act (FPA). CEQA and the FPA both require opportunities for public review and comment on environmental projects prior to approval. This makes sense. If the public’s participation is going to be meaningful, then it has to be allowed prior to approval or else there won’t be any opportunity for the public’s input to affect the decision. By delaying these surveys until after projects have already been approved, CAL FIRE has effectively robbed the public of the opportunity to review and comment on the vital environmental information they reveal. EPIC has worked with northern spotted owl biologists and botanists who expressed frustration that relevant environmental information that they would have commented on was not available during the public comment period because of this practice.

Finally, the letter argues that, if CAL FIRE continues this practice, the State timber regulatory program must be decertified. Private Timber Harvest Plans in California operate under a special certified timber regulatory program that exempts them from many of the provisions of CEQA. That’s why instead of preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) they prepare a Timber Harvest Plan (THP). Although the timber regulatory program is more relaxed than CEQA, it’s not meant to return us to the wild west. For example, THPs, as certified regulatory documents, must be “available for a reasonable time for review and comment by other public agencies and the general public.” (Cal. Pub. Rec. Code § 21080.5(d)(3)(B)).

Clearly, CAL FIRE is failing to comply. How can a document be available for review and comment for a reasonable period of time if it isn’t released until after the public comment period ends? Under a different section of the State’s Public Resources Code, the Secretary of Natural Resources is required to decertify any regulatory program that does not comply with these requirements. We believe that should CAL FIRE continue this practice, Secretary Crowfoot will be required to proceed with decertification.

EPIC and its allies sent the letter on July 30, 2021. As of this writing, we have not received a response from Secretary Crowfoot. Be sure to subscribe to EPIC’s newsletters to hear updates on this developing story. We will continue to press this issue and work to ensure that California’s forests get the protection they deserve.
Swimming, Hiking & Tall Trees: North Group Sponsors Lost Coast Campers

Sue Leskiw

This summer, North Group sponsored three campers: a 10-year-old girl from Arcata (Camper 1), a 10-year-old boy from Rio Dell (Camper 2), and a 9-year-old boy from Arcata (Camper 3) to attend a week-long session at Lost Coast Camp near Petrolia. This is the fourth year that campers sponsored through donations to the Lucille Vinyard/Susie van Kirk Environmental Education Fund have gone to overnight camp at this venue in the Mattole Valley. The facility’s mission is to “provide youth with a dynamic summer camp experience, which promotes building self esteem and positive friendships, individual expression, and fostering an appreciation for the natural world.” In exchange for their tuition, the campers agreed to submit an essay to North Group about their experience. Below are excerpts:

Camper 1: “We went swimming in a deep river every day, which was just the right temperature to go in the water. We sang very silly songs around the campfire. The cabin walls were made of canvas and it was freezing cold in the mornings. Because of COVID, we couldn’t do an overnight backpacking trip, but we slept outside one night and saw tons of stars -- including two shooting stars -- and about a thousand satellites. The challenge course was very fun. On Ranch Day, we went to a farm, where we rode in the back of Farmer John’s truck and threw out hay for the cows. We also got to hold oats in our hands and feed the llama. He had giant dreadlocks everywhere, except on his chest, and very giant teeth. He kicks if you try to pet him, but at least he doesn’t spit! I appreciate North Group for giving scholarships to Lost Coast Camp.”

Camper 2: “The first day, we played a cabin-vs-cabin capture the flag game. Then, we caught crickets and thought of a way to prank the girls: put the insects in their biffy (bathroom in forest for you). We snacked on watermelon, then played with balls and Ninja-type games. After a spaghetti dinner, we went to campfire and sang. On Day 2, we went to the beach and built a huge log house/fort that I could stand up in and it was windproof. I gave a medallion talk for a necklace that represented family, friends, and self-improvement. Then, we went to the river and had our swim test. On the third day, we did all the same things as in Day 1 and 2 because everybody really liked the activities. I lost a tooth and we slept under the stars. On Day 4, we pranked the girls with the crickets and went to Mill Creek and Josie’s farm. On the last day, we went on a tractor ride and saw a puppet show that was really funny and cool. The instructors got attacked by a gorilla. It was a very fun trip.”

Camper 3: “I had a great time at camp. The day that stuck out to me most was the next-to-last day, when I gave my medallion talk. I got a bear medallion, which represents self, family, and fitness. This helped me understand myself better and strengthened my relationships. There is a lot to do at Lost Coast Camp, like swimming, canoeing, hiking, and obstacle courses. There’s a ton to see, like tall trees, the barn, and the lake. It’s very peaceful there, with a lot of birds and some dogs. I made a lot of friends. I noticed that the night is warmer than the morning. They fed us oatmeal and cereal in the morning, sandwiches and apples at noon, and Sloppy Joes for dinner. After dinner, we had campfire, where we did sing-along and repeat-after-me songs. I hope you enjoyed my letter about camp. Thank you!”

Klamath Salmon in Peril: Irrigation in the Shasta and Scott Basins

Felice Pace

The Shasta and Scott Watersheds once produced the largest number of salmon in the entire Klamath River Basin. The Shasta was particularly fine for Spring Chinook Salmon and the small streams and beaver dams of the Scott Valley were heaven for Coho Salmon. But since the onslaught of groundwater extraction for irrigation in the late 1970s, streamflow in the two watersheds has plummeted and salmon have been denied access to prime spawning locations. As a result, production of young salmon has dropped precipitously.

Now, after years of unaddressed complaints about irrigation-induced stream dewatering, the State Water Resources Control Board is finally curtailing stream diversions and groundwater pumping in the two watersheds. Irrigation curtailment is necessary in order to secure the minimum flows which California Department of Fish & Wildlife biologists say are needed to get salmon access to their spawning grounds.

The State Water Board approved the emergency regulations on August 17. Irrigation curtailment orders were mailed to surface and groundwater irrigators in late August, just in time for annual Fall Chinook and Coho salmon migration and spawning.

Livestock operators will still be able to divert water for their livestock, but the amount diverted will be limited and should forestall the common practice of continuing irrigation outside of the irrigation season using stockwatering rights. Groundwater irrigation will also continue but at a reduced level. Domestic wells, which supply homes and non-agricultural businesses, are not affected by the regulations.

This welcome action is believed to be the first time that groundwater extraction for irrigation in California has been curtailed within entire watersheds.

The North Group is among the entities that have been filing complaints for years about excessive irrigation and stream dewatering in the Scott River watershed. The Karuk Tribe has also complained and has published numerous scientific reports on how water management in the Shasta and Scott Basins impacts salmon. You can access and read those reports at karuk.us/index.php/departments/natural-resources

Learn more about what the State Water Board is doing to better manage water in the Shasta and Scott Basins at waterboards.ca.gov/drought/scott_shasta_rivers/

The State Water Board recently published a list of those stream diverters who have not reported their annual water use as required by state law. You can access the list at waterboards.ca.gov/waterrights/water_issues/programs/enforcement/docs/sb88_deficiencies.xlsx

The deadbeat irrigators are listed by county. Perhaps we should publish their names in local media and on local websites.
Forest Defense: A North Coast Tradition

Ellen E. Taylor

Twenty-five years ago, Darryl Cherney remarked that he expected tree-sitting to become a national pastime. From his high perch in a fragment of the decimated coastal forests of the California northcoast, he was exulting over how many young people from all over the country came to help. Even before the fear of climate catastrophe was a headline issue, they were aware of the enormous value trees provide for Earth’s air, water, biodiversity, and spiritual tranquility.

Contemplating the barren vistas which replaced their childhood dreams of a glorious life, they were propelled into action.

Here in the US, 21 children watched increasingly worldwide chaos, and growing threats to survival. In 2015 they brought a lawsuit against the United States for its price in carbon, in carbon generating capacity, in water, and in biodiversity. Then they sued the government for the theft.

Many of whom see themselves as the hero kid of the generation, was destroying their future. Although their parents, they said, their parents’ childhood dreams of a glorious life, they were propelled into action.

Here in Humboldt County, recognition grows that a Constitutional climate suit against the state of Montana environment. In August, Judge Kathy Seeley ruled that which children are claiming their right to a habitable example and are continuing to move forward undeterred.

Contemplating the barren vistas which replaced their childhood dreams of a glorious life, they were propelled into action.

Three decades later, young people all over the world are rising to defend their inheritance. New Zealand, India, Pakistan, elsewhere, children are surveying a future of fire and floods with sinking hearts, and reacting. Fridays for Future, a creation of Greta Thunberg, and Extinction Rebellion, bring crowds of hundreds of thousands.

A group of children in Colombia calculated the increasing mass of rain forest being destroyed annually, its price in carbon, in carbon generating capacity, in water, and in biodiversity. Then they sued the government for the theft.

Here in the US, 21 children watched increasingly worldwide chaos, and growing threats to survival. In 2015 they brought a lawsuit against the United States for failing to protect their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, citing the Equal Protection clause of the Constitution. Their own parents, they said, their parents’ generation, was destroying their future. Although their case, Juliana vs the United States, lost, this year, in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals (in an opinion which confessed craven impotence: “any effective plan would necessarily require a host of complex policy decisions entrusted, for better or for worse, to the wisdom and discretion of the executive and legislative branches”), they set an inspiring example and are continuing to move forward undeterred.

Similar suits have emerged around the country, in which children are claiming their right to a habitable environment. This August, Judge Kathy Seeley ruled that a Constitutional climate suit against the state of Montana must be heard in court.

Here in Humboldt County, recognition grows that a Constitutional climate suit against the state of Montana must be heard in court.
Celebrating Another Successful Bay Tour Season

Jasmin Segura, Bay Tours Coordinator

As Bay Tours Coordinator, I have the privilege, through a grant from the California Coastal Conservancy, to play host to many members of our fine community by organizing activities around Humboldt Bay. This year, although different, was very much the same, thanks to our many community partners.

With guidelines for public gatherings changing seemingly by the week, keeping up with the latest was no minor feat. While concerns for the public’s physical health was top priority, we couldn’t discount everyone’s mental health. Humans are a social species, so being able to safely enjoy Humboldt Bay and each other’s company was also important.

Even the most introverted amongst us needs meaningful interaction outside our household. Armed with this knowledge (and some funding), we managed to maintain our relationships with partner groups and individuals alike – and also develop some new ones.

With local bird nerd Janelle Chojnacki, we hosted small, masked, any able-bodied strolls along different parts of the Bay. Borrowed binoculars in hand, participants learned about visiting and native feathered friends in a safe and lovely setting. The Madaket was a terrific venue for many of our partner groups to gather, learn about and simply enjoy the beautiful environment we get to call home.

If your community organization is interested in getting tour groups on Humboldt Bay or California Coastal Trail tours, please contact us at tours@humboldtbaykeeper.org or call Jasmin Segura at (707) 616-7261. Se habla Español!

Janelle Chojnacki led bird-watching walks along the Eureka Waterfront Trail, Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary, and Fay Slough Wildlife Area.

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RRAS Virtual Program: Please join us on Friday, October 8, at 7 pm, for a presentation on: Uncovering the Hidden World of a Secretive Seabird

With Jennifer Bailey Guerrero, MS, Program Manager, Oregon State University, Forest Ecosystems and Society.

The Marbled Murrelet is an endangered seabird that nests in old-growth, coastal forests from central California to Alaska, up to 50 miles inland. This seabird species has long challenged both scientists and land managers alike with its unique life history and secretive nature. With little known information about murrelet nesting in Oregon, public and private forest managers struggle with how to address the conservation of this species. Since 2017, Oregon State University scientists have been tracking this elusive species on its long journey from the ocean to the coastal forests, collecting data that will help to inform future policy on land management.

Jennifer Bailey Guerrero was born and raised in Oregon, grew up exploring all that Oregon’s wild has to offer. From the coast to the mountains to the plains, Jennifer set out at a young age to spend as much time outdoors as possible, a passion that gradually evolved into a career in science. In 2008, Jennifer received a Bachelor’s of Science in Environmental Earth Science from Northern Colorado University, and a Master’s of Science in Biological Oceanography from the University of Rhode Island – Graduate School of Oceanography in 2012. She now serves as the program manager for the Oregon Marbled Murrelet Project and provides the ocean expertise for ongoing research efforts.

Sea-birding by Kayak on Trinidad Bay

By Andrew Orahoske

This August and September, Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) partnered with local outfitter guides, Kayak Trinidad, for two professionally guided kayak adventures. These trips, with everyone in individual kayaks on the water, are meant to increase appreciation for our local birds and other marine wildlife. Based on our observations, and the feedback from participants, we will be offering a further sea-birding kayak trip in October.

The August trip started off foggy, so some bird species were initially either not visible or inactive, but kayakers were impressed with their ability to see deep into the water and watch seabirds chasing schools of fish. There was something special about the feeling of peace, and the ability to float past wildlife and observe without disturbing them.

During these foggy conditions, our group stopped and admired the robust stands of Pacific Bull Kelp, rising from the ocean floor much like an old forest. We remarked on how these marine kelp forests are vital nurseries and refuge for countless fish, like anchovies, vital food for local nesting colonies of seabirds. On cue, an adult Common Murre appeared, surfacing with a good size fish in its bill, meant for a nearby juvenile murre.

Once the fog lifted, a whole world opened up and we saw many more locally breeding seabirds, including a Pigeon Guillemot feeding her nestling in the fens of a sea stack, and the juvenile Black Oystercatcher was definitely a highlight. Osprey and Peregrine Falcons, countless cormorants and gulls, and a few Marbled Murrelets were sighted. Many overflights of Brown Pelicans through the fog and sun certainly made one realize; dinosaurs still exist!

Trip organizer, and RRAS Secretary, Andrew Orahoske, remarked, “Overall, these kayak trips have been a great success and we hope to continue offering these sea-birding trips in the future. Immersing people in Nature is always most gratifying, and I look forward to leading more water trips.”

RRAS Field Trips in October!

Sat. Oct. 2nd – 8:30-11am. Arcata Marsh, with Michael Morris. Fall is here, which means ducks! Enjoy FIVE Saturday morning marsh walks this month and see how many migratory duck species you can spot! Ring-necked Ducks and Blue-winged Teals are some of the less common but still quite likely to be seen, duck species that call the Marsh their winter home. Plus, the more common species like Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, and Northern Pintails will likely be dabbling and diving through the ponds.

Contact Ralph at thebook@reninet.com for information on walks he leads, and all Arcata Marsh walks.

Sun. Oct. 3rd – 9-11am. The fifth walk in our monthly Women & Girls’ Birding Walks series. Co-leading this raptor-centric walk are Jaime Carlino of Raptors Are The Solution (RATS), and Laura Echávez who specializes in long-distance raptor ID. Both leaders research Barn Owls at HSU. This walk will take place at the V Street Loop in Arcata where Northern Harriers, Red-shouldered, and Red-tailed Hawks, smaller falcons, as well as multiple owl species abound.

For reservations and meeting location contact our Field Trip Chair, Janelle, at janelle.choj@gmail.com.


Sun. Oct. 10th – 9-11am. Ralph Bucher will lead a walk at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, where many ducks and other waterbirds are likely to be returning for the winter.

Sun. Oct. 10th – Seabirding Kayak Trip on Trinidad Bay. Contact Andrew Orahoske at andrew.rras@gmail.com for more details and to reserve a spot.


Sun. Oct. 17th – 8am. Frank Fogarty will be leading a walk at King Salmon focusing on sea ducks, loons, and grebes. Frank, an instructor at Humboldt State on ornithology and other bird-related courses, has a wealth of knowledge on avian ID, behavior, and ecology. Meet at the parking area at the end of King Salmon Avenue.

Sun. Oct. 17th – 9-11am. Ralph Bucher will lead a walk at the Eureka Waterfront, located in the urban center of Humboldt County, which offers an incredible diversity of waterbirds and shorebirds, including loons, grebes, pelicans, terns, gulls, and many species of sandpipers.

Sat. Oct. 23rd – 8-30-11am. The fourth (but not final!) Arcata Marsh walk this month will be led by Larry Karstad.

Sat. Oct. 23rd – 9-11am. Wigi Wetlands Volunteer Workday: We will provide tools and packaged snacks. Please bring your own water, gloves, and face mask. Please contact Jeremy Cashen at jeremy.cashen@yahoo.com or (214) 605-7368.

Sat. Oct. 30th – 8:30-11am. The final Arcata Marsh walk this month will be led by Janelle Chojnacki – with Halloween the next day, costumes are encouraged!

View rras.org for more details. Local, state, and federal COVID protocols will be followed on all trips.

Left: Kayakers on Trinidad Bay, by Andrew Orahoske.
President’s Column
By Gail Kenny

I’m writing this from Boulder, Colorado in early September on a visit with our daughter. This is my first time in Colorado, so I am especially interested in seeing “life” birds. That is getting tricky since I have been birding, mostly in California, for at least 42 years. There are a few possible life birds here including White-tailed Ptarmigan and Broad-tailed Hummingbird.

In the six days we have been here, I haven’t gotten a lifer. I have seen some nice birds, including a Prairie Falcon at 12,000 feet in the tundra habitat of Rocky Mountain National Park where there was a chance at ptarmigan. I don’t know if it’s my imagination, but it seems like there aren’t as many birds here as there are in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties this time of year. There is an engaged birding community here based on the eBird checklists I have studied. On one birding foray I chatted with another birder who leads walks for the local Audubon Society. There is also an abundance of open space parks and preserves to explore, which is cool.

Balancing birding with taking care of myself is my intention for this trip. On another trip in the last couple of trips I overdid it and came home with a bad cold. As I have aged, it has been necessary to change the way I bird. I don’t do well with early mornings, long hikes, or long days. To feel well and enjoy birding, I have learned to pace myself and to enjoy the birds I see at mid-morning and later, and to keep my birding to shorter time periods. I don’t see as many birds, but I feel better. I also have an interest in wildflowers. They are stationary so easier to observe than birds! I found a couple of gentian species which made me happy, including the Arctic Gentian in the photo included here. We all appreciate birds and nature in a variety of ways. Since many of us are birding for pleasure, it’s important to do it in a way that works well for each of us. I will have quality time with my family and enjoy the late summer weather in this high desert and alpine habitat.

Birding With Women
By Jody Greaney

The fourth gathering of the Women & Girls’ Birding Walks was led by Samantha Chavez, a friendly, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic guide. About a dozen of us gathered in early September, and were entertained and informed with Samantha’s stories of mist netting and bird banding. As the fog lifted, we strolled along Hiller Park bike path for great viewings of a Black Phoebe, Wrentits, Song Sparrows, Chestnut-backed Chickadees, Golden-crowned Kinglets, Wilson’s Warblers and even an elusive Pacific Wren.

After passing the pond and enjoying the Mallards swimming there, we looped back around through the dog park and were gifted with a visit from an Osprey that glided in and perched on a nearby branch to feast on a hearty catch of what appeared to be a salmon. We watched the fish still wriggling in its grasp when a Cooper’s Hawk swooped by and disturbed the Osprey, but delighted us! That tough-to-top event was shortly followed by more excitement as we enjoyed great looks at a female tanager feasting on Cascara berries. A brighter male tanager could also be seen in further-off conifers and more Golden-crowned Kinglets and Chestnut-backed Chickadees joined in the feeding in this birdy area.

Samantha was a great guide, and all participants did their best to help each other identify the birds. In spite of masked faces that tended to cloud our binoculars, the skies were clear and the crowns of the kinglets were brilliant! Much was learned with pleasant conversation and plenty of laughs along the way.

Thinking of Joining the Audubon Society?

By sending in your membership, either directly or on the form below, to National Audubon, (rather than replying to solicitations from National Audubon), the fee is sent directly to our chapter – if you use the Code RRAS C24. However, when you renew with National, the share of membership dues that RRAS receives is only a couple of dollars.

If you join the local Chapter, RRAS, directly, we receive the total dues both initially and on renewal.

To do so, write a check out to RRAS for $15 and be sure to include “local membership” on your check, then mail to:
Redwood Region Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502.

You are welcome to join both nationally and locally.

To join National Audubon:

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 $25 is enclosed.

NAME: ________________________________
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EMAIL: ________________________________

Please make checks out to the National Audubon Society, and send with this coupon, to 225 Varick Street, 7th floor, New York, NY 10014
Returning prey-go-neesh
By Tiana Williams-Claussen, Yurok Tribal Member, Director of the Yurok Tribe Wildlife Department.

‘Aiy-ye-kwee’. Nek’ new Tiana Williams-Claussen, kwspee Wehl-kwew mey’-wo-mey-chook. ‘Ne-cheek-os ‘w-ew Desma; ‘ne-me’y ‘w-ew Morri. ‘Ne-peech-o-wos ‘w-ew Juke Williams, ‘aa-wokw. I introduced myself, Tiana, this way, in recognition of the tradition that serves as my foundation. As a Yurok Tribal member, where I come from, the village of Wehl-kwew, and who my family is across generations; including my mother, my daughter, my grandfather who has walked on; are important markers of and inextricable from who I am as a person. This traditional introduction puts my identity within a context of both place and time. I introduce myself in Yurok because there are specific connotations with each word chosen, such as ‘a-yi-ye-kwee’, which indicates a particular heft, or depth, to a greeting, as I address many of you whom I have not met but with whom I am happy to share my story of restoration. As a Yurok Tribal member, this sense of identity, this grounding in time and place both as a recipient of the prayers and actions of those who came before, and responsible for the well-being of those who come after, is what has led me to where I am today, currently serving as the Director of the Yurok Tribe Wildlife Department.

“Balance, healing, and world renewal are our reason for being, foundational to the Yurok ethos.”

I grew up on the North Coast. As a teenager, I did not know what path I wanted to take in my life, but I did know that I wanted to do something to help the Yurok world. Balance, healing, and world renewal are our reason for being, foundational to the Yurok ethos. We consider ourselves “Fix the Earth” people. In our contemporary world there are many needs and many ways to contribute to healing and restoring that balance. I have always had a love for science, so when I was accepted as an undergraduate at Harvard University I chose to concentrate in biochemical sciences, with the idea that I might return to serve as a doctor, a hard position to fill and keep filled in our rural region. Fast forward four years later, and I realized that not only did I not want to be a doctor, but I still had no idea what I wanted to do with my life! Upon graduation I was privileged to receive an internship through our Education Department which placed me with our Office of Self-Governance. Led then by Dr. Thomas Gates, this would be my introduction to California Condor (condor), prey-go-neesh, and finding my path to world renewal.

Above: Yurok Tribe Wildlife Department Director, Tiana Williams-Claussen, (in red), releasing a bird along with Ventana Wildlife Society staff, by Chris West.

Condors have been locally extinct on the California north coast for over 100 years now. In 2003, a panel of Yurok Tribal members tasked with prioritizing natural and cultural resource restoration in Yurok country chose prey-go-neesh as the highest priority land-based animal to bring back to Yurok ancestral territory. For us, and many tribes in our area, condor is integral to that foundational world renewal ethic. The loss of condor, a species critical to the cultural and ecological vitality of our region, has been a major wound to the system. This taskforce was coordinated by Dr. Gates, who took that priority and pursued making it happen through Tribal government pathways, acquiring a grant in 2008 from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct a feasibility analysis for bringing condor home. It was this funding which initiated what is now the Yurok Tribe Wildlife Department, with condor as its flagship species. I joined as its first employee, a Wildlife Technician at that time, and was joined shortly after by Senior Wildlife Biologist Chris West, the Northern California Condor Restoration Program manager.

Above: prey-go-neesh, by Chris West.

Our initial work focused largely on using Western science to assess the viability of local habitat to support condor reintroduction. While we knew that condor once thrived here as a part of our ecological community, our system had been severely rocked post-colonization. Condors had reached an all-time population low of 22 individuals by the mid 1980s, and were lost from our region around the turn of the 20th century. Their near extinction was likely largely due new pressures and impacts imposed by the influx of colonizers. Such impacts included a major reduction in the megafauna which the species relied on due to market hunting. Condors also suffered from habitat loss from the destruction of old growth forest and loss of prairies which were no longer maintained by Tribal people through traditional burning due to our peoples’ forcible removal from the land. Condors were further incidentally poisoned as landowners put out carcasses laced with strychnine for predators. And our environment was introduced to new toxic elements such as DDT and its eggshell thinning and reproductive impacts, and lead, which primarily comes from the use of lead ammunition. This latter remains the number one cause of known condor mortality in the wild, accounting for over 50% of deaths.

“Condors also suffered...habitat loss from the destruction of old growth forest and loss of prairies which were no longer maintained by Tribal people through traditional burning due to our peoples’ forcible removal from the land.”

Our primary initial questions related to available habitat; the potential presence of DDT and its breakdown metabolites DDE and DDD (combined total DDTs or tDDT); and the risk from environmental lead exposure assessed through avian scavenger surrogates. To address the first question, we used geospatial analyses to look at the life history needs of the birds, including foraging, roosting, nesting, and flight corridors. And despite the massive changes to our landscapes, which likely contributed to making our home less hospitable for a time, our remaining old growth redwoods; cliffs and pothole caves; extant prairie; and the river corridors, coasts, and mountains that not even mankind can dramatically impact, do look to provide ample high-quality habitat for the birds.

We assessed the potential for TDD contamination over the course of several years, across an area spreading from the California/Oregon border to Fort Bragg. We looked at marine mammal carcasses because DDT is a fat binding molecule which bioaccumulates over the long lives of these blubbery animals. While we assessed any marine mammal that we encountered, we primarily focused on California Sea Lions, representing a migratory species which might bring external pollutants in, and harbor seals as a non-migratory species representative of our local environmental health. Our results were very encouraging. Though DDT and metabolites are known to impact the condor flock managed by Ventana Wildlife Society in central California, due to their heavy reliance on marine mammals in that region, we found that our DDT levels were 4x lower than those found in that region, representative of an overall decreasing trend in DDT from south to north. While this does not mean we will have no impact, the central California flock is nearing a tipping point in which more birds are expected to be reproductively successful than fail due to DDT, leading to positive reproduction with less intervention. We hope that our relatively low levels are indicative of an even lower threat from DDT.

(Continued on next page)
“A piece of lead as small as the head of a pin is enough to kill a condor.” Lead contamination was our biggest concern. The use of lead ammunition has been implicated as the primary source of lead contamination, and resulted in 50% of known condor mortality in the wild last year. Upon impact, the relatively soft metal within lead ammunition fragments heavily, radiating from the impact point and contaminating the remains. While it may be less of an impact to most human adults, because of this potential to distribute lead throughout the flesh, the Center for Disease Control has indicated that children under the age of five should not be fed game meat harvested with lead ammunition in order to limit their potential exposure to this neurotoxin. It becomes an issue for condors when an animal is either lost by the hunter, or lead fragments spread to the offal pile which is generally left behind. While normally an excellent food resource for scavengers, representative of the important role that hunters play in our system, a piece of lead as small as the head of a pin is enough to kill a condor. Lead is also lethal to Bald and Golden Eagles who scavenge on these remains. Hunters will be critical contributors to condor conservation as we transition as a human population to non-lead ammunition alternatives.

Above photo: Senior Wildlife Biologist Chris West at the LA Zoo, providing lead chelation-therapy to a bird suffering from lead contamination, courtesy of the Yurok Tribe.

“Hunters will be critical contributors to condor conservation as we transition as a human population to non-lead ammunition alternatives.” In order to assess the threat from lead contamination, we studied Turkey Vultures and Common Ravens as local avian scavengers who might indicate lead availability in our area. Our results were about as expected given the magnitude of the issue; 24% of our Turkey Vultures had elevated blood lead levels, at a threshold which would indicate a problem for a condor. We could not study Turkey Vultures during the hunting season, our season of most concern. Their migration schedule caused them to be passing through, confounding a study during that time because we could not firmly pinpoint a geographic source of contamination. However, a parallel study in non-migratory ravens indicated a clear increase in lead contamination within the hunting season, a study which duplicated results seen in several areas throughout California. The good news was, our findings amongst local scavengers indicated that our lead contamination levels were lower than any place else studied throughout California, potentially due to low human populations in our region. Still there was work to be done to combat the threat.

In response to the threat from lead, our Department developed the Hunters as Stewards (HAS) project. HAS was designed to reach out to the strong conservation ethic within many of the hunters in our region. Our approach was to relay the information regarding the threat from use of lead ammunition, provide them with knowledge about making a transition to non-toxic alternatives, primarily copper-based, and allow them the opportunity to become voluntary partners in condor conservation. Based on surveys of outreach event participants, anywhere from 85-95% of the hunters we talked to indicated they had been completely unaware of the impact, and that they would be happy to make a switch to non-lead alternatives. Because of the strong hunting tradition that exists in this region, continued outreach and partnership building within the hunting community is going to be critical for success of the species. Some great information about lead’s impact and making a switch to non-lead alternatives can be found at huntingwithoutlead.org, developed by the Institute for Wildlife Studies.

“This partnership-based approach has been critical to our success from the beginning.” This partnership-based approach has been critical to our success from the beginning. Even before that initial funding was found to jumpstart the Yurok Tribe Wildlife Department, the Yurok Tribe had approached our neighbor, Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP), about the project, with the idea that integrating species recovery into habitat restoration and protection would meet both Tribal and RNSP conservation goals. An invitation to join as partners was enthusiastically accepted in 2007, and we will be releasing birds within Redwood National Park boundaries less than a year from now. It also resulted in a 16-party Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by representatives from federal, state, industry, utility, and non-profit partners, all agreeing that not only would condors benefit from re-introduction to our region, but that the region would benefit from condors’ return home. This MOU was built upon years of partnership development in which we reached out to the relevant stakeholders, heard their concerns, figured out how to address them, and came up with a mutual plan for moving forward together. We have also received training and advice from existing rearing and release facilities within the broader California Condor Recovery Program, and developed a treatment MOU to provide whatever sort of health care is needed. One of our major treatment partners is our local Sequoia Park Zoo. We cannot count the number of organizations and individuals within our community and throughout the country who have stepped up to support us in one way or another.

“We cannot count the number of organizations and individuals within our community and throughout the country who have stepped up to support us...” The Environmental Assessment (EA), required under the National Environmental Protection Act was begun back in 2017, and was finalized with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) just this March! This approved reintroductions in our area, under the preferred alternative, as a Non-essential Experimental Population (NEP) under the 10(j) rule of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), approved through a separate federal rule released the same day. An NEP is special in that it allows conservation managers to strategically craft protections that suit the species in question, prioritizing their conservation needs, but also providing flexibility under the ESA to protect the social and economic needs of a region that might not be in conflict with the species, but which might be negatively impacted by full implementation of the ESA. The EA and the specific rules associated with the 10(j) designation underwent a federal review process that received thousands of public comments, providing both support for the project and constructive feedback, resulting in an approach that would really work for the North Coast. Since then, it has been a matter of pushing hard to get the necessary materials and supplies to make this happen. National construction material shortages have caused delays in construction of our release and management facility. These shortages have also significantly driven up costs, and being funded almost entirely by grants and private donations, every dollar counts. Computer chip shortages are causing delays in acquiring the necessary computer technology and telemetry to support the project. Vehicle shortages are causing us to reevaluate how we get the job done for a bird that can fly as much as 200 miles a day, though our juvenile birds, 2-3 years old upon release, will hopefully give us a break before they fly that far. But for every obstacle we are finding a solution, often in partnership with others. Currently we are targeting a release of four birds in the spring of 2022. These birds are currently staged at the Ventana Wildlife Society’s (VWS) condor management facility as we prepare our site for their arrival. VWS has been a great friend and partner to our project since its start, and the birds can be seen on the San Simeon Cam at ventanaws.org/condor_cam.html, and are designated by number as #’s 696, 973, 1010, and 1045 (visually identified by the last two digits on a wing tag). We aim to release an additional six birds every year for the next 20 years, fitting each with satellite and radio telemetry and tracking them daily to help support their wellbeing.

“I look forward to finally, after nearly 20 years, fulfilling the dreams of my elders.” We still have a long way to go. Though it has taken us nearly 14 years to get here, this is just the beginning. I look forward to finally, after nearly 20 years, fulfilling the dreams of my elders. I dream myself of helping repair a century-old wound, as part of a much larger restoration journey led by the Yurok Tribe and its people, working to revitalize our rivers, forests and prairies, our language, and our ceremonies, and to bring all back into balance. I’m proud to know that my 3-year-old daughter will not have to grow up in a world without condor, and will always live in relationship with him. Through prey-goneesh I found my path to contributing to world renewal and restoration.

Photo: Condor, courtesy of Yurok Tribe.
Zerowaste Humboldt

Zero Waste Humboldt announced the 2021 Zero Heroes and hosted a virtual event to honor six businesses and one individual for their success in reducing waste and being inspiring models. The annual Zero Heroes Night on Thursday, September 23rd featured short videos about each honoree that will be posted to zerowastehumboldt.org.

ZWH Board President Kelly Fortner welcomed business colleagues, customers, friends and community members to join in the celebration. “These honorees are models for integrating Zero Waste values and practices into their business operations and personal lives,” she said. The following Zero Heroes are honored this year:

**Kinetic Koffee** — Owners Charlie Jordan and Mark Ritz monitor the waste they generate to track their Zero Waste progress over time through packaging reuse, recycling and composting their coffee byproduct. By adopting a reusable bin system for handling, transporting, storing and refilling their coffee at stores, they have reduced their use of plastic bags by 80%! Their inventory sheets track their organic product, as well as show if it is sold in a reusable bin or a plastic bag.

**Baby’s Best Diaper Service** — Owner Clair Miller provides a reusable cotton diaper service preventing thousands of disposable diapers per year from entering our local waste stream.

**Ferreira & Son Dairy** — Third-generation local dairyman and owner, Darin Ferreira, invested in returnable bottle sanitizing equipment to refill his milk bottles. In his first half year, he prevented over a thousand milk cartons and plastic milk jugs from becoming local waste.

**Beck’s Bakery** — Owner Rhonda Weidenbeck has dedicated the company to sourcing as much local grain and product as is available. Grains are milled in-house, reducing waste by about 10%. Beck’s offers bulk flour sales which reduces packaging and reprocesses unsold bread into croutons, crostini, rye toast and holiday stuffing. Food waste is donated to a farm and they use compostable cellophane bags.

**Alchemy Distillery** — Owners Amy and Steve Bohner are known for being resourceful within the local business ‘ecosystem.’ To-date, over 51,000 gallons of their distillery’s spent mash has gone to local pig farms. They’ve fermented the grain-rich day-olds from other businesses like Los Bagels, to produce their popular spirits. When their new tasting room is ready, they’ll be serving up in glasses they’ve made from old whiskey bottles.

**Seaside Weaver** — Owners David and Maya Cooper produce attractive, durable door mats handwoven with reused crab pot rope from local fishermen. Each mat is made of 150 - 200 feet of rope, thus keeping more than 12 miles of old rope from the ocean and landfill, so far.

**Julie Neander** is honored for individual achievement and years of leadership within local government in Zero Waste. Known for attention to detail for measurement and monitoring waste generation, she spearheaded development of the City of Arcata’s Zero Waste Action Plan, waste reduction ordinances and assistance for businesses.

The ZWH criteria for selecting 2021 Zero Heroes are: Replicable waste reduction model; Proactive waste prevention strategies used upstream; Conversion of a discarded material into a new product; Monitoring waste amount & types generated; Enhancement of the public’s understanding of ZW; and Social Impacts. With northern California’s record-breaking heat, forest fires, drought, deteriorating air quality, and severe flooding in other parts of the U.S., 2021 is our year of reckoning for climate change. Zero Waste Humboldt has selected honorees for its annual Zero Heroes Night with this in mind. To learn more contact zerowastehumboldt@gmail.com.

**Important Plant Areas**

_by Carol Ralph_

California is losing biodiversity now. Mapping the plant places we most need to save is urgent and crucial to the conservation of California’s botanical heritage. State CNPS is building the first comprehensive map of these Important Plant Areas (IPAs). The criteria include measures of rare plants, rare natural communities, plant diversity, soils, ethnobotanical importance, and other botanically significant traits. The project collects data from a multitude of sources, such as herbaria, rare plant records, and personal lists, into an arcGIS map with many “layers” for the different criteria. The data then goes into a mathematical model producing a “heat map” of the area, with higher conservation value shown in warmer colors. People planning developments, like wind farms or cannabis farms, can avoid areas of high conservation value. Land managers, like the U.S. Forest Service, State Parks, or land trusts, will see places they need to conserve and maintain, for example with weeding, grazing, or burning. Watchdog organizations and citizens will see the same information.

The value of this map depends on us telling the model about places like the rich, old growth stand at Groves Prairie, the spectacular lupines on Bald Hills Rd., and the genetically diverse Western Azaleas on Stagecoach Hill. If you can contribute or help enter observations, please contact Tony (tlabanca@sbcglobal.net). Find out more at https://www.cnps.org/conservation/important-plant-areas.

**Field Trip**

October 3, Sunday. Horse Mountain Day Hike. Indian Butte Road has both serpentine and “normal” soils, rocky outcrops, a seep, and a wet ditch. Conifers, manzanitas, ceanothus, and succulents are guaranteed. We will make a loop up the old ski slope past the radio towers on the summit. Meet at 9 a.m. at Pacific Union School (3001 Janes Rd., Arcata). Dress for the weather; bring lunch and water. Contact Carol at 707-822-2015 or theralphs@humboldt1.com.

**Evening Program**

October 13, Wednesday. 7:30 p.m. “Marvelous Mycoheterotrophs: The Beauty and Science of Floral-Fungal Freeloaders.” If you’ve ever been fascinated by a waxy, alien looking plant, you may have been enchanted by a marvelous mycoheterotroph! Mycologist and teacher Leah Bendlin of Oregon Mycological Society will discuss how these strange-looking plants depend upon fungi and how we know it. She will also introduce some local species and tell how they might help in successful mushroom hunting! Register for this Zoom presentation on our website.

**Missed the Plant Sale?**

Our plants are available every day, 12-6 p.m. at the Kneeland Glen Farmstand at Freshwater Farms Reserve, 5851 Myrtle Ave., Eureka. If you don’t see what you want, contact us at northcoastcnps@gmail.com.

**Stay Updated:**

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CNPS welcomes everyone. No expertise required.

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The Link Between Greenhouse Gas Emissions and a Cheeseburger

Margaret Castro

Climate change tends to evoke images of smokestacks, traffic jams, dry lake beds, melting polar ice caps, and numerous woebegone thoughts. These powerful images strike a chord with the general public; however, they can also feel very distant and overwhelming. In everyday life, these harsh realities do not seem tied into our daily routines. What is often overlooked is that large scale impact is not limited to large scale change; this impact can be brought about by the small, individual choices we all make every single day. The global and individual effort to combat climate change has many varying contributors that can be perplexing. Among these is the overall effort to lower greenhouse gas emissions and, just like every contributor to climate change, each person plays a significant part.

Greenhouse gas emissions create the greenhouse effect - the trapping of heat from the sun by these gases in the atmosphere, thereby warming the Earth. The main contributors to the greenhouse gas effect are, according to the most current report done by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), carbon dioxide (CO2) which accounts for 80 percent of all greenhouse gases and methane (CH4) which accounts for 10 percent. A major contributor to both carbon dioxide and methane emissions is the agricultural sector which accounts for 10 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, another EPA statistic. While 10 percent might not seem like a lot, it is important to note that transportation of livestock and factory farming is not included in the overall contribution.

What choices can each person make that can significantly lower their contribution to greenhouse gas emissions? The answer is much simpler than trying your luck in the bike lane on your morning commute. In fact, animal agriculture contributes more to greenhouse gas emissions than transport, about 40 percent more, according to the United Nations. The answer, then, is found in your diet: each meal choice you make can have a tremendous impact.

Steaks (a celebratory feast), burgers (a classic at a family barbeque), and lamb gyros (a nice change from the normal American cuisine) all should unfortunately be inserted next to mental images of smokestacks and the like. Although it may seem far fetched, this is horrifically true. There have been many health tips and campaigns for decreasing red meat intake, but this act is not just for the animal loving or the health conscious; it is also for those who would like to lessen their environmental impact.

So, what’s the link between the global effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and a cheeseburger? Ruminant livestock, such as cows, sheep and goats, have a rumen which is a fore stomach in their digestive system that contains methanogens. Methanogens are microorganisms that aid in the digestion of cellulose; upon this digestion, the methanogens release methane as a byproduct during a process called enteric fermentation. Ruminant livestock subsequently release methane through belching and flatulence. Although carbon dioxide seems to be the poster child for the climate crisis, methane contributes more to global warming than carbon dioxide. According to the Humane Society of the United States, “…the farm animal sector annually accounts for 37 percent of emissions of methane (CH4), which has more than 20 times the global warming potential (GWP) of CO2 …” Carbon dioxide is not completely absent in the greenhouse gas and ruminant livestock predicament: the consistent transport of livestock both within our country and globally, contributes to carbon dioxide emissions. In addition to methane emissions, the Humane Society of the United States also reports that factory farming contributes to CO2 production via chemical fertilizer and energy usage. Every year, the chemical fertilizer used to produce the corn fed to factory farmed animals emits around 41 million metric tons of CO2 and the energy required to maintain a factory farm releases about 90 million metric tons of CO2.

In addition to the Humane Society of the United States, other organizations have taken it upon themselves to delve into the complexities associated with the relationship between our casual lunchtime burger and the environment, among them is the Farm Sanctuary, whose website, farmsanctuary.org, is a plethora of vital information on this subject. According to their website, “Animal agriculture contributes about 66 percent of all agricultural greenhouse gas emissions in the United States.” This statistic includes every component of animal agriculture.

The influx of information in relation to climate change efforts can be just as overwhelming as our mental images, and making a valiant effort to address such a tumultuous issue seems out of the grasp for most people trying to live their day to day lives. It is important to remember, though, that as citizens we not only bring about change with the choices we make, but our choices can also inadvertently help others and the overall cause of lowering greenhouse gas emissions. The effort of being environmentally conscientious can be as simple as reducing the consumption of red meat from ruminant animals. If red meat seems impossible to avoid, choosing local is a good option. Always remember, each small step counts!
Another Caltrans Travesty

Elaine Weinreb

Westhaven has always been a quiet rural place with no downtown, no stores - at least in recent years - and no city government of any sort. It is tree-lined with mature redwood, Doug fir, red alder, and a relatively untouched understory of native vegetation. It is crossed by numerous small creeks that flow into the Pacific, about a half mile to the west. The houses are mostly old, and in some cases have been in the same family for generations. The people are not wealthy, and incomes are under the state average.

Many of the houses started out as logging cabins, sixty or more years ago, before the county started mapping right-of-way on the dirt roads that were later paved and given names. The cabins were built close to the roadway, separated perhaps by a row of trees or shrubs, a fence, or a short driveway. As the years went by, the cabins were expanded into houses, again long before there was a planning department. As a result, now in the 21st century, many of these homes now extend into the right-of-way of county roads, to the amusement of surveyors.

It is not a laughing matter for homeowners, however, who discovered last year that Caltrans planned to double the width of Westhaven Drive, on which about 150 properties front. Westhaven Drive, which is three miles long, is a low-traffic, winding rural road, not quite two lanes wide. It connects the Moonstone Beach area to the incorporated town of Trinidad. Locals usually drive slowly and carefully, watching for blind curves, schoolbuses, and sleeping dogs. Impatient drivers take the freeway.

If the road were widened, affected homeowners would lose their front yards, any semblance of peace and privacy and, in some cases, their driveways, wells or septic systems. Children and animals would have no protection from the traffic. Because the road would meet Caltrans standards, traffic would go much faster than it does at present, making it dangerous to walk dogs, bike, or enjoy any other form of passive recreation.

How did this come about? It is a bizarre story, rooted in the efforts of the Trinidad Rancheria to build a 5-story Hyatt hotel on the crumbling bluffs of Scenic Drive. As a traffic mitigation for Trinidad, the tribe asked Caltrans to construct a new interchange on 101, which would channel traffic directly to the proposed hotel. The interchange would connect to Westhaven Drive, hence the need to widen it to Caltrans standards. The tribe's rationale for involving Westhaven was that a few tribally-owned houses are on the east side of the freeway, with no direct access to the Rancheria's other properties.

The highway planning proceeded for nearly ten years, with little or no public notice. Residents did not learn of these plans until an HCAOG-funded Project Studies Report appeared in print.

Caltrans plans to double the width of Westhaven Drive, on which about 150 properties front. If the road were widened, affected homeowners would lose their front yards and in some cases, their driveways, wells or septic systems. Photo by Clay Johnson.

Caltrans has been unresponsive to the questions and concerns of the residents, telling them to talk to the Tribe. Trinidad Rancheria, however, claimed ignorance of the Westhaven Drive widening, even though plans for it appear many times in the Project Studies Report, bearing the tribal seal prominently on its cover.

This makes the widening of Westhaven Drive a runaway train. Nobody knows who climbed into the engine and tinkered with the gears, but it is now racing down the tracks with nobody in control, threatening to wreak havoc.
THE NEC’S COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION LEGACY

Chad Roberts, NEC Life Member

Conservation was already an important part of the cultural upwelling in the North Coast in the late 1960s, and in my mind the focus really sharpened when Tim McKay transferred to (then) Humboldt State College. HSC enrolled many people already motivated by conservationist objectives, but Tim’s activism at that time helped crystallize our interest in environmental decision-making processes. For many of us, that focus still exists. I was out of the North Coast for most of the 1970s, but when I returned the NEC was already an important player in environmental issues, with Tim at the helm. Local chapters of the Sierra Club and the National Audubon Society were prospering, as well as several regionally focused environmental groups. It was mutually advantageous for all these groups to collaborate, so the NEC became a virtual ‘Center’ of collective conservation activism in the North Coast.

For the next 20 years I was a member of both the NEC and of the Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS), and the RRAS conservation chair for about 11 years. A lesson emerged from those experiences that productive conservation outcomes usually resulted from collaborative actions with like-minded people. In addition to Tim at the NEC, in the early 1980s Lucille Vinyard and Susie Van Kirk of the Sierra Club were important local conservation activists, and many other folks carried parts of the load. It’s worth noting that some agency staff helped us in defining conservation objectives during this period; David Solis, a Forest Service wildlife biologist, and Gary Monroe, of the California Department of Fish & Game, deserve recognition for their contributions. During this entire period, the NEC was a central actor in the North Coast ‘environmental coalition,’ with a reach that extended far beyond the region.

Managing the National Forests in the Klamath region was a significant concern for many conservationists in the 1980s, a period of rapidly changing regulatory circumstances. The Six Rivers National Forest (SRNF) embarked on developing its (mandated) forest management plan in the early ‘80s, but didn’t publish an actual ‘draft’ plan until the middle of the decade. From the outset the conservation community was adamant that the draft plan didn’t address important values or processes in our federal lands. In 1987, NEC members collaboratively developed our own version of an SRNF plan, the Green Forest Plan for a Sustainable Future, which we submitted to the SRNF as a substitute version of the draft.

The SRNF didn’t adopt our plan, but it also didn’t pursue its initial ‘standard’ draft. The SRNF enlisted a broadly based contingent of public members, and FS planners incorporated most of the objectives of the NEC and other local conservation groups, finally issuing a ‘proposed’ plan in 1993. Similar dynamics affected planning for the other three Klamath region National Forests. Ultimately, the NEC’s involvement in these planning processes turned out to be a harbinger, pointing to the development of the Northwest Forest Plan (more on that below).

In the fall of 1987, the first of the ‘megafires’ in the North Coast region blew up, the 250,000+ acre King-Titus Complex, in the Happy Camp Ranger District of the Klamath National Forest (KNF), in western Siskiyou County, the known home of many northern spotted owls (NSO) and many unentered old-growth forest stands. The KNF followed its usual procedure for the ’80s, attempting to salvage large parts of the fire footprint with minimal environmental reviews. The NEC and its member groups appealed the environmental reviews for all the proposed projects, largely without success. In 1989 the NEC sued the KNF, demanding a thorough environmental assessment covering the entire King Complex, including an EIS.

The major environmental law firms active at the time declined to assist with the suit, so the NEC teamed up with Dave Krueger, a local attorney admitted to practice in federal courts, although he had no actual experience in environmental law at the time (see photo). The KNF concluded (correctly!) that it would lose, and settled the suit by agreeing to prepare an EIS; more important, the KNF agreed to incorporate existing scientific knowledge about the effects of KNF projects on wildlife species and their habitats in ‘ancient forests’ into its environmental assessment processes.

Any way it’s sliced, the late ’80s was a time of significant conservation change. The NSO was proposed for listing (more than once) under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), an outcome which federal land-management agencies and the timber industry strongly opposed. The major conservation groups in the United States walked softly around this issue, fearing that an NSO listing could result in the ESAs repeal by Congress, notwithstanding the fact that their local PNW chapters usually prevailed when challenging federal agency review processes for local projects, because agency decisions so clearly failed to comply with adopted regulations.

This ‘internal’ impasse within the conservation community led to a regional summit in late 1988 in Portland, OR, with the national leadership of the Sierra Club, the National Audubon Society, and the Wilderness Society present, together with representatives of local chapters and independent conservation groups...

Continued on next page
HELP A LEGENDARY PHOTOGRAPHER
COMPLETE HIS DREAM

Ally Gran and
Ted Humphrey

Dave Van de Mark is a living legend at Redwood National & State Parks. He arrived in Northern California in 1963 as acres and acres of old-growth redwood forest, the tallest trees in the world, were falling to the axe and chainsaw. He immediately recognized the importance and beauty of the forest and dedicated his life to their protection. Between 1965 and 1978, he trespassed on private timber land, chartered airplanes to fly over clear cuts, slept on streambanks, and walked over a thousand miles to capture over 5,000 photographs. These photos of forest destruction were sent all over the country and world, raising awareness that the old-growth redwood forest was rapidly disappearing. From TVs and newspapers to the state and national governments, Dave Van de Mark’s photos ignited a revolution leading to the establishment of Redwood National Park.

Without his dedication to photography and conservation, our favorite places at Redwood National and State Parks might not exist. Dave has committed his life to the redwoods, but conservation doesn’t pay. Almost 50 years after Dave helped protect a national park, he wants to complete his life’s work by photographing places he visited 50 years ago. However, he is struggling to find the resources to make it happen. Now it is time for us to give back and thank Dave for his conservation and protection of the redwood forest. It is time for us to help him complete his life’s work. This project is a one-in-a-lifetime chance to show, through the eyes of the photographer that helped protect it, what 50 years of conservation can do at Redwood National and State Parks.

Dave’s Lifelong Project

At 78 years old, the next couple years remain his best opportunity to extensively take to the field again. These new photos, when compared to his originals from over a half century ago, will show the drastic physical & biological changes within the park. An excellent photographer with an inspiring memory, Dave will go back to his original photograph locations to document the positive changes from conservation. These new photos will not only show the beauty of this area but its healing after destructive clearcutting in the 60s and 70s. This is a unique opportunity to demonstrate what 50 years of restoration and preservation has done to a devastated ecosystem.

To support this project, visit gofundme.com and search “Dave Van de Mark.”

Between 1965 and 1978, Dave trespassed on private timber land, chartered airplanes to fly over clear cuts, slept on stream banks, and walked over a thousand miles to capture over 5,000 photographs. His work was vital in bringing old-growth logging into the public consciousness. Photo by Ally Gran.

Dave Van de Mark in his element. Dave’s dedication to photography and conservation helped save what is now Redwood National Park from destructive logging. Photo by Ally Gran.

THE NEC’S COLLABORATIVE CONSERVATION LEGACY

Continued from previous page

...throughout the range of the NSO. The NEC headed a contingent of people from northwestern California, which as far as I can recall included at least one representative from every affected local group in our region. Together with representatives from western Oregon and Washington, the total attendance was around 120 people.

The summit had several significant outcomes, including commitments by the national groups to support NSO listing and to support the work of local chapters when dealing with Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) decision-makers in DC. To this day I believe this conservationist concord contributed directly to the 1990 ESA listing of the NSO as ‘Threatened’ by the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

The summit also resulted in an agreement among the national groups and the locals to develop a ‘lobby’ for ancient forests in DC, which led to the creation of the Western Ancient Forest Campaign (WAFC). The NEC was a significant factor in the WAFC’s engagement (in which Connie Stewart played a significant role). The WAFC, the strengthened presence of the national conservation groups, the support of several electeds in DC (particularly Jim Jontz, a Congressman from Indiana), and the NSO listing led the Forest Service and the BLM to halt their ongoing liquidation of ‘old-growth’ forests throughout the Pacific Northwest.

The elevated political stakes this created gave the issue a role in the 1992 presidential election, which led subsequently to the development by federal agencies of the Forest Ecosystem Management Assessment Team (FEMAT), and the subsequent 1996 Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP), based on FEMAT’s ‘Option 9.’ The NEC and its conservationist allies had a direct role in generating this outcome.

The conservation benefits achieved by the NEC and our member groups through collaboration remains, in my thinking, one of the most important lessons of that period. In 2002 I was a co-founder of Tuleyome, a regional nonprofit based in Yolo County, with a focus on conservation and recreational issues. Tuleyome’s founders already had extensive experience with major conservation organizations, including Audubon, the Sierra Club, the California Wilderness Coalition, and the California Native Plant Society, and we all knew the value of collaboration for accomplishing conservation objectives. A good example of this collaboration is the 2015 designation by the Obama administration of the 330,000-acre Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument in the inner Coast Range.

As Tim used to say when answering phone calls late in the evening: “Your environment never sleeps!” I think that developing this kind of fundamental, lifetime commitment to collaborative conservation is the real legacy that many of us old-timers still carry from our NEC engagement.
Elena Bilheimer is majoring in Environmental Studies with a minor in Journalism at HSU. In her studies she has mainly focused on the importance of incorporating social justice with environmental activism to work towards creating a more liberated and sustainable world. She is especially interested in learning more about how art, design, and writing can be used as tangible tools to promote activism. Her passions include being outside, camping, gardening, reading, design, and cooking. Elena is looking forward to being part of the NEC team and contributing to such an important Humboldt organization!

The Monster Project has been supporting collaborations between artists for over 6 years. The outcome of these collaborations have been the creation of large-scale canvas paintings, costume designs, songs, poetry, paintings on panels, ceramic sculpture, dance, performance work, and outside installations. There are no age limitations. The project is open to youth, adults, and elders. Some of the most exciting work and ongoing relationships that have come from the Monster Project have been intergenerational connections. An important component of the project is that both artists have an equal share in the idea and creation of their piece so there is no hierarchy or greater authority in the collaboration. The theme of Monster as the jumping off point for the collaborative work was chosen because of its great breadth and many interpretations. It incorporates not only creatures hidden in closets and under beds, but anything in life, as anything can be monstrous - fear, beauty, truth, nature, desire, our own inner struggles, other people. The collaborating artists explore their deepest humanness through their ideas of Monster.

This piece and many more can be viewed outdoors in the lot at the corner of G and 3rd Street in Eureka or at monsterproject.squarespace.com

- **Artists Collaborators:** Cicely Ames & Terry Torgerson
- **Title:** "Corona Chaos"
- **Medium:** Acrylic paint on wood panel
- **Speech bubbles:** "Our planet is on fire! If we destroy our planet we destroy ourselves!"
**BIDEN NOMINATES INDIGENOUS TRIBAL MEMBER TO LEAD NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

The last administration found it increasingly difficult and embarrassing to get Senate confirmation of nominees who sometimes had obvious conflicts of interest or personal issues that made them less-than-palatable to enough Senators that they never passed. As a result, some agencies were led by deputies and long-time acting designees that did not require Senate confirmation. With regard to some agencies, such as the National Park service, that lead to disarray at the top between unconfirmed appointees and career professionals. Some actions taken by those unconfirmed political appointees during the last 4-5 years have been challenged regarding their legal authority.

This summer President Biden announced his nomination for Director of the National Park Service, Charles F. Sams III.

Sams’s nomination was applauded by virtually all conservation organizations noting his many years as director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, a reservation located in Oregon with over 3,000 tribal members. Though some legal scholars and a few others have questioned his lack of experience with managing parks and large agencies with complex challenges between states and private enterprise, barring any surprises, his nomination is expected to pass easy confirmation. Though the NPS leaders have previously been African American and female, and a Latino American man was acting for a while under the last administration, there has never been a tribal member at the agency’s helm. As Interior Sec. Haaland stated: “The diverse experience that Chuck brings to the National Park Service will be an incredible asset as we work to conserve and protect our national parks to make them more accessible for everyone. I look forward to working with him to welcome Americans from every corner of our country into our national park system.”

**SLOUCHING TOWARD BUDGET RECONCILIATION**

While Congress and the Biden Administration heaved a sigh of relief on the Senate bipartisan passage of a generous infrastructure bill before the Senate left for recess, Speaker of the House Pelosi has made it clear she wants the Budget Reconciliation bill done before she signs the House version of the infrastructure bill.

The pathway to the President’s signature on both is not straightforward. Both parties want to point to their better working relationship with the Infrastructure Bill as the prime example. The Budget Reconciliation bill, however, only requires a Senate majority for passage. Pelosi’s poker game is determining how much budget support for things like climate change and conservation she can squeeze into the Reconciliation bill to make sure it will pass. The House without losing the ever-teetering swing votes of moderate Senators Manchin (D-WV) and Sinema (D-AZ) both are endangered Democrats in conservative states and Biden needs their support for his agenda.

An example of the tightrope Pelosi is walking is provided by our own congressman, Huffman. Conservationists are still steaming over the questionable, if not downright dishonest, way Senator Murkowski (R-AK) was able to push energy exploration in the boundaries of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) as part of the budget bill passed during the last administration. In the House, Rep. Huffman is trying to include language to stop leases in ANWR and offshore energy exploration as part of the Reconciliation bill. House Democrats believe the federal budget will require $40 million to repeal ANWR drilling and another $50 million to ban drilling in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and the Florida part of the Gulf of Mexico. Though specific language has not been divulged, conversations among leadership in both the House and Senate are ongoing. “I’d rather not be very specific,” Huffman told reporters of conversations he’s had with leaders regarding the negotiations, “but let’s just say I think it’s in play and I’m hopeful.” After working for four decades to successfully open ANWR to drilling leases, it is unlikely the Alaska congressional delegation will let that slip away. Murkowski’s working relationship with Manchin and other Democratic senators makes inclusion of halting ANWR leases a very steep climb. Rep. Porter (D-CA), however, may find there is less resistance to a provision she has discussed that would, for the first time in over a century, update the oil leasing program on federal lands. Porter’s proposal would include an increase in royalty rates for onshore oil and gas leases. “Administrative actions alone cannot solve this problem,” said Mary Greene, public lands attorney for the National Wildlife Federation. “Congress must … swiftly take action to update our hundred-year-old leasing law so that our nation can transition to the clean energy economy that we all need and deserve.”

**EVER-MOVING LINE BETWEEN WATER AND WETLANDS**

President Biden is enjoying a judge’s decision in which the U.S. District Court for the District of Arizona struck down Navigable Waters Protection Rule (NWPR), an attempt by the last administration to limit the reach of the Clean Water Act in protecting wetlands and upper reaches of watersheds. The timing is good for Biden’s team who has been working on a revision to the rule that would withstand legal challenges by developers and states. If the new rules pass the legal tests, conservationists can continue to advocate for protecting precious wetlands that are disappearing at an alarming rate as a result of the climate crisis as well as urban and suburban sprawl.

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Potter Valley Project: The Saga of Dam Removal

Caroline Griffith, EcoNews Journalist

As anyone who has followed the decades-long efforts to take down Klamath Dams knows, dam removal is a complex process. Oftentimes far more complex than the process of erecting those dams in the first place. In the last year, EcoNews has reported multiple times that the dams on the Eel River are “one step closer to coming down”. But how many steps are left before they actually do? Given the fact that in September the South Fork of the Eel River dried up to the point that it no longer connects with the main stem, it’s imperative that meaningful steps are taken to save Eel River salmon from extinction. In an unexpected turn of events, a September 23 ruling by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) set a clearer deadline for movement on dam removal.

The two dams on the Eel River, the Scott Dam and Cape Horn Dam, are part of the Potter Valley Project, a hydroelectric project with a 9.4 megawatt capacity and a mile-long diversion tunnel that delivers water to Potter Valley and the Russian River. When PG&E declined to renew its operating license for the Potter Valley Project with FERC in 2019, a group called the Two Basin Partnership formed to explore terms for a new license, looking for a “Two Basin Solution” serving the “co-equal goals” of Valley and the Russian River. When PG&E declined to Cape Horn Dam, are part of the Potter Valley Project, a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) set a

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GET ON BOARD FOR THE CLIMATE

When Ammonia Smells Like Flowers

Martha Walden

One of the biggest climate-changing threats facing civilization flies under the radar for most people: refrigerants. Emissions from these man-made chemicals are so much more potent than carbon or methane that it boggles the mind. Just the array of acronyms that refer to them – CFC, HCFC, HFC – boggles the mind. Never mind the full names – you don’t want to know.

Not long ago, the use of HFCs looked like a runaway train, as the world heats up and more and more cooling measures are needed. An international agreement was forged in 2016 to phase them out, but of course, Trump’s administration refused to ratify it. Miraculously, legislation was quarterbacked through Congress during the last month of his term that mandated an 85 percent reduction in the manufacturing of HFCs. Starting this month, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will establish HFC allowances for the federal cap and trade program.

This is good news but not as good as it sounds. The example of yesterday’s refrigerant, CFC, tells us so. That ozone-depleting chemical was banned in 1987. Thirty four years later, CFCs are reduced but still common. Manufacturing CFCs may be illegal, but using them is not. Each year approximately three times more CFCs are recycled than destroyed. The amount destroyed has dropped by half since 2012. Plus, most worryingly, CFC-11 is still illegally manufactured somewhere in south Asia, and the ozone layer over that area shows it.

Despite the cautionary tale, the EPA is using the same approach to get rid of HFCs. They too can be endlessly recycled. Fifteen percent of the current supply can even be manufactured legally, so that amount may give cover to illegal manufacturing. Another similarity is that the owners of commercial refrigeration systems do not need to repair their equipment unless its leakage rate exceeds 20 percent annually. That’s a lot of permission for something that traps thousands of times more heat than CO2.

As with CFCs, carbon offsets will play a role in lowering the costs of compliance with the new regime. Under this system, polluters are required to pay for emissions reductions anywhere in the world in order to compensate for their own before they eventually clean up their own act. Theoretically anyway. Unintended consequences and ample room to game the system have made for slow, expensive progress.

In summary, CFCs depleted the ozone, so the chemical industry begat HFCs, the world’s greatest global warmers. Undaunted by that serious oops, the chemical industry has now begat HFOs. I can hardly wait to see what those do. Old-fashioned refrigerants, such as ammonia, carbon dioxide and butane are making a comeback in the European Union and other parts of the world not as beholden to the chemical industry as the U.S.

The refrigerants committee of 350 Humboldt has met with Air Resources Board and Senator McGuire’s staff to prod California to go farther than the EPA in its commitment to reduce the globalwarming threat of HFCs. One idea is an incentive program for converting to “natural” refrigerants. Yes, compared to man-made coolants, butane is natural, carbon dioxide is a good guy, and ammonia smells like flowers.
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**REWILDING CANADIAN FARMS**

Topsy Farms on Amherst Island, Ontario, Canada, has rededicated an acre of their sheep pasture to the wild plants and animals that used to live there.

"Rewilding" is a growing trend around the world of land stewards restoring and maintaining native plants and habitats for local animals to repopulate, especially keystone species. In 2020, Nature magazine released an international study detailing the positive impacts of restoring natural ecosystems: if we rewilded 15 percent of the world’s farmland (in specific priority areas), we could prevent 60 percent of expected species extinctions while capturing and storing almost 300 gigatons of carbon dioxide—that’s nearly one third of the world’s total emissions since the Industrial Revolution.

Topsy Farms has fenced off a long, narrow corridor through their sheep pasture for rewilding. The fenced area includes 500 newly-planted trees, along with native shrubs, a snake habitat, an intricate irrigation system, and wildflowers throughout. There’s a break in the corridor that allows the sheep to cross without getting access to all the delicious new plants. Topsy is one of a number of farms in Ontario working to return parts of their land to native habitats. Some of the proven benefits are the return of birds and pollinator insects, ground water filtration, and reduced soil erosion.

The Topsy Farms team explained that an invasive species of beetles has been boring into the ash trees around their land, which ends up killing the trees and destroying the natural wind barrier they provide; without the windbreak, a lot of the farm’s topsoil blows away. Topsy Farms site coordinator Rachel Hawkshaw said, “A lot of the choices that we made were about what was pre-existing here and also can act as a permaculture food forest. The foraging serves us, the flock, but also anything else that’s out and around. It’s a good buffet and shelter for all the birds and the little critters.”

The term “rewilding” generally refers to large-scale restoration projects. Restoration Ecology Professor Stephen Murphy had this to add: “Whether one wishes to say, is that rewilding, restoration, or something else ... these are individuals who are taking a stance and making a really positive difference.”

Sources: Solutions Journalism, TVO.org, Nature.com

**MEXICO’S REEF INSURANCE**

In October 2020, Hurricane Delta hit the Mexican fishing and tourist town of Puerto Morelos and the enormous, vibrant coral reef that lives offshore; a long stretch of this reef is the world’s first natural asset protected by its own insurance policy.

The Mesoamerican Reef is the second-largest barrier reef system in the world, stretching along 700 miles of Mexico’s Caribbean coastline. The region hosts a network of ‘Guardians of the Reef,’ brigades of volunteer conservationists who tend to the reef’s well being. Soon after Hurricane Delta, a team of about thirty Guardians dived in to quickly assess and repair the underwater damage. Timing was key, since detached coral systems can die in less than a month. At first, the Guardians worked 12-hour days for almost six weeks; after a few months they were able to stabilize over 2,000 coral colonies and reattach more than 13,000 coral fragments.

Their restoration work was made possible by an innovative funding approach: insuring the economic value of nature to help pay for its own conservation. This insurance model was created by collaboration between the local government, hotel owners, an international non-governmental organization, and a pair of ambitious insurance companies.

Researchers at global nonprofit The Nature Conservancy (TNC) calculated a dollar amount of what the reef’s absence would cost the region’s tourism industry. The Mesoamerican Reef plays a fundamental role in the ecology and economy of Caribbean Mexico, attracting loads of tourists and marine life. Reefs also significantly affect stormy waters: a healthy reef can cushion around 97 percent of a wave’s energy before it hits the shore, and losing one meter of height off the top of a reef can potentially double the amount of damage delivered to local homes and businesses. These and other of “nature’s services” form the basis of devising an insurance policy for the reef. In 2018, TNC, local stakeholders, and insurer Swiss Re created the Coastal Zone Management Trust, funded by the government through taxing hotels for beach use. In 2019, the Trust took out the landmark insurance policy from a Mexican insurer, with Swiss Re serving as reinsurer.

The policy paid out $880,000 for restoration after Hurricane Delta. Mark Way, TNC’s director of Global Coastal Risk and Resilience, said, “It was a very significant milestone in our work to explore the use of insurance as a mechanism to protect at-risk coastal ecosystems. [It’s] a win for nature and a win for the coastal community, and it will drive further interest in conservation finance and the need to protect marine ecosystems across the globe.”

Volunteer Guardian Arcelia Romero Nava said, “The community here [in Puerto Morelos] realizes how important the reef is for fishing and tourism, and are fully behind this program. We get new volunteers every day, and all up this coast, towns are setting up their own brigades. Something big has started here.”

Sources: Solutions Summit, Reasons to be Cheerful

**NATIONAL PARKS FUND IN ACTION**

After a strong bipartisan push, former President Trump signed the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) in August 2020. The GAOA permanently authorizes the 1964 Land and Water Conservation Fund which uses profits from offshore oil and gas leases to maintain and improve America’s public lands, from National and State parks to neighborhood playgrounds and schools.

Shoshone National Forest (WY) has already had a worn-out bridge replaced; Devil’s Canyon campground at Manti-La Sal National Forest (UT and CO) has new roads; Umatilla and Malheur National Forests (OR and WA) have a scenic byway and drain culvert replacement underway; National Forests like Daniel Boone (KY), El Yunque (Puerto Rico), George Washington-Jefferson (Appalachia), Ozark St. Francis (AR), and all National Forests in Florida and North Carolina are set to receive new bridges, campgrounds, roads, trail upkeep programs, wastewater treatment systems, and more.

Montana got a hefty share of funding for over 50 at-large maintenance projects throughout the state, in wilderness and recreation areas including the Bitterroot Mountain Range and Flathead Lake. Zion National Park (UT) has $11 million dedicated to campground restoration, and Sierra National Forest (CA) is getting a number of roads and campgrounds redone. On top of all that, the inimitable Pacific Crest Trail, which crosses through 25 National Forest easements in California, has some restoration on the calendar.

The GAOA passed with massive bipartisan support, authorizing $1.6 billion in annual funding for five years to tackle deferred maintenance programs on public lands and at Tribal schools. The bill also assured permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, allotting an annual $900 million for parks, forests, lakeshores, campgrounds, roads and other infrastructure, including small local parks and playgrounds. The Department of the Interior expects to invest in over 18,000 jobs, contribute over $2 billion to America’s gross domestic product, and direct many of the benefits to underserved communities and schools funded by the Bureau of Indian Education.

All of the above restoration and maintenance projects were greenlit in just the past year; many more will follow in the years to come! Sources: Good News Network, DOI.gov

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*Source: IFAW, Happy Broadcast*
**CREATURE FEATURE**

*Long Tailed Weasel*

*Neogale frenata*

Wiyot Name: Tsougulhayughunu’ru’

Ivy Munnerlyn, Coastal Programs Coordinator

**LONG TAILED WEASEL**

*(Neogale frenata)* or Tsougulhayughunu’ru’ in the Wiyot language.

The long tailed weasel is a charming but fierce predator, snacking primarily on rodents and other small mammals. Weasels are part of the “Mustelid” family, which includes badgers, otters, martens, and ferrets. In summer, they are brown with a white face and pale belly. In the winter, they transition to an all-white coat (except the tip of their tail, which is always black).

This species typically makes its den in abandoned chipmunk burrows. Their young develop rapidly, and can leave the burrow and eat meat before their eyes open. Photo: A. Davey on Flickr

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**Hoary Bat**

*(Aeorestes cinereus)* or Skoyom in the Yurok language.

Hoary Bats are a widespread species in North America, and are one of the most common bat species in Humboldt County. They are also some of the largest bats, measuring nearly 6 inches in length.

They get the name “hoary” from their silver-tipped fur, which is reddish brown underneath. Hoary bats hunt their insect prey using very low frequency echolocation. This makes it harder for them to detect obstacles, so they typically hunt over wide open spaces. You can spot these tree-dwelling mammals at Humboldt Redwoods State Park in the evenings.

Photo: JN Stuart on Flickr

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**California Blackberry**

*(Rubus ursinus)* or Pi’dughurragilh in the Wiyot language.

CA blackberry is native to the West Coast and can be distinguished from invasive counterparts by their slender petals, which taper to a point at the base and tip. The leaves are also a good indicator. They are green on the underside, and always come in sets of 3. The CA blackberry has a hard time competing with the invasive Himalayan blackberry, so this is a great plant to cultivate in your yard and surrounding areas.

Chances are you’re more likely to run into the highly invasive Himalayan Blackberry than our native species. While this species is extremely disruptive to native plant communities, it is also delicious to humans, so pick as many as you like! Photo: A. Davey on Flickr
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