BY THE PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE

RACHEL CARSON TRIBUTE | YOUTH V GOV FILM REVIEW | THROW THE DAM AWAY | HUMBOLDT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

KIN TO THE EARTH: MAGGIE GAINER | THE SEA IS RISING | JACKSON DEMONSTRATION STATE FOREST | LAND RETURN
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**Bouquets**

**Sincere Gratitude To:**

- The family and friends of Jim Test who passed away in May of 2022. Jim served as editor of EcoNews and was on the Board of the NEC. He also served on the Arcata City council and co-owned Bug Press. As the first Editor of EcoNews, we are grateful to Jim for laying the groundwork for this fine publication that is in your hands right now.
- To Black Humboldt for organizing Juneteenth celebration events throughout June in Humboldt County. Thank you for inviting the NEC to support and to be a part of centering and celebrating Black Joy. To learn more about Black Humboldt visit: www.blackhumboldt.com

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**Greetings from the - Northcoast Environmental Center -**

The mission of EcoNews is to inform and educate the public on environmental issues around the world, state and bioregion. Many of these issues are complex and have varying levels of support throughout the environmental community. Our goal is to provide a platform to explore, discuss and debate these topics in order to better understand their nuances. The ideas expressed in EcoNews do not necessarily reflect the positions of the NEC or its member groups. We appreciate and welcome alternative points of view.

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  North Coast Chapter
  www.northcoastcnps.org
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- Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment (SAFE)
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- Friends of Del Norte
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- Zero Waste Humboldt
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Let's Start With the Good News!

In a turn of events that thrilled environmental activists on the north coast, the Surface Transportation Board (which regulates rail travel) announced on June 10 that it was rejecting the bid by a shadowy LLC to rebuild the rail lines along the ecologically fragile Eel River to haul coal up to Humboldt Bay for export to Asia. We are waiting to see whether they appeal the decision and what the next steps are, but it looks like this particular flim-flam has been defeated. There was swift and strong opposition to this proposal from a local coalition of environmental, labor and faith-based groups that the NEC was proud to be a part of. Thank you to everyone who took action locally to stop big coal from coming to Humboldt. Whether the attempt by the Mendocino Railway to take over a 13-mile stretch of the right of way will be successful and how it will impact the Great Redwood Trail remains to be seen, so stay tuned.

Housing in Humboldt

With the expansion of Cal Poly Humboldt, the likely development of offshore wind projects and the associated industries, and the general appeal of our coastal climate and natural spaces, we need to be prepared for the growth that is headed our way in Humboldt County. (Whether we like it or not.) Specifically, we need to make sure we can house everyone, and not just new residents; we also need to effectively and affordably house all of our existing community members. The very same things that attracted many of us to this area are increasingly attractive to others and, although the estimated numbers of potential new residents vary, no matter what, it seems that we are on the cusp of change. Although that may be hard for some to accept, we need to plan for this growth to make sure that it’s done thoughtfully, but we also need to do it quickly enough that we don’t find ourselves making bad decisions and accepting bad projects out of necessity.

Humboldt County is already behind on building new housing: Our Regional Housing Needs Allocation (the number of units that the State is requiring the county to plan for) is 3,390, but that requirement was made before Cal Poly Humboldt announced it expected to add 5,600 new students by 2028. Ask anyone who has looked for housing recently and you will hear just how difficult and expensive their search has been, highlighting the need for more housing options.

While many of us agree that there is a problem, agreement on a solution is more elusive. Both Eureka and Arcata have come up with plans for infill housing: in Eureka, the City is actively working to develop affordable housing projects on city parking lots, while in Arcata they are working to update the zoning code to allow for and incentivize infill development, which can help the environment by reducing dependency on cars for transportation as well as preventing sprawling development into forests and agricultural lands. Both of these plans are getting pushback, some of it unexpected.

For the most part, those who are opposed to the plans are not presenting alternate ways to solve our housing problem. Some of the arguments that are being raised are about environmental concerns, so it’s up to us as people who care about the environment and the people who rely on it to come up with solutions rather than just saying no to the plans and hoping that our communities never grow. We can’t simply shut the door on newcomers and say no to all new housing development. The NEC, along with other local environmental groups, is working (as always) to push for the best possible development so that we can equitably house new and existing residents while protecting this amazing place that we call home.

If you support the development of housing, especially infill housing, in Eureka and Arcata, please get in touch so we can work together to make it happen in the most climate-friendly, people-friendly way possible.

The War in Ukraine and the Military Industrial Complex

As the war in Ukraine was starting, we were fortunate to make contact with a Ukrainian environmental organization, Ecoaction, that was starting the process of documenting environmental atrocities resulting from the Russian invasion. Their findings have been compiled into an online map that can be found at en.ecoaction.org.ua/warmap.html. Many of the actions used by militaries in war involve destruction of infrastructure for strategic reasons, resulting in environmental devastation from bombed oil and gas infrastructure, hazardous waste and sewage leaks, fires that lay waste to forests and destroy habitat, contaminated waterways, and, in the case of Ukraine, radioactive leaks.

Although some of the impacts of war on the environment are very obvious, another way that militarism harms the environment is through funding. The U.S. Defense Budget for 2022-23 is $752.9 billion, as much as the next nine countries combined. Although $617 million of this budget will go towards “adapting to and mitigating climate change”, this is a pittance compared to what is being spent on militarization. Resistance to war and the war machine peaks when we are actively engaged in conflict, but it is important to note that every year the US Defense budget grows larger without a fight while lawmakers quibble about funding for the environment, climate change solutions, healthcare and pretty much everything else. Imagine if instead of building new bombers, we prioritized climate change solutions, green infrastructure, low-carbon jobs, healthcare, education and the arts. Let’s make that happen.
Silent Spring of the publication of Rachel Carson’s book,Silent Spring, which would turn those scenes of innocence into stunning images of dangerous ignorance.

Rachel Carson was the perfect person to combine scientific knowledge with riveting and eloquent writing to change Americans. Carson became an aquatic biologist with the Bureau of Fisheries, later part of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. Carson’s work included reviewing results of research conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture that raised concerns about environmental and public health issues arising from the indiscriminate application of DDT. The research showed links between some pesticides and impacts to birds that ingested them. Perhaps most shocking was the implosion of some bird species such as Bald Eagles as a result of the eggshell fragility caused by DDT. She was maddened that the reports from those studies did not make it into the public

Before 1962, scenes of children enjoying lunch at picnic tables in parks while being sprayed with clouds of pesticides were common. Images of suburban children chasing after slow-moving trucks emptying tanks of the pesticide DDT into a misty fog for them to play in and low-flying crop-dusters laying a cloud of DDT on acres of crops across America were not uncommon. This September is the 60th anniversary of DDT on acres of crops across America and beyond. A biologist with a gentle, clear voice, she welcomed her audiences to her love of the sea, while with an equally clear determined voice she warned Americans of the dangers human beings themselves pose for their own environment. Always concerned, always eloquent, she created a tide of environmental consciousness that has not ebbed.”

On the Maine shore where her ashes were scattered a plaque reads: “Rachel Carson (1907-1964), Writer, Ecologist, Champion of the Natural World, Here at last returned to the sea.”

**LEARN MORE ABOUT CARSON’S LEGACY HERE:**

- Rachel Carson childhood farm: [rachelcarsonhomestead.org](http://rachelcarsonhomestead.org)
- The home she built in Silver Spring, Maryland: [rachelcarsonhouse.org](http://rachelcarsonhouse.org)
- The Rachel Carson Council environmental organization: [rachelcarsoncouncil.org](http://rachelcarsoncouncil.org)
Dear EcoNews,

During a recent conversation with a friend, she recounted an experience she had in which she and her partner came across a sea bird that had been pushed to the shore on a remote beach and was getting pummeled by waves. Uncertain and distressed about what to do, they waited a little while to see if it would recover and then decided to intervene by picking up the bird gently with a towel and bringing it out into the sea past the pummeling waves. Unfortunately, the bird seemed to recover for a little while but then succumbed to the stress of the experience. The conversation made me realize that I don't know what the right thing would have been to do in that circumstance. Does anyone have any advice about what to do when you come across injured wildlife?

- Wondering about Wildlife

Dear Wondering about Wildlife,

Hi there! My name is Monte Merrick. I’m a co-founder of Bird Ally X and the director of Humboldt Wildlife Care Center/bax, which is our region’s only permitted wildlife hospital, outside of the North Coast Marine Mammal Center in Crescent City, which treats only Seals, Sea lions and other marine mammals.

First let me say thank you for caring about the fate of that bird, and for your friend’s compassion and willingness to act. I’m sorry for what happened. As a wildlife care provider for the last 23 years, I’ve had plenty of heartbreak when a treatment plan doesn’t work. I can definitely relate to their experience.

Your friend was correct in assuming that the seabird they found needed help. For many aquatic birds, coming to land is a serious sign of distress. Obviously gulls, pelicans and shorebirds are highly aquatic, and yet are normal to see on land, but some species are so devoted to water that even their nests are made of floating vegetation. Grebes come to mind. Other similarly aquatic species come to land only to breed, using offshore rocks for colony nesting sites. Common Murres are easy to see on the rocks off Trinidad during breeding season, as an example. Any individuals of a species evolved to a life on water who come to shore are very likely in a life-threatening situation. There is nothing on land for them - no food, no water, no shelter. If they cannot survive in the element to which they are finely adapted, they come to land as a desperate move, but it’s an unsustainable effort and they die, literally stranded.

As a wildlife responder to catastrophic oil spills, I have spent many hours walking beaches catching stranded birds. It’s not easy. Often a bird you are trying to net slips past you and makes it back to the water. Their bravery in their attempt to evade capture is deeply admirable, but their success at evading capture means death from their injury. So we develop skills to increase our odds! Sometimes a bird is so debilitated that they don’t evade capture. But that doesn’t mean it’s too late for them! Just last month we admitted a Common Loon, a very heavy, highly aquatic bird who only comes to land to nest, who was found grounded near Gold Bluff beach. Four weeks of recuperative time in our pool were required for that loon to be well again, but in fact, she was released just last week.

My advice for situations like the one your friend experienced is pretty simple. If you are able to pick up a bird on the beach, it is absolutely safe to assume that the bird needs treatment. In almost all situations in which a person can capture a wild animal, it likely means that the animal needs help. Our clinic is open 365 days a year to admit injured and orphaned wildlife. We’re here for just this reason. If you find an animal that you think may be in trouble, but aren’t sure, or you aren’t able to safely capture, for whatever reason, you can always call us at (707) 822-8839. We send crews out every day to rescue wildlife in need.

- Bird Ally X

Dear Felice Pace,

I genuinely appreciate you taking the time to read my piece and write a reply. It always feels good to hear the readers’ opinions. In assessing and analyzing any socio-ecological phenomenon, many different aspects could be used or not, which strongly depend on the context in which the analysis has been conducted. My main goal in “Smokey Bear: A Savior or An Agent” in the April 2022 issue of EcoNews was to assess the ecological impacts of settler colonialism on the life of the Indigenous people of the United States, especially in fire-dependent and fire-adapted ecosystems. What you mentioned as the primary reason for intense, devastating forest fires, I firmly believe, is another example of settler colonial policy and Western understanding of the environment, which was and still is strongly anthropocentric and fails to count for the biodiversity of the already established ecosystems and the traditional ecological knowledge of people who live on this land for thousands of years.

I am aware that there is much scientific research regarding clearcutting and plantations and their influence on forest fires, but let’s consider the impacts of the objective understanding of nature, which disregarded the traditional ecological knowledge of Indigenous people. The Federal government used such discursive and objective knowledge to control vast areas of public domain lands and established the United States Forest Service to manage those lands. As an ongoing colonial process, settler colonialism happens through the alteration of land, species composition, ecological structure, and the relationships between people and nature. Such processes undermined various core relationships that challenge every aspect of indigenous communities, from their sovereignty to their mental and physical health, and create dominant narratives regarding the ecological dynamics of settler colonialism.

With all that said, I understand your concern, and I appreciate your reply as it is always inspiring to hear from the readers.

Onward to the world we deserve,

Farzad Forouhar

Editor’s Note: In the April 2022 EcoNews issue Farzad Forouhar wrote the article “Smokey Bear: A Savior or An Agent?” In the June 2022 EcoNews issue we published a Letter to the Editor by Felice Pace commenting on the article. Below is Farzad’s response to Felice’s letter.
The Youths Are Alright

Matt Simmons, EPIC

Brown v. Board of Education, Loving v. Virginia, Obergefell v. Hodges, these are the names of some of the most famous and consequential court cases in United States history. They all have something in common too. In each case the plaintiffs asked the courts to recognize a right in the Constitution that was not previously recognized.

Youth v. Gov., a documentary now available on Netflix, is the story of another such case, Juliana v. US. It documents the struggle of the 21 youth plaintiffs who sued the United States arguing that the government has violated their constitutional right to a stable climate. To quote their lead attorney, Julia Olson, “Liberty and Justice cannot exist if we have a destabilized climate system.”

The 21 youth plaintiffs come from every corner of the United States and reflect the diversity of our nation. And yet, they have one striking thing in common; they are all already experiencing the harmful effects of climate change. Whether it’s Levi, a young boy from Florida who has already experienced several hurricanes and whose home is projected to be underwater by the end of the century, or Jamie, a member of the Navajo Nation who had to leave her home due to a drought, they each have a powerful story about the impacts of climate change.

Their stories are a powerful reminder that climate change is impacting everyone no matter where you live. The climate crisis is already upon us. As youth, the plaintiffs have a unique perspective on climate change because they bear zero responsibility for the climate crisis but will live the longest to experience its ramifications. While watching the documentary, you get a sense of how powerless these children felt learning about the climate crisis and culpability of the United States in perpetuating it.

The documentary is a good introduction to the history of the United States' complicity in the climate crisis. The plaintiffs’ case rests on the idea that not only did the United States fail to avert climate change but that they actively participated in causing the problem by permitting, subsidizing and promoting fossil fuels. Not only that, but the United States had knowledge of the problem much earlier than the general public and buried some of the most damning evidence. One memorable witness, a former government employee, shows the documentary team a basement full of files documenting the government’s knowledge of and lack of response to climate change. Many of the witnesses on the plaintiff’s side are former government employees who are racked with guilt over their failure to act sooner.

The documentary is also a good introduction to the byzantine nature of environmental litigation. The documentary covers several years of this case, but the courts barely make it through one of the very first issues that any court hears when a lawsuit is brought: standing. To summarize a complicated legal issue, standing is the doctrine that determines whether a plaintiff has the right to sue in the first place. A plaintiff must show 1) that they have been injured, 2) that the defendant caused their injury and 3) that the court can redress their harm. If a plaintiff cannot prove all three of those elements their case is tossed out of court. Much of the documentary is spent with the plaintiff’s attorney, Julia Olson, as she explains how she is attempting to meet each of those three elements.

Despite this technically being a legal documentary, the youth are the real stars of the show. Their joyous cries and disappointed moans as the case works its way through the seemingly endless legal process lend emotion to a story that could easily be boring if told in the wrong way. While at the same time the documentary does an excellent job of explaining the case against the U.S. government whose actions have directly accelerated the climate crisis. By the end of the documentary, I was thoroughly convinced that we do have a right to a stable climate and that those kids deserve better than what our government has left them. You can stream Youth v. Gov on Netflix now.

For a look at local youth activism, check out Mendocino County Youth for Climate at www.themycy.org.
Les Jóvenes Están Bien

por Matt Simmons, EPIC
traducción por Carley Arroyo

Brown c. Junta de Educación, Loving v. Virginia, Obergefell v. Hodges, estos son los nombres de algunos de los casos judiciales más famosos y consecuentes en la historia de los Estados Unidos (EE.UU). Todos tienen algo en común. En cada caso, los demandantes solicitaron a los tribunales que reconozcan un derecho en la Constitución que no estaba previamente reconocido.

El documental ahora disponible en Netflix, Juventud v. Gobierno (Youth v. Gov) es la historia de otro caso similar, Juliana v. EE.UU. Se documenta la lucha de los 21 jóvenes demandantes que demandaron a EE.UU argumentando que el gobierno ha violado su derecho constitucional a un clima estable. Su abogada principal, Julia Olson, cita, "la libertad y la justicia no pueden existir si tenemos un sistema climático desestabilizado".

Los 21 jóvenes demandantes provienen de todos los rincones de los EE.UU y reflejan la diversidad de nuestra nación. Y, sin embargo, tienen una cosa llamativa en común. Todos ellos ya están experimentando los efectos nocivos del cambio climático. Ya sea Levi, un niño de Florida que ya ha sufrido varios huracanes y a quien su casa se prevé quede bajo el agua a fines de siglo, o Jamie, miembro de la Nación Navajo que tuvo que abandonar su hogar debido a una sequía. Cada individuo tiene una poderosa historia sobre los impactos del cambio climático.

Sus historias son un recordatorio poderoso de que el cambio climático está afectando a todos, sin importar dónde viva. La crisis climática ya está sobre nosotros. Como jóvenes demandantes, tienen una perspectiva única sobre el cambio climático porque no tienen ninguna responsabilidad por la crisis climática, pero también viven más tiempo para experimentar sus ramificaciones. Mientras ves el documental, te da una idea de que impotentes se sintieron estos jóvenes al enterarse de la crisis climática y la culpabilidad de los EE.UU al perpetuarla.

El documental es una buena introducción a la historia de la complicidad de EE.UU en la crisis climática. El caso de los jóvenes demandantes, tienen una perspectiva única sobre el cambio climático porque no tienen ninguna responsabilidad por la crisis climática, pero pueden sentir la necesidad de demandar al gobierno por su falta de acción.

El documental también es una buena introducción a la bizantina naturaleza de los litigios ambientales. El documental cubre varios años de este caso, pero los tribunales apenas logran superar uno de los primeros temas que cualquier tribunal escucha cuando se inicia una demanda: la legitimación. Para resumir un tema legal complicado, la legitimación es la doctrina que determina si un demandante tiene derecho a demandar en primer lugar. Un demandante debe probar 1. Que ha sido lesionado, 2. Que el demandado causó su lesión y 3. Que el tribunal pueda reparar su daño. Si un demandante no puede probar los tres elementos, su caso es desestimado.

A pesar de que técnicamente es un documental legal, los jóvenes son las verdaderas estrellas del espectáculo. Sus gritos de alegría y gemidos de desilusión mientras el caso se abre camino a través del aparentemente interminable proceso legal dan emoción a una historia que fácilmente podría ser aburrida si se cuenta de manera incorrecta. Al mismo tiempo, el documental hace un excelente trabajo al explicar el caso contra el gobierno de los EE.UU., cuyas acciones han acelerado directamente la crisis climática. Al final del documental, estaba completamente convencido de que tenemos derecho a un clima estable y que esos niños merecen algo mejor de lo que nuestro gobierno les ha dejado.

Puedes ver el documental Youth v. Gov en Netflix ahora.

Para ver más sobre el activismo juvenil local, diríjase a www.the-myc.org aprender sobre jóvenes mendocinos por el clima (Mendocino Youth for Climate).
Dabawouwulh ta’luluwouyit!
(LET’S THROW THE DAM AWAY!)  

Michelle Vassel

There we were, in the middle of where the Eel River has always been, on a bed of rock covered in putrid smelling yellow and brown algae. Under our feet were stranded tadpoles, some pollywogs with hind legs formed, and some with both front and back legs and full tails, not yet frogs, not ready to leave the water, yet the water had left them. What was left of the river clung to the eastern shore, only a couple inches deep and a few feet wide.

The scene was apocalyptic. Wiyot Tribal Chairman Ted Hernandez took to Facebook, “This is our Eel River. It is dying, because of the Potter Valley Dam system and the drought,” he said. Speaking from the heart, he pleaded, “This is where we need to come together and bring our river back to health.”

It is hard to believe that this is the same Eel River that Tribal Elder Irving James once described. In 1996 Mr. James told the story of his best day fishing, in 1920, when he pulled up two thousand pounds of salmon. “There weren’t any more days like this ever,” he said. Irving James lived from 1900-2000 and watched the change in the river after the two dams were put in. He watched each year as fewer salmon came home.

The Eel River was once one of the largest salmon fisheries on the West Coast. In 1900, Cape Horn Dam and a one-mile tunnel to Potter Valley at the headwaters of the East Fork Russian River were constructed. Twelve miles upstream from Cape Horn, Scott Dam – which forms Lake Pillsbury – was completed in 1922.

In August of 2021 the entire north state was dry as a bone. For 145 miles, as we drove to Potter Valley, we saw tan grass, crisp fields – as far as the eyes could see, everything was dry. As soon as we reached Potter Valley the entire color palette changed to green: green alfalfa, green grape vineyards, green grass being grazed. Potter Valley was a beautiful oasis in an otherwise dry state. The Eel River before Van Arsdale Reservoir (formed by Cape Horn Dam) was cold and had current; it was deep enough to swim. Downriver of the dams, after the diversions, the water was sparse, moved slowly, and was significantly warmer.

On our way home, as we talked about the horrible conditions on the Eel at Fernbridge, Scotia, and Rio Dell, Wiyot Tribal Councilwoman Marnie Atkins said, “We have been here before.” She reminded us of a traditional Wiyot story about the “Stolen Salmon.” I was familiar with the story because the Tsek Houdaqh youth program had created a shadow play with Dell’Arte International theatre group and brought the story to life. In this story, our hero, Southwest-Young-Man, during a time when Wiyot people were hungry and there were no fish to eat, goes in search of fish. He leaves his village in Wiyot country and heads to the mountains. After a long journey he finds himself in a village and stays for a while. Someone comes into the village with a huge salmon, and they share it with him. He stays a while to try to figure out where it came from. He finds that the salmon are being kept in a lake behind a dam. One night, he waits until nightfall and sneaks back out to the lake, and under the cover of fog he removes the dam. Once removed, he watches the water flow again; he sees the salmon are free and returns home to Wiyot country. After his return a man told him that he had been down to the river and saw fish.

This story, Councilwoman Atkins pointed out, is traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) about the impact of dams on salmon. Wiyot people have at some point in the thousands of years living in this place experienced a dam on the river that resulted in low fish counts and passed down this story through the generations. Chairman Hernandez has expressed the Wiyot view of dams many times over the years, “Our rivers are our life veins.” When you put a tourniquet on a vein you stop its flow, and you eventually kill the limb. That is what these dams are doing, killing our river and all who need it to live.

Later, I was thinking about those baby frogs at the river, and I thought of another Wiyot story I had heard about frogs. This story tells of a frog whose child becomes deathly ill, and he tells Spinagaralu. Spinagaralu callously says, “Well, let it be dead.” Later Spinagaralu’s child becomes sick, and the frog replies, “That is alright, let him be dead.” Perhaps if Spinagaralu had cared about the frog’s child, his own child might have lived. According to the story, if, when the frog’s child died and he went to Spinagaralu, the latter had said: “It is too bad that your child is dead; let it live,” then people would not die, but all would live.

This story, like the last, is TEK, reminding us that we should be concerned about frogs. Frogs are an indicator species; they are the first impacted by damage to the environment. When they die, we should be concerned because we may be next.

Continued on next page
Dams have to be relicensed every 50 years by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and PG&E started this process for the Potter Valley Project in 2017. After two years, PG&E announced that it would not relicense it as the company was no longer making money from the aging project. Energy production has come a long way in a hundred years. There are cheaper, more effective and environmentally sound means of making electricity. The value of the dam had changed from energy to another resource to be extracted, another commodity – water. Originally built to produce power, the creation of the second dam in 1922 enabled the summer diversions, which is when the river needs its water the most. Counties south of Humboldt had become dependent on Eel River water. The Potter Valley Irrigation District (PVID) formed to provide Eel River irrigation water to the farmers along the East Branch Russian River and has benefited from the Potter Valley Project. Eel River water further down the Russian River is used for farming, recreational, aesthetics, and (Russian River) fishery enhancement purposes. For 100 years Eel River farmers, recreationists, fish, and wildlife have paid the price. Our salmon, steelhead, and pacific lamprey (a culturally significant species that survived two mass extinctions) have paid the price. As PG&E rate payers, we have even footed the water bill.

In 2017 Congressman Jared Huffman formed a group to discuss a “two-basin” solution to this problem. The Wiyot Tribe participated because the group purported to value science, and the Tribe agreed that it would entertain some form of winter diversion if the science showed that it could be done without impacting the Eel River (perhaps taking water during times of winter flooding). Another group formed in 2018, the Two-Basin Partnership, of parties from both basins who proposed to take over the license from PG&E, and the Wiyot Tribe was invited to join. The Wiyot Tribal Council unanimously rejected the offer because in order to do so the Tribe would have to agree to an additional consideration: to continue to support one or more of the dams. The Tribal Council stated it would only entertain options that ensured a “free-flowing” Eel River, because TEK, the science of tens of thousands of years, maintains that dams inherently harm fish.

This is a familiar story, played out again and again; extraction of resources by outsiders who do not live here and care nothing about frogs’ children. First, they came for fur, then gold, then timber, then salmon, and now our water. Local news has been reporting victories, the license takeover has failed, the Potter Valley Project license has expired, and it all seems as though there is nothing to worry about. The dams aren’t just going to come down on their own. This is the moment in history where we as a community need to let our voices be heard, when we need to pay the most attention. FERC has asked PG&E to come up with a decommissioning plan and we need to lend our voices and expertise to this plan. We need to press for a timeline. We need to voice our opposition to perpetual one-year license extensions and requests for drought variances that allow the extraction of more water to the benefit of the Russian River watershed as the drought continues to severely impact our Eel River. This is a once in a lifetime chance to return our river to health. This is the time where we need to embody the Wiyot cultural hero Gatswokwire (Southwest-Young-Man), and let’s come together, and Dabawouwl ‘a’luwouyit! (Let’s throw the dam away!)

For a longer version of this article, visit yournec.org/econews/july2022
What's Happening With That Climate Action Plan?

Elena Bilheimer, EcoNews Journalist

The recent public release of the draft regional Humboldt Climate Action Plan (CAP) offers the community an important opportunity to contribute their opinions on how Humboldt’s local government should be planning to reduce greenhouse gas emissions regionally and strategizing for a cleaner future. To better understand what this plan means and how the public can become involved, here is a breakdown of what the CAP is and the process it will go through in the next year to potentially be adopted by the governing entities of Humboldt.

What is the Humboldt CAP?

According to Michael Richardson, Supervising Planner for the county, the CAP is “an attempt by the county and all of the cities to describe how we intend to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions into the future to comply with State requirements.” California has taken a “carrot” approach in their effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), meaning that they have chosen to offer a reward — a streamlined pathway when it comes to the environmental review of projects — instead of a punishment for local governments that create a CAP that meets State targets. The current draft plan identifies six specific goals to reduce GHG emissions locally, which are further broken down to introduce the various strategies, objectives, and implementation measures that will be used to ensure success.

Who was part of its creation?

A few years ago, the County and the cities came together and decided to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the roles and the responsibilities of the various governing entities in the creation of a CAP. Since then, staff from the County of Humboldt, Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA), and Environmental Indicator Accounting Services (EIAS) in consultation with city staff from Arcata, Eureka, Blue Lake, Ferndale, Fortuna, Rio Dell and Trinidad, and stakeholders have been researching other rural CAPs to develop the measures and recommendations outlined in the draft plan. According to Richardson, there have also been a number of public meetings designed to engage the community and get their opinions about what should be included, although there hasn’t yet been the comprehensive public engagement that he would desire.

What is the timeline of the CAP?

Throughout the months of May and June, the draft plan was brought to the Board of Supervisors and the various city councils for a high level review to make sure that the CAP met the basic framework for what is going to be evaluated in the environmental review process. After that is completed, a notice of preparation for the environmental impact report (EIR) will be published, which offers a 45 day window for the public to weigh in on what environmental impacts should be discussed in the EIR. The environmental review process typically takes about a year to complete, so around August of 2023, the environmental document will be certified and the CAP has the potential to be adopted.

How will it be approved, implemented, and enforced?

The plan that will eventually be up for adoption is going to be greatly influenced by the environmental review process that is about to take place. The environmental review process includes the creation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which contains descriptions of various alternative plans to the current draft CAP. An EIR is a document designed to analyze a project’s potential impact on the environment, in addition to identifying various mitigation measures and alternatives. State law requires the inclusion of both a “no project alternative” (an evaluation of what the environmental impact would be if nothing was done and the status quo was preserved) and an “environmentally superior alternative” (an evaluation of the plan that will have the least impact on the environment) in the EIR. Although decision makers have to consider the environmental document as a whole, they don’t have to select the environmentally superior project, just as they don’t have to select the no project alternative. Because the CAP is a regional plan, the County Board of Supervisors and the various jurisdictions will vote on it separately. They have the ability to approve or deny the whole plan or approve only certain measures. If the plan is approved, what typically happens is that the various jurisdictions pool their resources to hire a professional planner to seek funding and monitor the implementation of the CAP. Richardson emphasized that there was a range of options that may be considered at that phase, and it is still uncertain what exactly will happen.

What is the public input process?

The environmental review process will generate a lot of discussion about what measures are a good fit and what could be improved, which is why robust public engagement is necessary. Richardson suggests that now is a good time for interested citizens to reach out and comment. During the 45 day Notice of Preparation, comments about what should be included in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be accepted. After that process, there will be opportunities for public comment on the draft EIR, which will be addressed in the final EIR. “I think we’re positioning ourselves to be very open and expansive in our public engagement in the review of the alternatives and in the development of the alternatives,” said Richardson. “So that’s where the public will have opportunities to kind of weigh in on what they think of the measures that are proposed in the draft plan and what they think alternatives would look like or should look like.”

A coalition of local environmental groups including the NEC, EPIC, the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP), 350 Humboldt and the Redwood Coalition for Climate and Environmental Responsibility (RCCER) submitted joint comments on the draft CAP and will be involved in the environmental review process to push for a strong, implementable plan. As the comments state, “As organizations whose missions include the preservation and protection of our environment, we believe that quick, coordinated action to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions locally is imperative to combat the effects of climate change and that local governments have a responsibility to adopt and implement policies to ensure this action. Although we support the concrete actions described in the draft CAP, we feel there are ways in which it can be strengthened, not only with more concrete actions, but also with a strong implementation plan which includes dedicated staffing.”

To stay informed about what the NEC is doing in regards to the CAP, sign up for the NEC’s email list at yournec.org. To learn more about the Humboldt CAP, go to humboldtgov.org/2464/Climate-Action-Plan, or contact Michael Richardson at mrichardson@co.humboldt.ca.us for email updates.
Maureen Hart, Sustainability Consultant

Before she had learned the term “recycling,” Margaret (Maggie) Gainer’s parents raised her with the Appalachian cultural value of “making do.” A smart person knows how to make do with what they’ve got. Maggie has worked for 40 years to change how we think about, generate, and reduce waste. Her practical experience in recycling processing operations and marketing at Arcata Community Recycling Center (ACRC), informed her advocacy in California’s legislature and led to her groundbreaking research, analysis, and public education work.

She directed ACRC (1976-1981) during a crucial growth period for recycling in Humboldt and most cities nationwide. ACRC became known nationally for rigorous processing of its recyclables to sell to markets at the best prices possible.

Maggie’s greatest contributions to the U.S. sustainable materials management field are in Recycling Economic Development and promoting methods for Waste Prevention. She has helped to create local end-use markets for locally collected materials, with many innovative collaborators, and has helped to develop proactive systems methods for Waste Prevention.

Gainer was honored in 1991 by the California Resource Recovery Association with the Recycler of the Year award and was a frequent keynote speaker at state and national recycling conferences throughout the 90s. By the mid-1990s, the California Department of Conservation and Garbage Magazine recognized Maggie and her Gainer & Associates consulting team as “visionary” and trendsetting. They developed a 5-point strategy for integrating recycled materials into the economy that the U.S. EPA and state agencies hired them to present in “train-the-teachers” workshops throughout the U.S. to guide state and local economic development staff. In the 2000s, their focus on the importance of integrating recycled materials into the economy was dubbed “The Circular Economy” by a MacArthur Foundation research report.

Maggie is a strong proponent of adhering to the hierarchy of First-Reduce/Prevent Waste, Second-Materials Reuse, and Last-Recycle and Compost for individuals, consumers, business systems, and government planning. For the California Integrated Waste Management Board/Calrecycle, Gainer & Associates conducted extensive research, analysis and training on the need for more investment for source reductions systems, now known as Waste Prevention.

Keenly aware of the impending curbside recycling contamination crisis, she wrote regularly for recycling industry, government, and environmental publications about the weakening of recycling systems brought on by the plastics packaging industry, and the garbage recycling industry’s switch from consumer presorting to single stream curbside collection.

In 2011 she was part of a cadre of Humboldt County residents who founded Zero Waste Humboldt to emphasize the waste reduction hierarchy’s top priorities of Waste Prevention and Materials Reuse. Her leadership at Zero Waste Humboldt has been dedicated to local grassroots organizing and leadership development in Waste Prevention and Materials Reuse demonstration projects, such as:

- Zero Waste methods for the North Country Fair board (2012-2016) to dramatically reduce the waste the Fair generated by ⅔, becoming an inspiring model for outdoor events.
- The Refill-Not-Landfill Project awarded 10 water bottle refill stations to local governments and two high schools to reduce single use plastic water bottles. Because each station counter tracked use, this project demonstrated a reduction of 50,000 single-use plastic water bottles in a typical year.
- The Zero Waste Solutions Speaker Series brought inspiring presenters to Humboldt from California businesses that had successfully adopted Zero Waste methods, and presented ideas for what to do about plastics and food waste.

Maggie continues to communicate with Zero Waste leaders around the U.S. and provide Zero Waste technical assistance and training. Her current passion is to change shopping habits and increase the public’s understanding of how investment in reuse systems will help to combat the overwhelming problems caused by single-use plastics.
**North Coast Chapter**

**Field Trip**

**JULY 9, Saturday, 10 am-12 noon. Trinidad Head Plant Walk.** A diverse blanket of shrubs and herbs, mostly native, covers this scenic, wind-battered, rocky bluff. Botanist and extraordinary instructor **Robin Bencie** will introduce the species, so the green blur will become a company of friends. The loop trail is 1.7 mile with uphill and downhill and includes spectacular views. Meet at the foot of the head, in the parking lot by the beach at Trinidad State Beach.

**Evening Programs**

will resume in September.

**Who Invited That Invasive Plant?**

by Carol Ralph

"Nearly 40% of the invasive plants now in the US were originally introduced as ornamentals," and "imports of new exotic plants into the US continue to rise." These statements in a recent article in *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, a publication of the Ecological Society of America, stunned me. The invasive plants we spend so much time battling spread into our wildlands from gardeners, from people like me! Gardeners may ignore how their plants spread, or share them with friends, or dispose of them carelessly, and their plant can soon be in the wild. Government regulations and prohibited species lists are respected by most growers and consumers that find them, but the information is often hard to find or unclear. And governments can't be expected to know which will be the next invasive species. It's up to us to stop them before they become invasive, preferably by not planting them! Removing a beautiful, vigorous plant from your garden can be heart-wrenching, but compared to the legacy of letting it spread to our wildlands, the pain is small. Planting locally native species is a sure way to avoid this problem.

**Native Plants for Sale**

The Farmstand at Freshwater Farms Reserve is open! (5851 Myrtle Ave., Eureka.) A selection of our chapter's nursery-grown shrubs, diverse perennials, and grasses is for sale at our plant stand there. Check our website for the farmstand schedule and a list of plants available.

Stay Updated:

**www.northcoastcnps.org**

**facebook.com/NorthCoastCNPS**

**CNPS welcomes everyone. No expertise required.**

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**California Native Plant Society**

**Festival Season**

Now that we are back to social gatherings it's time to take a look at Zero Waste drinking. No, we are not talking about "getting wasted"! We are talking about drinking responsibly, as in beverage container awareness. Here are a couple super size decisions you can make when you swill.

- This symbol does NOT mean the cup can be recycled. For example, the classic red Solo® party cups synonymous with keg ragers are NOT recyclable. The #6 indicates the type of plastic resin PS Polystyrene used to manufacture these cups. This code does not mean the container is made from recycled plastic, nor does it mean the plastic is recyclable. There are many organizations such as ours working to remove the outdated meaning for the symbol in these cases. Unfortunately, the plastics industry would like us to continue purchasing these unfriendlies.

- Watch out for green washing! There are alternatives out there that claim to be eco-friendly because you can reuse them/put them in the dishwasher, etc., but beware of just another plastic product. For example, Red Cup Living® makes a cup that looks like the red cups mentioned above. They are claiming these are good for the earth but they are just a thicker ABS plastic.

- Bioplastic or what cup manufacturers call “Biodegradable” plastic cups are just made from plastic that breaks down into microplastics (toxic waste) faster than regular plastic. Look for compostable products made from plant based materials specifically made up of organic matter like cornstarch, sugarcane, potato starch, and others that break down in compostable environments only leaving behind beneficial products which improve soil health.

- Aluminum is reusable and recyclable. The canning company Ball is now making a classic kegger cup from aluminum.

- Glass is reusable and recyclable too but trickier for the less coordinated drinkers.

Consider these drinking container choices as you prepare for your party, celebration, festival, or kegger. And if you are headed out to partake, then Bring your Own. In July 2019, the California Governor signed AB 619 (“Bring Your Own” bill) into statewide law supporting the transition from single-use items to reusables. This law allows temporary food facilities at events to serve customers in reusable containers rather than single-use disposables. It also clarifies existing health code laws to say we can bring reusable containers to restaurants for take-out.

Party this summer drinking whatever refreshing beverage is right for you but make the best container choice for the planet and just say no to plastic in any form. Zero Waste Humboldt is available to train, educate, and advocate for the choices that matter in the consumer waste(d) land. Our next fundraiser is July 7th, 5pm at Phatsy Kline. More info on our facebook page: [facebook.com/ZeroWasteHumboldt](http://facebook.com/ZeroWasteHumboldt).
Tales from the Trails – 7th Annual Tim McKay Birdathon

Submitted by Gary Friedrichsen

The ten-day period, April 30th through May 7th, was chosen for this year’s Birdathon that raises money for both Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) and the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC). This year five teams took part in the event and, although dealing with some less than perfect weather, had astonishing results! The five teams, divided in two categories as “Bird Curious” and “Papi-Dori’s Budget Birding,” chose the 6-hour blitz format, and the White-Crowned Spotters, “No (R)Egrets,” and “Wandering Talliers” took the more traditional 24-hour period.

The “Bird Curious” team consisted of Carlrey Arroyo, Caroline Griffith, Ivy Munnerlyn and Jasmin Segura. Made up primarily of NEC staff, they ventured fourth from their office on I St. and walked to the Arcata Marsh. Unfortunately, the rains came during count week and they had to seek shelter throughout their entire time at the marsh. They still enjoyed a massive swarm of swallows on Mount Trashmore, ducks, shorebirds, and LBU’s that call this amazing place home. A bit soggy but no worse for wear they returned to the office having ticked 41 species for their outing.

“Papi-Dori’s Budget Birding” was helmed by Jose Luis Sandoval, a student in environmental studies at Cal Poly Humboldt. Jose hails from Panama and had to squeeze his Birdathon into a busy class schedule. He began at 4 a.m. to get a jump on the birds. He enjoyed the dawn calls of the Tree Swallows. In Eureka he had good looks at a Bald Eagle. Very tired after his early start he had to quit by 10am to get to class. But he knocked out 56 species for his efforts and is now contacting his donors for their pledged amounts.

Team “No (R)Egrets” consisted of Gary Falxa and his wife Gayle Garmen. This team had the good fortune to pick a day more amenable to this activity and they made hay while the sun was shining. Their first bird was a singing White-crowned Sparrow in their yard. Their route took them to the Blue Lake Cottonwoods and the Mad River Fish Hatchery. By 9am they had logged 40 species. Then on to Elks Head near Trinidad and Trinidad Harbor for a few marine birds including Black Oystercatchers, Common Murres, and three species of Cormorants. Hiller Park, the must stop Arcata Marsh and the V St. loop were next. On around the bay looking for more gulls, terns and other water birds they encountered their only White-tailed Kite. Off to Freshwater Farms Reserve, then a quick stop at the Sequoia Park Pond for the nesting Wood Ducks. Success, with adults with six ducklings. Without venturing into higher habitats, the No(R)Egrets came in with 101 species.

The “Wandering Talliers” consisted of Laurie Lawrence, Greg Chapman, Bill Rodstrom, and myself. Much to our chagrin, the weather gods were against us and we had to persevere under marginal conditions throughout the day. We began in Willow Creek at the east side of Friday Ridge Road. The path would be as follows: Willow Creek area, Titlow Hill in the snow, Trinidad, King Salmon, Samoa peninsula, V Street, and ending at the Arcata Marsh. We felt fortunate for many sightings but also bemoaned the several misses along the way. Among the many highlights were a very distant Bald Eagle, a single Western Kingbird, and a pair of Peregrines swooping on a lone Willet. We were still pleased with the one 116 species.

RRAS Field Trips in JULY!

Fri. July 15th – 5:30-8pm. Join trip leader Andrew Orahoske at the Mad River fish hatchery in Blue Lake for a weekday evening birding excursion. The hatchery area includes extensive riparian habitat with an abundant diversity of species that take advantage of this insect-rich environment. This trip will focus on searching for Willow Flycatchers and Purple Martins, both of which have been reliably found here in the past.
Sun. July 17th – 9-11am. Ralph Bucher will lead a walk on the Eureka Waterfront. This trail is paved and is wheelchair accessible.
Sat. July 23rd – 9-11am. Wigi Wetlands Volunteer Workday. Help create bird-friendly native habitat and restore a section of the bay trail behind the Bayshore Mall. We will provide tools and packaged snacks. Please bring your own water and gloves. Contact Jeremy Cashen at jeremy.cashen@yahoo.com or 214-605-7368 for more information.
Sat. July 30th – 8:30-11:00am. The July Women and Girls’ Birding Walk will take place in the forests of the College of the Redwoods campus and will be led by Forestry instructor Valerie Elder. This walk will focus on learning about the trees and forest ecosystems that support birds, including large native species like Sitka Spruce, redwoods, and Douglas Fir as well as willows, maples, and other species on campus. Email janelle.choj@gmail.com to reserve your spot!

*Contact Ralph at thebook@reninet.com for any walks he leads and all Arcata Marsh walks.
*Contact Field Trip Chair, Janelle Chojnacki at janelle.choj@gmail.com for all other walks.
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The Sandpiper is published eleven times a year by
Redwood Region Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502.

By Gail Kenny

President’s Column

It takes many hours of dedicated volunteers to run Redwood Region Audubon Society, so as a token of our appreciation, we have an annual tradition of selecting a Volunteer of the Year who is recognized at the annual banquet, usually in February. Since we didn’t have a banquet this year due to COVID precautions, we presented the Volunteer of the Year Award at our first in-person general meeting since early 2020.

We have a core group of people who have been volunteering for RRAS since the 1990s or even longer. Jim Clark is one of those people. We realized Jim was long overdue for this recognition when we discovered he had never received The Volunteer of the Year Award.

Jim started birding in 1963 and first joined Audubon as a charter member of the Tulare County Audubon Society around 1975. He continued as a member through his short stay in Calaveras County. Jim became active in the Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) in 1982 after his final return to Humboldt County. He was active with the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary task force starting in 1983 until it became Friends of the Arcata Marsh (FOAM).

Jim quickly transitioned from the marsh project to serving on the RRAS board beginning as President-Elect in 1983. From 1986-1989, Jim served as the Conservation Committee Chair. During this time Jim was active in dealing with the proposed ORV park on BLM property on the north jetty while remaining as the Chair for the Arcata Marsh Task Force. Jim served as President of RRAS from 1997-2000 and again from 2004-2007. He resumed the Conservation Committee Chair in 1998 and has stayed active as Chair, Co-Chair or committee member most years since then. Jim is currently Co-Chair of the Conservation Committee along with Chet Ogan, who is also a longtime RRAS volunteer and the person who nominated Jim for this award.

One of the things we most appreciate about Jim is his steadfast attention to local projects that have an environmental impact. Jim worked for the Humboldt County Health Department for many years, and as a result, he has a knack for reading through project proposals and picking out conservation issues that need addressing.

Jim is our longtime representative on the Northcoast Environmental Center Conservation Committee. This helps him keep abreast of the current concerns in the local environmental community and helps focus us on where to put our efforts. Jim also volunteers on the Humboldt County Fish and Game Advisory Commission which was established to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors in all matters concerning fish and wildlife within the County of Humboldt. In addition, Jim has been active with the RRAS Bird Safety Around Cats Committee, especially helpful with writing letters to the editor, and commenting on changes to the City of Eureka animal ordinance. Thank you, Jim!

On another note, Ron LeValley, one of Humboldt’s well-known birders, passed away on June 4, 2022, at age 75. We want Ron’s family and friends to know we are grateful to Ron for being an active volunteer with Redwood Region Audubon Society for many years through his service on the board and various committees. We remember him as a cheerful and enthusiastic person and appreciate his contributions to RRAS as well as to ornithology on both the local and regional levels.

Above: Self-portrait of RRAS’s 2022 Volunteer of the Year, Jim Clark.

(Tim McKay Birdathon: Continued from previous page)
The “White-Crowned Spotters” consisted of Gary Bloomfield, Ken Burton, Tom Allen, Eric Olson, and C. J. Ralph. Quite wisely, they did not attempt the normal assault of the higher elevations and instead kept to the coast and interior valleys working more hospitable habitats. As the rain came down, they began the day in the Arcata bottoms. A stop at the V St. loop was a good one to see breeding plumage Red-necked Phalaropes and, like the rest of the teams that stopped here, good numbers of ducks and the few remaining shorebirds. Their route was as follows: Arcata bottoms. Marsh Project, Kneeland, Maple Creek, Butler Valley, and around to Mad River Fish Hatchery, Blue Lake Cottonwoods, Trinidad, mouth of Mad River and back to C.J. and Carol’s residence. C.J. was not allowed to count the Peafowl seen on the road but they managed some great finds despite time and weather constraints. A great highlight was an American Dipper, encountered under a bridge in Maple Creek, and the Lazuli Bunting in the cottonwoods. They were extremely proud of their 128 species count, and for good reason.

As the checks and RallyUp donations flow in, we believe we will crest the $10,000 mark and surpass our last Birdathon by a fair margin. Thanks to all the participants, their donors and special thanks to prize donations from: Out of This World Optics, Tomo Japanese Restaurant, Mazzotti’s on the Plaza, Panache Hair Salon, Brio Bread Inc., Redwood Curtain Brewery, Liz Finger CMP, Kayak Trinidad, and Gary Friedrichsen for Pelagic Trips.

Spring Renewal
By Jessie Bunkley

Spring bursts slowly at first, then suddenly and all at once. All winter, the days were filled with near constant visits of Anna’s hummingbirds to the bright red feeder hanging outside the kitchen window. Leaning against the cold, stone countertop, face hovering a few inches from the glass, I would watch the brilliant birds glisten in the morning light, as they drank their fill of artificial, sugary nectar. In so many ways, these tiny members of class aves are superlatives, extreme examples of physiology, with hearts beating 20 times per second and wings beating three times that! My heart quickens whenever I see them.

Not only do I appreciate them for their physical abilities, which are so different from my own, and their essential role as pollinators in the ecosystem we share, their quick buzzing and dazzling plumage always brings my grandmother close in memory. She was also amazed by the sight or sound of a hummingbird, to be connected with a deeper sense of who I am in relation to the world around me.

Spring is the time of annual renewal and with it the hummingbirds leave my feeder behind, finding nourishment in the blossoms and blooms that erupt across the landscape. Cream-colored elderberry and brilliant pink red-flowering currant. Salmonberry, salal, lupin, a sweet buffet rolls out across the land and ancient ecological interactions revive as pollen and nectar are exchanged and birds and flowers perpetuate one another.

Ecosystems are complex wholes comprised of every living species, geological formation, drop of water, and nutrient that cycles through life and land. Since European colonization, the ecosystem we reside in has been out of balance. An extractive culture concerned solely with the accumulation of personal wealth has led to the extreme exploitation of the natural world, decimating the forests, rivers, and all their inhabitants. Prey-go-neesh fell victim to this wave of destruction and for the last 130 years these magnificent birds have not cast their fleeting shadows from high above. Their strong, sharp beaks have not torn open the carcasses of sea lions or elk, so others may also eat. The thread that ties them to all other members of this ecosystem was severed, weakening the entire complex web of life.

This spring though, with the guidance of the Yurok council to restore Prey-go-neesh to this land, the diligent and persistent work of the Yurok Wildlife Department and Redwood National and State Parks, support from numerous partners, and the cumulative knowledge from decades of condor restoration in southern California and throughout the southwest, a deeper renewal is unfolding. On May 3, Poy’-we-son (one who leads) and Nes-kwe-chokw’ (one who has arrived) took flight over the redwood coast. As they flew from captivity into the wild, they carried more than bone, muscle, and feather. On wings spanning nine feet, they carried the hopes of a people, tied together the fraying strands of an ecosystem, and demonstrated resiliency of a species and the possibility for renewal.

Condors are the other extreme of superlatives — enormous wings that rarely flap, allowing birds to travel hundreds of miles a day while expending very little energy. While hummingbirds help usher in new life, condors send off the dead. Both are necessary. This spring, as the hummingbirds return to the flowering land and prey-go-neesh returns to Yurok ancestral territory, we are reminded of who we are and where we came from, and hope is renewed for balance.

Take Flight
A flight of geese calls brightly, their rowing wings beating steadily northward. The sight and sound tears at the roots of my feet, calling me to the wilderness, calling all who can hear to wander. The full-throated bugling elicits a deep and particular sense of freedom, a feeling that home is ever-changing, defined by presence, not place.

The calling of a goose is a harbinger of winter and a breaking of spring — a marker of season and time. In a Sand County Almanac, Aldo Leopold contends, “One swallow does not make a summer, but one skein of geese, from, and hope is renewed for balance.

Do you love spending time on the beach?
From the National Audubon Society

Birds like Snowy Plovers and Least Terns can be found on our coast this summer, nesting and resting on our beaches. The Western Snowy Plover is still listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act because of the many challenges to its small population. Plovers and terns are beach breeders and often nest in a scrape of sand, pebbles or clamshells to hide their chicks - too easy to step on if not careful!

Whether you love the beach for sunbathing, walking your dog, fishing, kayaking or boating, here are some ways to be a bird-friendly beachgoer:

1. Give shorebirds and seabirds at least 100 feet of space— that’s the equivalent of 16 beach towels.
2. Respect any fences and signs, and stay outside of areas roped off for breeding birds.
3. Keep dogs on a leash, away from the beach, or visit a dog-friendly beach.
4. If you see small eggs on the beach outside a fence, back away to let parent birds return, and call Fish and Wildlife to let them know. Be aware that parent birds are easily scared and may never return to a nest once disturbed.
5. Avoid use of loud or large flying things which birds perceive as predators: drones, fire-works, kites, balloons, etc.
6. Enjoy watching Snowy Plovers scurrying along the beach searching for insects or tending their young. On warm days, you may see tern moms standing over eggs and hatchlings to shade them from the sun. On hot days, they’ll soak their belly feathers in the ocean and return to the beach to give their broods a cool sponge bath. Simply adorable! So grab your binoculars or scope, and watch from a safe distance!

KID’S CORNER
Wowza Wildlife!
By Leslie Scopes Anderson

DAD, I HATE DRAGONFLIES!

WHERE IN THE WORLD?

Purple Martins live mainly in eastern US, where native tribes once put out gourds for them to nest in. If there are no birdhouses, martins may use old woodpecker holes.

FUN FACTS:
Purple Martins roost together in the thousands in late summer after the chicks learn to fly (fledge.) Some groups are so huge they show up on weather radar!
Aquatic Songster – The American Dipper

By Gary Bloomfield

A varied song full of whistles, repeated buzzes and trills, heard over the sound of rushing water, signals the presence of the rather plain yet charismatic American Dipper. This is one of five species of aquatic songbirds that comprise the family Cinclidae, and the only one found in North America, from Alaska south to Central America.

The moist coastal forests of northwestern California provide ample clean, fast-flowing streams that dippers require for their unusual method of feeding. They can be seen standing on midstream rocks, poking their heads under the water’s surface, and constantly bobbing up and down (“dipping”) or even diving underwater to swim or cling to submerged cobbles to search for and pursue their prey. This mainly consists of aquatic insects, such as caddisfly larvae, which they bash against rocks to remove their inedible cases which protect them from less persistent predators, supplementing with other invertebrates, small fish, and fish eggs. The presence of these prey items, and thus the dippers themselves, indicate a healthy stream environment, where these organisms thrive and the water is clear enough for the dippers to find them.

These unique birds have several adaptations to their aquatic lifestyle. The very shape of their eyes can be adjusted by muscles to enable them to see clearly both in air and underwater, and in addition to their nictitating membranes which serve as underwater goggles, their nostrils can be sealed by scaly covers while under water. They also have robust oil glands, used to waterproof their outer feathers, keeping their dense layer of down underneath dry to protect them from even the most frigid streams. Their short, pointed wings are more suited to swimming than flying, so most of their flight is done just over the water’s surface, with wing-blurring dashes up or downstream along their territories.

Throughout most of their range they are primarily mountain birds, but along much of the Pacific Coast they also frequent cool forested streams in the lowlands, occasionally right to the coast. Year-round residents, American Dippers present different viewing opportunities throughout the year. Dippers nest along the streams that support them, building their domed, mossy nests on protected, often rocky sites, behind or near waterfalls, and frequently under bridges that cross their favored creeks. These bridge sites can offer especially enjoyable viewing opportunities, as the height above the stream can provide views of their underwater activity.

Springtime, especially after the young hatch, through early summer is when they are most active, as both parents work their territories, singing, bobbing, and flashing their white-feathered eyelids, and energetically foraging for their young as well as themselves. Late summer is when they molt, rendering them flightless for a period of time. Fall and winter is when both the young disperse and adults from higher country move downstream, even along the larger rivers that might not provide proper nesting sites but do offer productive foraging wherever the water is not too deep and there are sufficient rocky areas that suit their prey.

Peacock Feather

By Effie Lee Newsome

Heav’n’s deepest blue, Earth’s richest green, Minted dust of stars, Molten sunset sheen, Are blent together On this lithe brown feather, In a disc of light— Lithe, light!

Effie Lee Newsome (1885-1978), was born in Philadelphia. One of the first African American poets who primarily published poems for children, she was the author of one volume of poetry, Gladiola Garden (The Associated Publishers, 1940).

U.S. House Passes Recovering America’s Wildlife Act

From the National Audubon Society

The House just passed the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act (RAWA) in a bipartisan vote of 231-190 – a historic victory for wildlife. The legislation would dedicate desperately needed conservation funding annually directly to states and Tribal Nations for proactive, on-the-ground projects. Thank you for contacting your legislators to support this vital conservation bill. At a time when science tells us that we’ve lost 3 billion birds in less than a human lifetime and that two-thirds of North American bird species are at risk of extinction due to climate change, RAWA will help conservation efforts for more than 800 species of birds, including the vulnerable Golden-winged Warbler and Black Tern. This bill will not only help wildlife, it will also create more than 30,000 jobs and generate $93 billion in total economic activity in communities across the country.

It's now up to the Senate to pass this important legislation. You can take action by asking your Senators to support the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act to help thousands of wildlife species.

DID YOU KNOW? Facts shared by the RRAS Cat & Bird Safety Committee

A 2017 study of data from wildlife rehabilitation centers throughout the US found that cats were responsible for 52% of bird intakes, and 78% of those cat-related admissions died. In California in 1999, 95% of birds brought home by cats were native species (i.e., not house sparrows, starlings, etc.), and native birds were twice as likely to be seen in areas without cats! If you enjoy seeing ground-dwelling California Quail or Spotted Towhee in your yard or nearby wild area, then you can protect them by keeping cats indoors, on a leash or in a cat carrier.

There have been a lot of developments in the fight to Save Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF). We thought we’d give you an update.

EPIC is working with a broad coalition in the campaign to Save Jackson, which includes local environmental organizations, community members and the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, the original stewards of the forest, to provide permanent protections for the publicly owned forest.

Recently, CAL FIRE has announced that it will be rewriting the JDSF management plan four years early. This comes after continuous pressure from the public. Some members of the Jackson Advisory Group are Senator McGuire and Secretary Wade Crowfoot. This means the public will have the opportunity to weigh in on the forest’s future four years earlier than they otherwise would have, and we can ensure that this state owned forest is managed in an ecologically and culturally informed way. EPIC will be following this process closely and will be sure to keep you informed about how best to influence the future of JDSF.

Additionally, CAL FIRE has proposed a compromise on the Caspar 500 THP. The controversial Caspar 500 THP set off the campaign to save JDSF when forest users noticed dozens of large, second growth trees had been marked for harvest in a popular hiking and mountain biking area. Last summer, forest defenders successfully managed to pause logging on the Caspar 500 THP, but the timber companies have been eager to return.

CAL FIRE’s compromise includes moving a proposed logging road, which would have run through the Gemini Tree that forest defenders occupied last year, pardoning the Gemini Tree. Second, 75 acres of the roughly 500 acre Timber Harvest Plan will be taken out of commercial harvest and will instead undergo light thinning at the direction of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians. This last concession is an effort by CAL FIRE to begin some co-management on JDSF without agreeing to fully co-manage the forest.

CAL FIRE’s compromise offer relies on the research of Steven Sillett, a professor at Cal Poly Humboldt. The idea is for the logging to continue but for CAL FIRE to select a couple Potential Elite Trees (PETs) per acre to permanently protect. These trees would be the most vigorous redwoods in the forest and would be permanently protected so that they would eventually become old-growth redwoods. However, neighboring trees that are not selected will still be logged.

On May 28, the Save Jackson Coalition was pleased to learn that three controversial THPs located in Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) had been withdrawn by CAL FIRE. The plans constitute a total of 1,479 acres (over two square miles) of forest now taken off the chopping block.

The Mitchell Creek and Little North Fork Big River THPs were both recommended for approval in the Spring of 2021, with the Boundary Creek THP recommended for approval in March 2021. In response to community opposition, hundreds of public comments and the advocacy of the Coyote Valley Band of Pomo Indians, CAL FIRE has now withdrawn these THPs.

The Save Jackson Coalition has been demanding a moratorium on all logging in Jackson, including the approval of new THPs, until a new management plan can be written and implemented that better meets the needs of the Native American Tribes, the community, the environment, and also addresses the current climate reality. In recent weeks, CAL FIRE has announced that they will be rewriting the JDSF management plan and now they have withdrawn these three controversial THPs. The Coalition considers this a good faith action on CAL FIRE’s part toward that end. The Save Jackson Coalition continues to demand a moratorium.

Interested in becoming more involved? Check out the savejackson.org website.
The first mention of Sea Level Rise (SLR) in EcoNews was the February 1981 issue, so readers of this publication should be well aware of the concept and local implications of this phenomenon. The article in question quotes a report by the President’s Council on Environmental Quality (Ronald Reagan had just taken office, so we can assume that this report came out of the Carter administration) which warned that if we didn’t take immediate steps to reduce our CO2 emissions we could expect a 15 foot rise in sea levels by an unspecified date. As the methodologies used to predict SLR have been honed, it has been determined that Humboldt Bay can expect to see the highest sea level rise rate on the West Coast due to a combination of rising water levels and land subsidence in and around the Bay.

In a call to action for regional decision-makers the Humboldt Grand Jury, an investigative body made up of citizens tasked with the detection and correction of flaws in government, recently released a report entitled The Sea Also Rises calling for regional collaboration to protect communities and infrastructure from rising seas. Although predictions vary, according to the report, “a two-foot increase in Humboldt Bay’s shoreline will be possible by 2050 and a three-foot rise may occur as early as 2070.” These predictions are based on the “low risk” projections from a 2018 study by the Ocean Protection Council. “High risk” projections are three feet by 2050 and around five and a half feet by 2070.

A three-foot rise would affect local infrastructure such as:
- The only access road to King Salmon
- PG&E’s Humboldt Bay Generating Station and the interim spent nuclear fuel site
- Highway 101 as it traverses South Bay, Elk River Slough, and Arcata Bay
- Highway 255 on the Mad River Bottoms
- Approximately 12 miles of railroad and the current and future sections of the Humboldt Bay Trail within the Humboldt Bay Area Plan (HBAP) planning area
- Approximately 9.6 miles of municipal water transmission lines
- The Truesdale pump station, seven wastewater lift stations, and 10.5 miles of sewer lines
- 30 electrical transmission towers and 113 transmission poles
- Sections of the South and North Jetties (867 ft. and 1,214 ft. respectively)
- Three of the 10 bulk cargo/commercial docks
- Several contaminated sites, including former pulp mills (Simpson in Fairhaven, Sierra Pacific in Manila) and former Southern Pacific Railyard (Arcata)
- 52 Wiyot cultural sites

Although many of these affected sites are within the jurisdictions of different municipalities, the fact that they are all on Humboldt Bay and will be similarly affected by SLR necessitates a coordinated approach to the problem. As the report states, “reinforcing a shoreline dike in one section of the bay is not a solution if a neighboring dike crumbles from poor maintenance, allowing bay water to inundate the area these dikes are designed to protect.”

Collaborative, coordinated regional planning can position Humboldt County favorably to receive the state and federal funding that will be necessary to protect critical infrastructure from SLR. The report states, “it has been estimated the cost to repair or enlarge shoreline dikes could average $2 million per mile. There are 41 miles of shoreline dikes around Humboldt Bay.” The California Sea Level Rise Mitigation and Adaptation Act of 2021 mandates allocation of up to $100 million annually for SLR planning efforts statewide, which could potentially help Humboldt County manage some costs associated with SLR planning.

The report recommends that the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors, the Cities of Arcata and Eureka, and the Humboldt Bay Harbor District vote to make a commitment to prioritizing SLR adaptation and mitigation, and to direct their staff to incorporate this commitment into their planning efforts by September 30, 2022. It further recommends that they join efforts to create the Humboldt Bay SLR Steering Committee to work collaboratively to develop a regional approach.
**NEC Library Book Review: Heart of Dryness**

*Ali Ong Lee*

In this third year of a sustained California drought – in anticipation of more wildfires and amidst climate change crises – we pause, during sporadic spring storms and as Ruth Lake sits at 100 percent capacity to consider another Northcoast Environmental Center library book: James G. Workman’s non-fiction narrative *Heart of Dryness: How the Last Bushmen Can Help Us Endure the Coming Age of Permanent Drought* (Walker and Company, New York, 2009).

The author provides this drought analysis by weaving anthropology with hydrology using his background as a Washington D. C. journalist and speechwriter for President Bill Clinton. Workman was Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt’s assistant, helping both to remove outmoded dams and to produce the World Commission on Dams Report. Workman continues to pursue “the human right to water” in the Americas, Asia, and Africa.

Workman nearly died in the Kalahari Desert and concludes that the severely drought-ridden place and its resilient people can infuse us with strategies, with strength, with stories that connect their lack of water with ours, and that connect their plight of perpetual drought to ours. We are in those times of unnatural stressors on ecosystems when we need to do more, both globally and locally, than pray for rain which provides “the most essential and finite resource, water.”

In this 300-page hardcover, with eight pages of color photographs featuring the ancient Kalahari Bush People, Workman follows their battle for land and water sovereignty to exemplify the impacts of government over-control of water. In eight parts and 24 chapters, Workman addresses such drought issues as:

- Land and Aquatic Biodiversity
  Suffering Extinctions (Chapter 11)
- Quest for Meat (Chapter 9)
- Water for Elephants Only (Chapter 11)
- Primal Instincts and the Realpolitik of Water (Chapter 18)
- The End of the Beginning (Chapter 24)

Workman challenges the notion of hydro-democracies and notions of absolute access to water, even though access to water was only starting to be recognized as a basic human right (as opposed to corporate rights) by the United Nations in 2002. Workman asks:

- Is Hoover Dam an “engineering marvel or vast evaporation pond?”
- As “human demand rises with affluence,” how do we curb demands for more square footage, more consumption, more water?
- Might we consider dry sanitation versus wet sanitation (flush toilets and indoor plumbing)?

To put a face on drought, Workman follows one of the Bush People’s leaders Quoroxloo, for whom drought is perpetual and for which her indigenous people have developed resiliency strategies for water conservation, reclamation, and storing, in addition to social systems for sharing, access, and responsibilities of water stewardship.

Quoroxloo’s people became conservation refugees (incarcerated on restricted parts of their own lands) after the Botswanan government allowed resource extraction (diamond mining) to deplete water tables, to build dams that sped-up water evaporation more than they stored water, and prioritized eco-tourism (and the economic benefits of elephant safaris) over Bush People who were competing for water on conservation lands and were seen to have no economic benefit and, therefore, to have no benefit at all.

What is more, Quoroxloo and the hardest of the Kalahari Bush People refused to be forced off ancestral land at gunpoint, at the cost of their ways and their lives, as they witnessed relocated brethren isolated at relocation camps, dying of diseases for which they had no immunity, dying disconnected from their ways, their people, their land.

According to Workman, “For any sovereign nation-state government, the conquest and control of water resources is a paramount concern.” The Kalaharians were not treated as a paramount concern, but as an obstacle to watering elephants while the rest of Botswana was being rationed water and a permanent drought took hold as the climate changed, and while diamond extraction escalated. In 2006, after a protracted case also tried by international public opinion, Botswana’s high court found the Kalahari Bush People to have the right to remain on their ancestral land (inside a wildlife preserve), where they could dance and die without obstruction to freedom, to culture, to water.

Workman concludes that at the turn of the last century, “As Frontier towns like Los Angeles sprawled into megalopolises of ten million, America shared Botswana’s compound pain of booming population and shrinking freshwater.” Here, as well as there, water scarcity simultaneously drives us apart and together as we come to terms with the fact that “We don’t govern water; water governs us.” We must also first understand the true weight and worth of each drop of water. Reading Workman’s *Heart of Dryness* might help us do just that as another drought looms this summer.

**RECOMMENDED READING BY WORKMAN:**


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**“WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IS NEVER REALLY CONSIDERED A SERIOUS POLITICAL ISSUE, ECONOMIC RISK, OR NATIONAL SECURITY THREAT, AT LEAST NOT UNTIL THE NATION IN QUESTION HAS ALMOST NOTHING LEFT TO LEAK.”**
Ascending to New Heights in the Trinity Alps

Sophia Sady, Ascend Wilderness Experience Public Relations Manager

Ascend Wilderness Experience (Ascend) is a Trinity County based non-profit that has been quietly taking youth on backpacking trips into the Trinity Alps Wilderness Area for over 20 years. Founded by experiential therapist Scott LaFein, Ascend emerged from a desire to create safe spaces for youth to explore the natural world and tap into themselves as individuals in a collaborative group setting. Over the years, Ascend has provided a variety of environmental education programs and team building offerings that enhance its core mission of providing experiences in wilderness that empower youth by fostering personal growth, the ability to overcome challenges and a deep appreciation of humanity and the natural environment.

Since 2001, Ascend has led over 800 youth (age 6-18) into the Trinity Alps Wilderness Area, providing all food, gear, transportation and training at no cost to participants. Ascend’s flagship program is their multi-day backpacking trip into various alpine locations in the Trinity Alps Wilderness Area. This trip is an immersive experience for youth aged 9-18 and can last from 3-7 days depending on experience and maturity levels. Ascend emphasizes the opportunity to allow kids time and space to unplug and be their curious selves, finding that the combination of being in a natural setting with peers and an adult leader who is not a parent is a rare and unique opportunity for kids to tap into themselves. Ascend Wilderness Guides are trained to facilitate discussions and experiences that allow participants autonomy and can transform challenges into opportunities to build resiliency, gain insight and grow. Young people who have enjoyed an Ascend Wilderness Experience trip have flourished as adults in Trinity County and beyond, becoming strong advocates and protectors of public lands.

The current iteration of Ascend is led by Executive Director Amanda Barragar, a Junction City native. Barragar’s close family ties with Ascend Founder Scott LaFein ensure Ascend stays true to its original intent of supporting youth while growing and shifting to meet the current challenges that face public wildlands today. The Trinity Alps Wilderness Area had seen an enormous increase in usage of 1,400 percent since 2015, even before COVID drove record numbers of hikers and backpackers into this ecologically delicate area. The Trinity Alps Wilderness Area is the second largest designated wilderness in California and spans three national forest boundaries. It is also a hot spot for ecological diversity because it is part of the Klamath Mountain range, which is one of the seven areas of global biological significance in the United States, and one of only 200 worldwide. Yet, only two Wilderness Patrollers are responsible for the half million acres of wilderness. Add the devastation from the past few years of historic wildfire seasons and the result is a monumental amount of work to be accomplished to steward and tend this remote tract of public land.

In 2021, Ascend launched two new backpacking programs for teens and adults to help address the shortages of personnel in the Trinity Alps by recruiting volunteers to complete critical trailwork in the backcountry during their Ascend trip. In partnership with local Forest Service personnel, these trips identified particularly neglected trail systems and spent days exploring the area, collaborating as a working group and accomplishing critical tasks to rehabilitate the trails.

The Teen Stewardship Work Experience Trip was designed to not only perform important stewardship tasks but also provide the much needed service to the community of creating resume building experiences for teens. Trinity County youth face significant disadvantages due to the prevalence of poverty in the region. Local youth have limited opportunities for hands-on job training and often lack adult mentors and role models. During the Teen trip, local youth were given the opportunity to work in a nurturing, small group setting with caring, professional adults to gain basic, employment-related soft skills such as the ability to follow direction, work as a team and resolve conflict; as well as more tangible skills such as safely operating hand tools and principles of leave no trace, that will give participants an advantage when applying for a job in public lands management or other natural environment-related careers. Teens who participated in the initial offering last year have responded with resounding enthusiasm and the trip received record applications from returners as well as new applicants to participate this coming year.

In 2021, Ascend was also able to fulfill a much requested desire of the community by creating an adult stewardship trip. This dedicated group of ten adult volunteer participants was able to perform significant trail work, including logging out approximately 70 fallen logs that had impeded the trail system. Besides the astounding amount of trail work this group accomplished, on an interpersonal level these adults had the time and space to forge connections with the wilderness and each other that will have a lasting effect in the community. In this way, Ascend’s stewardship trips incorporate those original principles that Ascend was founded on of accessing one’s true self and building connections both internal and external through experiences in wilderness.

To find out more about Ascend Wilderness Experience, visit our website and sign up for our newsletter at www.ascendwilderness.org.
Sea Goat Farm, currently in the midst of its second season, offers locally grown produce to the community at its farmstand in McKinleyville. Although the farm in its current evolution is only two years old, the garden was originally started 34 years ago as a ministry of Grace Good Shepherd Church. In order to help supply the Mckinleyville food bank and church pantry, a man named Verne Thornton cleared a section of ⅓ acre pasture behind the church and tended it for 18 years before another community member named Stan Schmidt took over until 2019. At that time, the farm was put in the care of Megan Blumenstein, who has a BA in Agroecology & Environmental Education from Prescott College. In order to provide a safe outdoor marketing venue where community members could participate in the local food system, the Sea Goat Farmstand was developed and opened in May of 2021.

This farmstand is part of a community outreach program initiated by Grace Good Shepherd in 2018 called Abbey of the Redwoods. This program aims to offer more Eastern spiritual traditions and environmentally and earth based spiritual traditions to the community. Some of their offerings include yoga, meditation, qi gong, and Zen Buddhism. Through daily spiritual practices, retreats, conferences, and media presentations, the Abbey attempts to increase interfaith understanding, peace, justice, and equality.

“Abbey of the Redwoods’ Sea Goat Farmstand project provides access to locally grown food, opportunities to garden, learn about the environment, and network with small businesses,” said Blumenstein. “This project thus supports the local economy by providing a space to connect with small artisan producers, specialty foods, flowers and beverages and promotes tourism, arts and culture, thereby fostering healthy communities.”

Using her experience as a market gardener, farm intern, small business owner, and farm educator, Blumenstein developed this project with the help of 12 people that come regularly to work in the garden and aid with the farmstand. In addition to selling the produce they grow, other products and crafts from local businesses are also sold at the farmstand, including: Humboldt Baking Company, Stevens Family Ranch, Botanical Love by Jenn, Shrood Foods, The Magic Teahouse, Wild Rose Farm, Ghee Well, Nature’s Mosaic, Potthead Pottery, Wild Jasmine Creations, and Humboldt Grain Girls, Skye Hearts Herb Farm, Local Culture Mushrooms and Green Spiral Farm.

When asked about some of her favorite foods that are growing on the farm, Blumenstein replied, “We have a lot of gorgeous spinach right now, as well as many varieties of Asian greens such as baby bok choi, tatsoi, Chinese lettuce, and some gigantic napa cabbages! Right now, I am eating a lot of tatsoi. It is so tender—more so than bok choi—and cooks down similar to spinach. I like to get a hot pan with olive oil and garlic and flash saute these greens and add a dash of ume plum vinegar in place of salt. It is incredibly delicious and my kids just love it too!”

If community members are interested in trying this recipe with local greens and supporting the Sea Goat Farm, they can come to the farmstand located at 1450 Hiller Road in McKinleyville on Saturdays from 9-2 to buy produce and other artisan products. Community members are also invited to participate in volunteer hours every Wednesday and Friday 10-3 and Saturdays 9-2. Sea Goat Farm is hoping to offer internships in the future that would include agricultural education and hands-on experience. If anyone is interested in this opportunity, Sea Goat Farm currently has plans to advertise an internship position for the next growing season.

“We very much appreciate and depend on our volunteers for their continued support, but also love the community bond that this project creates and the opportunity to educate and empower people to learn the practical skills of farming and gardening,” said Blumenstein. “The engagement with the community through service learning, volunteerism, workshops, kid’s field trips and other local partnerships is very important to us, and we hope to develop upon these relationships for the success of our endeavors.”

This summer, Abbey of the Redwoods will be hosting a Summer Nights Artisan Craft Fair every 1st Saturday of the month for the months of June, July, August, and September from 3-8pm. In addition to the crafts, there will be music and a food truck. If anyone is interested in being a vendor at these events, please contact Sandra Rodriguez at abbeyoftheredwoods@gmail.com.

To learn more about Abbey of the Redwoods and the Sea Goat Farm and farmstand, check out their website abbeyoftheredwoods.org/ecospirituality. For information specifically about the farm, please contact Megan Blumenstein at seagoatfarmstand@gmail.com.

Check out Sea Goat Farmstand’s Instagram (www.instagram.com/seagoatfarmstand) to learn more about what they are up to on a more regular basis!
In an effort to continue this momentum, I have been working since 2019 with the Wiyot Tribe and Cal Poly Humboldt to have 884 acres of land in Goukdi’n returned to the Tribe as my master’s thesis project. The parcels are currently owned by the California State University Board of Directors and in the care of Cal Poly Humboldt. My research includes the history of Goukdi’n, document analysis, and personal interviews, and seeks to demonstrate the connection between the land and the Wiyot people. It also provides an interpretation of why relationships to land are not just important, but imperative to healing. During my interview with Ted Hernandez, Chairman of the Wiyot Tribe, he stated:
"You know, we need this healing. We need to bring everything back to balance...You have Goukdi’n, you got Tuluwat, you have Jaroujiji, you know, you have all these special places [that] are part of the puzzle. And if it's missing that piece, that puzzle is not going to be balanced, it's going to fall apart."

As the US becomes more comfortable with words like 'decolonization' and 'genocide' as they pertain to our own history, we are starting to see a rise in movements that empower and give voice to Indigenous peoples worldwide. This is not to say that these voices weren't there before, but they are now (finally) being listened to. Slowly.

One of the most well known movements that we’ve seen is the LandBack movement. Coined by Arnell Tailfeathers, member of the Blood Tribe (Blackfoot Confederacy), the LandBack movement aims to return land to Tribes in the US - not just some of the land - all of the land. And rightfully so. Settler colonialism tried to separate humans from the land and taught us that land should be thought of as property; something that we own, have the right to control, that is less intelligent than people, and can be contained. In order to reconnect with and heal ourselves and our planet, we must return stolen lands to the Tribes that are, and have always been, in relationship with them.

We have seen examples of LandBack here in Humboldt County. In 2018, Eureka’s City Council voted to return most of Tuluwat Island to the Wiyot Tribe - an effort that some Tribal members had been working on for decades – a goal that some people said was impossible. Also in 2018, the Yurok Tribe worked with Western Rivers Conservancy to secure 50,000 acres of land in Blue Creek, a tributary of the Klamath River. And on November 18, 2021, California State Representative Jared Huffman introduced a bill to Congress titled, “Katimiiin and Aameky’araam Sacred Lands Act,” which would put about 1,031 acres of Federal land located in Siskiyou and Humboldt counties into trust for the benefit of the Karuk Tribe.

Regardless of the initial oversight of communicating with the Wiyot Tribe regarding Goukdi’n, Cal Poly Humboldt still has the opportunity to return the land to its rightful owners. As an institution that centers equity, inclusion, and sustainability, Cal Poly Humboldt can choose to work in partnership with the Wiyot peoples, not only to return stolen land, but also to foreground Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. With the onset of the polytechnical designation at Humboldt State, there has been even more talk about the importance of solidifying partnerships with local Tribes, making this the perfect project to align with those goals. The return of Goukdi’n to the Wiyot Tribe could potentially be a precedent setting, internationally recognized action.

As a society that is deeply impacted by settler colonialism we are all learning how to escape its death grip, and we are all at different stages in this process. When I initially learned about Goukdi’n, the Tribe had not been included in the conversation about the land. In fact, they had not even heard of this project until Dr. Cutcha Risling Baldy and myself approached them months after the transfer had occurred. In order for there to be progress, we must learn to center the voices of those who have been historically silenced.

In an effort to continue this momentum, I have been working since 2019 with the Wiyot Tribe and Cal Poly Humboldt to have 884 acres of land in Goukdi’n returned to the Tribe as my master’s thesis project. The parcels are currently owned by the California State University Board of Directors and in the care of Cal Poly Humboldt. My research includes the history of Goukdi’n, document analysis, and personal interviews, and seeks to demonstrate the connection between the land and the Wiyot people. It also provides an interpretation of why relationships to land are not just important, but imperative to healing. During my interview with Ted Hernandez, Chairman of the Wiyot Tribe, he stated:
"You know, we need this healing. We need to bring everything back to balance...You have Goukdi’n, you got Tuluwat, you have Jaroujiji, you know, you have all these special places [that] are part of the puzzle. And if it's missing that piece, that puzzle is not going to be balanced, it's going to fall apart."

As an institution that centers equity, inclusion, and sustainability, Cal Poly Humboldt can choose to work in partnership with the Wiyot peoples, not only to return stolen land, but also to foreground Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty. With the onset of the polytechnical designation at Humboldt State, there has been even more talk about the importance of solidifying partnerships with local Tribes, making this the perfect project to align with those goals. The return of Goukdi’n to the Wiyot Tribe could potentially be a precedent setting, internationally recognized action.

Settler colonialism, genocide, US history, historical trauma, healing, and land return are necessarily intrinsically interconnected. Had explorers come to the US and just peacefully coexisted with Indigenous peoples while learning with and growing from one another, I would have written my thesis on something else completely. Had we remained in relationship to place and land, and to our Mother Earth, there would be no need for the rematriation of land. Those are the ways we can imagine otherwise; in order to achieve a future that is worth living, and one we are worthy of receiving.

**Source:** Tully, Carrie, “Working towards land return in Goukdi’n: a history of genocide and a future of healing” (2021). *Cal Poly Humboldt theses and projects. 522. digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/etd/522*
PLASTICS

Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, has ordered the National Park Service to phase out plastics, both single-use containers and utensils as well as other plastic materials. It will take some time to change contracts and look for alternatives. “Our national parks, by definition, are protected areas — ones that Americans have loved for their natural beauty and history for over a century — and yet we have failed to protect them from plastic for far too long,” said Christy Leavitt, director of plastics reduction work for the nonprofit environmental organization Oceana. Under the Obama administration 23 National Parks were directed to eliminate single-use water bottles but the plastic bottle lobby succeeded in reversing that order under direction of Secretary Zinke, who departed the Department under ethics investigations.

WATER / INFRASTRUCTURE

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee passed H.R. 7776, the “Water Resources Development Act of 2022,” a large water infrastructure bill, while the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved S. 4137, its version of the House bill; both with unanimous committee support. Differences in the two versions will be resolved and some projects could be dropped. The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, California system is referenced several times in the bills.

ENERGY

Though skeptics advise caution, there is some hopeful news. Chevron unveiled plans for a new “carbon capture and storage” project in the San Joaquin Valley project which, if successful, could capture up to 300,000 metric tons of carbon per year. The captured CO2 would be transported via pipeline to an area of Chevron’s Kern River oil field and stored in deep saline aquifers. The impacts of this are not fully researched but supporters say any carbon removed from the atmosphere is a positive step as long as there is a net carbon reduction.

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Though there were many positive provisions in the Infrastructure Bill of 2022, one provision to “streamline” federal infrastructure projects includes measures to reduce public oversight of projects by requiring federal agencies to coordinate, and requiring project timeline designation of a lead agency for the NEPA review process to be completed within two years from the publication of the notice of intent, pursuant to a schedule developed by the lead agency. The process also requires the generation of a “record of decision” within 90 days of the agencies’ issuance of the final Environmental Impact Statement. Although the administration says they are striving to hasten the process, they also do not want to sacrifice environmental standards. This will require conservation advocates to quickly and carefully review all documents with short turnaround times. Those deadlines can become excuses to cut corners and limit public review and comment.

The streamlined process may hasten offshore wind project approval. Conservationists routinely file lawsuits on short timelines to allow more thorough public review and comment as well as assuring all relevant science and impacts have been covered. Biden Administration spokesperson Jason Miller stated, “This plan explicitly rejects the tired view that there’s an inherent tradeoff between permitting efficiency — doing permitting in a timely and predictable manner — with permitting effectively, ensuring the best outcomes for the community and the environment. We can and we will do both.” Time will tell but past efforts have been controversial, and some have failed the test in courts.

NUCLEAR

After the US Department of Energy announced an extension to the deadline to apply to extend funding for nuclear power plants that are targeted for decommissioning, Gov. Gavin Newsom (D) sent a letter to Energy Sec. Granholm requesting that the Department revise requirements so the Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power plant can apply for funds from the $6 billion targeted for nuclear plants in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The new deadline is July 5. As a reminder, there is still no approved plan for permanent storage facilities for radioactive waste.

FISH

Congressman Huffman’s (D-CA) efforts to update the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Act has been delayed due to the death of Rep. Don Young (R-AK) and is awaiting a permanent replacement since Young was also a leader in the discussion and introduction of bills. This Act has been key to the rebound of overfished populations of commercially harvested fish.

BIRDS

In good news for migratory birds, Sen. Cardin (D-MD) and Sen. (R-OH) introduced Migratory Birds of the Americas Conservation Enhancements Act of 2022, S. 4187, a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA). The bill would provide a four-fold increase in funding to help conserve species of neotropical and other migratory birds, many of which are in rapid decline.

“The NMBCA provides essential support to Latin American and Caribbean partners who ensure migratory birds have a place to return in winter after breeding in the U.S. — such as the Cerulean Warbler and Wood Thrush,” said Steve Holmer, Vice President of Policy at American Bird Conservancy (ABC). “By increasing NMBCA funding, the door is opened to greater participation from partner groups, as well as larger projects that are more effective at meeting bird conservation needs.”

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

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THE ROLE OF RECYCLING

Susan Nolan

It’s become clear that recycling is not going to solve our solid waste problems, and zero waste should be our goal. Still, recycling and reusing materials has a role to play in reducing carbon production, because some of the manufacturing process has already been done.

The best return is on metals. Aluminum and steel are obvious, but there’s also brass, copper, lead, stainless steel, and more. Metal production from raw materials is very carbon intensive. Digging out, crushing, and transporting the heavy ore, then smelting (melting and purifying) it at temperatures from 1200 to 2200 degrees Fahrenheit, all take a huge amount of energy. The iron smelters of Pittsburgh were fueled by Pennsylvania coal, and hydropower from major dams on the Columbia River feeds Washington state’s aluminum industry. Recycled metals still need to be transported, melted down, and re-cast into something useful, but the heavy lifting has already been done.

Where can you recycle metals? Every major population center has a scrap yard. For Humboldt Bay, it’s Arcata Salvage at 192 South G Street, Arcata. You can drop it off in the bins in front. Arcata Salvage is also a fun place to browse: there’s a collection of parts-donor bicycles, old tools, used wire fencing, and you never know what else.

Glass also recycles very well. But it’s made from very common earth materials, and it isn’t particularly valuable, so hauling it long distances doesn’t pencil out, sadly. Our local recycled glass has been crushed and mixed into asphalt rather than hauled hundreds of miles to a processor.

Some materials degrade with each use. Paper is a good example. Newsprint can be produced from recycled material, but the best paper is made from virgin pulp. A lot of paper is a mix of both new and recycled fiber. You may have noticed the difference between American-made cardboard (brown and strong), and Chinese cardboard (grayish and weak). Lacking extensive forests, the Chinese rely on reused wood fiber. One use for the lowest quality paper and cardboard is light-duty single use applications such as packing forms, egg cartons, or pulp trays for meat. The fiber in these items has degraded to the point where they are not recyclable, but reuse can be an option; your neighborhood home egg business would love to have those cartons, for example.

Plastic also loses quality with each re-processing. Mixing with virgin material is one workaround, but most plastic waste doesn’t get recycled back into the same use; it gets “down cycled” into fleece fabric, outdoor furniture, etc. There are thousands of types of plastic. Some types are more recyclable than others. The plastics industry has grouped them into seven categories, labeled by numbers in the familiar “chasing arrows” symbol. This mark implies that an item is recyclable, but that isn’t necessarily true. Styrofoam (#6), for example, is not.

PET (#1) recycles the best, but even so, most of it is “down cycled” into other products. This does give it a second use; however, those products don’t generally get recycled when their lifespan is up. So plastic is less recyclable than metals or glass, which can be used over and over.

Hardcore recyclers may enjoy taking apart an old washing machine, for example, sorting into plastic and rubber (trash) and recyclable wiring and metal parts. So, recycling is a mixed bag, as you might expect from the great variety of things we need to dispose of. Some recycle very well, like metals. Others have issues, like paper and plastic. And some, even when they seem to be labeled as recyclable, are really just landfill. As a rule of thumb, material that has already been refined and processed has a smaller carbon footprint than material sourced from nature, but this is complicated by long transport to centralized processing plants. Local initiatives like J&T’S Molded Plastic Enterprises in Redway, maker of garden pots and other products, and the now-defunct Fire and Light glassworks, show that close-to-the-source options are possible.
Get on Board for the Climate

Is California Losing Faith?

Martha Walden, 350 Humboldt

First there was AB 32: fifteen percent greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction below 1990 levels by 2020. Flushed with early success in 2016, California’s legislature then passed SB 32: forty percent GHG reduction by 2030. The California Air Resources Board (CARB) went to work on a Scoping Plan that radiated confidence in California’s industries. With a little nudge from the state, they would continue evolving towards the rational, low-emissions future of clean, renewable energy.

SB 32 also mandates an 80 percent reduction by 2050, but in 2018 Governor Brown signed a non-binding executive order declaring that California would achieve “carbon neutrality” no later than 2045. That doesn’t mean not emitting any carbon by 2045. It means that more carbon would be removed from the atmosphere than ongoing emissions. "Net zero" is another way of saying the same thing.

Here we are, seven and a half years shy of 2030, and our confidence is faltering along with the pace of emissions reduction. CARB’s Scoping Plan has come under serious fire. Earlier this year a report from the Independent Emissions Market Advisory Committee revealed that CARB has already issued industrial allowances for more emissions than what its cap and trade program was supposed to eliminate by 2030. (My column covered this last April.) In response to questions from panicked senators, CARB said, “Don’t worry, just wait until you check out the Scoping Plan update.”

Well, the Scoping Plan update is now underway, and the worrying has not ceased. According to a critique from Danny Cullenward, a PhD energy economist and one of California’s top advisers, major accounting errors mar all four of the suggested net-zero scenarios.

It also concerns Cullenward a great deal that CARB has focused on Brown’s net-zero order by 2045 instead of the legally mandated 2030 target of AB 32. At this point California would have to triple the pace of its reductions in order to make it. Except for a promise to improve cap and trade rules, the Scoping Plan doesn’t detail how to make up the gap.

By focusing on the more distant goal of net zero by 2045, CARB is hoping for futuristic carbon dioxide removal (CDR) to come to the rescue. Industry emissions will be captured and stored underground instead of prevented. CDR is a young, unproven, expensive technology. Cullenward agrees that it could play an important role in the long run, but nipping emissions in the bud is essential to SB 32.

It turns out that fossil fuel industries and other businesses aren’t rushing towards the new rational future of low emissions and clean, renewable energy. Many climate activists say that fossil fuels industries just want to lock in their own business as usual at any cost. Others counter that renewable energy won’t be ready soon enough to take over the heavy lifting that industry needs.

Considering their record, big oil and gas certainly fail to inspire trust in their own motives. Will they actually invest in the expense of carbon capture? Right now it costs about $600 to $800 per ton of carbon, but costs should decline the more it’s deployed. On the other hand, transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy is a colossal challenge. Maybe it will take longer than we think to wean ourselves from fossil fuels. California’s Air Resources Board seems to agree with this dismal assessment.

of a 2.2-megawatt solar panel array coupled with a bank of three Tesla Megapack storage batteries. During typical blue-sky conditions, this system generates clean, renewable energy for ACV and the Coast Guard Air Station, and stores unused power in the battery bank to supply during the evenings or high-demand periods. When a power outage occurs, the microgrid acts as an island, seamlessly continuing to power its connected structures. The system also participates in California’s independent wholesale energy markets, setting a strong example for future developers in reliability, economic wisdom, and better utilization of solar energy.

"An important success of [the microgrid] was how we were able to work through the complex financial, technical, regulatory, business, and operational hurdles facing this project," says Dana Boudreau, Director of Operations and Infrastructure at Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA). "This experience will serve us well as we continue to engage our community in building offshore wind energy, supporting more solar and storage capacity, and developing new community microgrids."

The airport microgrid was developed by a first-of-its-kind partnership between a number of organizations great and small: RCEA, Schatz Energy Center at Cal Poly Humboldt, Pacific Gas & Electric, County of Humboldt, TRC Companies Inc., The Energy Authority, Tesla Inc., and Schweitzer Engineering Labs. The project was funded in part by a $5 million grant from California's Electric Program Investment Charge and by a $6 million investment from RCEA.

"RCEA's goal is to provide our customers with 100% carbon-free electricity by 2025, and 100% local carbon-free electricity by 2030. This project is a major milestone for our clean energy and resilience efforts."

Source: RCEA Press Release, Oxford Languages
Karina Ramos Villalobos is a community activist, journalist, and artist. She has been a guest on Wiyot land since 2019 when she began attending Cal Poly Humboldt to achieve a B.A. degree in journalism. With passion and determination, Ramos Villalobos has worked with El Leñador for four semesters producing a wide variety of life, arts, and entertainment stories among news articles. Ramos Villalobos is a leader and advocates for BIPOC communities. When she isn't leading in the classrooms she is organizing spaces for BIPOC and Queer artists through a space she created called Humboldt Homies. Ramos Villalobos’s goals are to grow her skills in producing a wide range of storytelling through multimedia projects and one day have her own form of magazine or news outlet for better and more representation of the BIPOC community.

Claudia Alfaro Hernandez is an Environmental Science & Management major at Cal Poly Humboldt, with an emphasis on Ecological Restoration. She moved to Humboldt County in 2020 from her hometown of Jurupa Valley, California in hopes of fully integrating herself within the Natural Resources community. Within her time in Humboldt County, Claudia has worked alongside organizations, such as Ciencia Para Todos & El Leñador, to find, educate, and empower the Latinx community. Her academic and community experiences have led to her self-advocacy for supplemental support services for low income & first-generation academic students.

Claudia’s interest in environmental conservation came into play once she conducted research on the Joshua Trees of the Mojave Desert in 2018. Since then, Claudia has been more conscious of her impact on the natural environment. She integrates such thinking whenever she steps foot in any natural space, whether in academics or recreation. Claudia hopes to dedicate her academic career to the preservation and management of Natural Resources in population-dense areas, as means to combat various environmental issues.

Claudia looks forward to being a part of the NEC team & contributing to an important Humboldt Environmental organization.

My name is Gerardo Arturo Hernandez, currently I am a sophomore student seeking a Political Science major at Cal Poly Humboldt. I was raised in the City of Cudahy in Southern California, I come from a working class family and I am a first generation undergraduate student attending a four year university. I have been fortunate enough in seeking opportunities such as publishing Los Angeles based news as a summer intern for the L.A. Times and I was a student writer for Cal Poly Humboldt's bilingual English & Spanish newspaper El Leñador.

In the upcoming 2022-2023 academic year I will be involved as At-Large Representative for the Associated Students (A.S.) of Cal Poly Humboldt. A.S. is a student body government organization that continuously seeks institutional changes that can enhance the student environment. For my career goals, I have high aspirations to become involved within the political spectrum of government and serve one day as a public elected official for underrepresented communities because I care deeply on giving them a voice in the policymaking process.

My name is Griselda Valdez. I am a first-generation student at Cal-Poly Humboldt. I am getting my degree in Environmental Science and Management with a concentration in Education and Interpretation, as well as pursuing a minor in Parks Administration. This summer, I am working with EcoNews as an archiving intern. I am excited to learn and grow. I love living in Humboldt and enjoy taking nature walks, biking, and baking and recently started looking for agates.

Within the political spectrum of government and serve one day as a public elected official for underrepresented communities because I care deeply on giving them a voice in the policymaking process.
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