THE VITAL ROLE OF BEES
GREETINGS FROM THE NEC

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. Our goal is to provide a platform to explore, discuss, and debate these topics 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.

COMMUNITY SUBMISSIONS
We want to feature your work. Do you have nature art or poetry you’d like to share? How about photos of your catio, compost bin, garden, solar array, etc.? Email nec@yournec.org

LETTERS TO ECONEWS
We want to hear from you! Write us a letter 300 words or less that’s relevant to EcoNews and we’ll consider publishing it! The NEC reserves the right to reject any submitted material for any reason. Email nec@yournec.org

ECONEWS NEEDS YOUR VOICE!
To more accurately reflect the diverse voices and needs of our community, EcoNews wants to feature more articles on Indigenous perspectives, intersectional environmentalism, environmental justice, food justice, activism, and more.

We have a small fund to pay emerging voices. If you’d like to submit an article and potentially get paid for your work pitch your idea at nec@yournec.org.

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GUESTS ON GOU D’NI, WIYOT TERRITORY

ECONEWS is the official monthly publication of the Northcoast Environmental Center (NEC), a non-profit organization. Third class postage paid in Arcata. ISSN No. 0885-7237. EcoNews is mailed to our members and distributed free throughout the Northern California and Southern Oregon bioregion. The subscription rate is $50 per year.

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Sea Level Rise and Wastewater Treatment

The rush to develop more housing in Arcata and the surrounding communities is heating up. Although much of this is due to the expansion of Cal Poly Humboldt, housing has been a problem in Arcata for decades with too few available spaces and ridiculously high rents. There have been several controversial housing projects proposed within the last five years that have divided the community over what the future of Arcata is going to look like. Will there be multi-story housing developments, tiny house villages, a combination of both or none of the above? It’s certainly something that needs to be debated as we look for ways to provide enough housing and keep it affordable. What is often overlooked in this whole discussion is the unique and special asset that is the Arcata Marsh and Wastewater Treatment Facility. Developed in the 70s by scientists George Allen and Robert Gearhart, with political help from then-City Councilman Dan Hauser, this was considered a revolutionary solution for Arcata’s wastewater.

Here we are 50 years later and the city is embarking on substantial improvements to update this facility (including incorporating UV disinfecting technology to mitigate issues associated with byproducts of the chlorine disinfection process entering the Bay) while keeping the marsh as part of the process. However, there is some concern that this update isn’t taking into account the growth that’s beginning to take place in Arcata because of the university, and the potential growth associated with offshore wind developments. We think that before Arcata gets too far out over its skis it needs to make sure that the true capabilities of its wastewater plant — even with all the improvements that were approved last year at the price tag of $60 million for Phase 1 — meet the expected growth and account for sea level rise.

According to information put out by the City, “The Facilities Plan and CEQA analysis for Phase I and the envisioned Phase II incorporated a 20 percent growth factor (equating to a population of 22,410).” The 2020 Census puts the population at 18,300 people. Phase 2 of the upgrade is on hold at the request of the State Water Board, which has provided funding for a feasibility study to look into sea level rise adaptation, including the potential of moving some or all of the plant, as well as capacity for future growth. Additionally, when the California Coastal Commission approved the upgrades to the plant last year, it was with the stipulation that this permit was for 30 years (until September 8, 2052) and in the meantime the City needed to be planning for sea-level rise adaptation, up to and including relocating all or portions of the facility to higher ground.

So while we have capacity for some growth, we really need to be thinking 10, 20 and 30 years into the future to make sure that this once very innovative and still absolutely vital piece of infrastructure can still function as our population grows and the sea level rises. The State Water Board feasibility study is supposed to be done at the end of 2023, so expect to hear more from us as the process unfolds.

More on Cannabis

There is a lot of controversy surrounding Humboldt County’s Cannabis Ordinance and the environmental impacts of the industry, which led us to join with Citizens for Sustainable Humboldt (CSH) and the Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS) to file suit claiming numerous CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) violations. During this process we learned that the County is not even following its own regulations. In many of our local communities cannabis is pitting neighbor against neighbor. One such small community banded together, started an initiative process and gained enough signatures to put a measure on the ballot. While the NEC was not involved in the signature collection we do support the right of community members to address the problems with the County’s Cannabis Ordinance and its implementation. This initiative is very controversial and is exposing even more division in our community. What we would like to see happen is the County being pushed to negotiate and fix the many problems with its cannabis ordinance and its enforcement, before this initiative hits the ballot and further divides the community. You should urge your supervisor to take an active role in trying to resolve this conflict.
CELEBRATE SUMMER SOLSTICE

Hello, Goodbye: 75 Rituals for Times of Loss, Celebration, and Change (Simon Element) by Day Schildkret

SUMMER SOLSTICE

Overhead, the sun seems to linger at its zenith forever and ever. On this day of days, the Northern Hemisphere’s summer solstice is the culmination of light. Up here in British Columbia, where the Earth’s tilt is even more pronounced, the evening summer sky still glitters hues of blue from the day that just won’t end. My own skin radiates warmth from lying like a lizard on the beach’s hot rocks, and even at ten at night, everyone is still wide awake — the neighborhood kids refuse to go inside. As much as the summer solstice is the height of light, it is also paradoxically about the waning of that light and the beginning of the return to darkness.

Summer solstice is all about fullness. After the dark and subtle tones of winter and the fresh ripening of spring, midsummer calls for completion. Yet with completion comes decline. And just as we’re getting used to devouring the plump joys of summer, the solstice reminds us that joy always teeters on the edge of sorrow. And all of that fullness will soon lessen and deepen, just like grapes do when giving way to wine.

Similar to the way you might pause to take in the view at the top of a mountain, the summer solstice asks you to slow down at the height of the year so you can take it all in: What happened in the past six months? What winter dreams fruited? Which seeds never even took root? What grew so much that it needs harvesting? What hard work can you celebrate? What now needs to transform?

THE BEARING FRUIT RITUAL

Intentions
May I acknowledge the beginning of summer and take stock of my successes and failures since wintertime. May I celebrate the fullness in this time of the year and also grieve the end of that full expression and the beginning of going within.

You Will Need
• One unripe fruit
• One perfectly ripe fruit
• One overripe fruit
• A large serving plate

Who
Ideally, you don’t do this ritual alone but share it with at least one other person. If you want to do this with a larger gathering at a picnic in the park, at a dinner party, or even within your office, it’s totally doable.

Beforehand
Sure, you can come to this ritual spontaneously and respond to the prompts below off the cuff, but I encourage you to take time beforehand to really consider them. Maybe this looks like journaling and letting your mind wander on the page, or perhaps it’s a late-night conversation with a good friend, unpacking the questions together. This ritual asks you to raise up things you really care for, so they deserve taking some time to wonder about.

The Fruit
Each fruit represents a personal or cultural success, failure, or that gray area where you can’t tell which it is yet. They symbolize the achievements and efforts, the mistakes and understandings, the relationships and experiences that have been growing or not growing since winter. Bringing attention to them externally helps to feed the ones that need your beautiful attention and release the ones that didn’t make it. As you consider the questions, let them spark memories, musings, or steps forward.

One fruit will be taken home, one fruit will be eaten, and one fruit will be returned to the earth.

Where
It’s summertime! Go outside. It’s as simple as that.

The Unripe Fruit
Start with the unripe fruit: Hold it up and consider your past six months. This fruit symbolizes the “almost but not yet.” These are places where patience and perseverance are needed.

• What ideas almost materialized but didn’t?
• What relationships seemed promising and then fizzled?
• What projects are you still holding out hope for but are looking less and less likely?

Afterward, wrap this fruit up and take it home and let it ripen in the sun in your kitchen.

The Ripe Fruit
Next, hold up the ripe fruit and consider your past six months. This fruit symbolizes all that has ripened well. These questions are to acknowledge all that is plump, full, and ready to be devoured.

• What did you achieve since winter?
• What relationships are thriving right now?
• What are your successes lately?
• What efforts and progress in yourself, your community, your country, or the world can you celebrate?
• What change looked promising in yourself, your community, your country, or the world and turned out to be premature?

After answering the questions, eat that yummy fruit and enjoy that delicious juice running down your chin.

The Overripe Fruit
This fruit symbolizes the mess, the decay, the disappointments that need you to let it go so it can return back to the earth. As with the other fruits, hold it up and reflect on the last six months.

• What has come into your life and what has left?
• What old relationships need to be released?
• Where have you made a mess?
• Where does your heart break when you look at yourself, your community, your country, or the world?

After answering the questions, dig a hole to bury it or leave this fruit under a tree to be consumed by the bugs and birds. If you are in a public park or a place where you can’t leave or bury the fruit, wrap it up and bring it to a compost bin rather than a garbage can, because all that compost will become soil once again, where new seeds can be planted.

Conclude
Complete this ritual with some praise and gratitude, especially for all those unseen and unknowable forces that guided and granted you all that you received and didn’t receive since the winter solstice. And of course, the last bit of thanks goes to the sun. Soak up the heat knowing that it will continue to fade.

For more on Day, please visit: morningaltars.com

SUMMER SOLSTICE IS ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21 THIS YEAR.
Dear EcoNews,

I have always been an animal lover and have been recently thinking about adopting an outdoor/indoor cat. I am really excited about the prospect, but am concerned about the impact it will have on the local bird population. My mom lives in a rural area with her cat and I have personally witnessed him killing many small winged and furry creatures. I know that there is such a thing as “caticos”, but I think it would be really difficult for me to restrict a cat that wants to go out in the world and explore. I have two questions: What are my options when it comes to protecting wildlife from my potentially bloodthirsty cat? And do outdoor cats really have an impact on local bird population sizes?

-Cat Conscious

Dear Cat Conscious,

What are my options when it comes to protecting wildlife from my potentially bloodthirsty cat?

The domesticated cat evolved in Africa and is an invasive species. Our local birds and mammals did not co-evolve with domesticated cats and have little to no defense against being killed by them. Fortunately, it is easy to protect wildlife from your cat (and your cat from the many hazards of the outdoors such as cars, disease, and attacks from other animals). With patience, you can change a free-roaming cat into a happy indoor pet. Here are some options.

Catio$: These are enclosed patios for cats. See rras.org/create-your-own-catio.aspx for how to build one, and rras.org/catio-tour.aspx for a look at some local catio$ that the Redwood Region Audubon Society featured on a recent tour. They can be small and inexpensive or incredibly elaborate; either way, the cat can access the sights, smells and sounds of nature in the catio$. Owners attest that their cats love to hang out there and seem to have as much fun watching the birds and other animals as they would if they were out wandering.

Other good ways to keep an indoor cat happy:
- Provide window shelves for your kitty to sit and look out.
- Play with your cat daily and leave tissue paper, paper bags or boxes to delight the cat when you are away.
- Plant kitty grass in indoor pots for grazing.
- Spay or neuter your cat as early as 8 weeks of age.
- Games, lasers, food puzzles and cat trees are also a great way to amuse your kitty.
- Teach your cat to walk on a leash outdoors or put them in a stroller!

Do outdoor cats really have an impact on local bird population sizes?

Absolutely! Although we don’t have good local data for our county, scientists estimate that cats kill billions of birds each year (and six times as many small mammals). Indeed, cats are the #1 invasive predator of wildlife in the U.S. In a 2020 study researchers from the U.S. and three other countries put GPS trackers on nearly 1,000 outdoor cats and tracked their movements for about a week. These pets mostly were fed at home and were neutered or spayed. The study found that most of these cats stayed in the area immediately around their home base. Researchers estimated that the cats ate about 130 wild birds and animals/year. That doesn’t sound like a lot, but since they hunt in such a concentrated area, they are actually killing wildlife at a higher rate than native predators. Thus, a wandering house cat has a serious effect on neighborhood wildlife and will take birds and other critters mostly within or near its home base, resulting in less birdsong and wildlife sightings in owners’ backyards. Also, the researchers found that the cats crossed a road an average of 4.5 times per week which further documents the danger of letting cats explore outside.

So, if you love your cat and your local birds and wildlife, please keep your cat indoors!

- Harriet Hill,
Redwood Region Audubon Society,
Birds and Cats Committee Chair

For more information or to join our committee, please see rras.org.
**Native Coastal Dune Restoration**

*Mike Cipra, Friends of the Dunes*

*Editor’s Note: Here on the north coast we are lucky to have a gem of an ecosystem, a short drive (or bike ride, or slightly longer walk) away. Along the coast west of Arcata and Eureka is over 1,000 acres of coastal dunes, home to rare coastal maritime forests, foredunes with native wildflowers, freshwater wetlands, broad moving dunes, and intertidal habitat. The Lanphere and Ma-le’l Dunes, Humboldt Coastal Nature Center, Manila Dunes and Samoa Dunes and Wetlands combine to make one of the longest contiguous stretches of coastal dunes on the West Coast. There are exciting things happening in our dunes, so be sure to go visit and appreciate this special place.*

The restoration of our native coastal dune ecosystems in Humboldt Bay results in increased biodiversity. Numerous studies have reinforced what you can see with your own eyes when you visit a place like Lanphere Dunes—where removal of invasive European beachgrass, iceplant, and yellow bush lupine has been taking place for more than 40 years.

Based on the results of the recently-completed Humboldt Coastal Resilience Project, a six-year peer-reviewed study comparing an invaded dune system to a restored dune system (see EcoNews August 2022), we now know that restoring native habitat also makes our dunes more resilient to the impacts of sea-level rise and climate change.

This newly-published research on the resilience benefits of native dune ecosystem restoration is driving a new wave of emerging restoration projects on the north spit of Humboldt Bay. Just in the last nine months, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation have recognized the national importance of Humboldt Bay’s dune systems and the opportunity to combine the benefits of increased native species diversity with increased resilience. Together, these funders have committed to investing more than $2,775,000 over the next four years to dramatically increase the pace of dune ecosystem restoration. The focus areas for this work will be the foredunes of the Friends of the Dunes’ Humboldt Coastal Nature Center property and the foredunes and backdunes of the newly conserved Wadulh Unit of the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge, just north of Lanphere. Wadulh is the word for dunes in Soulatlu, Wiyot language.

At the conclusion of the project, Humboldt Bay’s ecosystems and communities will benefit from a completely restored foredune running about five miles along the north spit encompassing these newly restored areas and the Lanphere and Ma-le’l Dunes in between. In addition, the entire Wadulh Unit of the Refuge is slated for restoration. This is landscape-level restoration.

In the end, if we know that the seas are rising and the climate is changing, and we know that restoration can make our ecosystems and communities more resilient to these changes, we have a responsibility to act—to accelerate the pace of dune ecosystem restoration of Humboldt Bay.

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**Stop the Sweeps**

*Northcoast Environmental Center Staff*

More and more we get word of areas around the community that are being “swept” of unhoused people. This is not a phenomenon that is specific to Humboldt; all around the country more people are ending up living on the streets, which means more cities are resorting to sweeps – evicting people from where they are camping because they have nowhere else to go. Even the word is dismissive and hurtful, indicating that the people being moved are akin to dirt.

One such action is happening in north Arcata as we are preparing to go to press this month. Whether these acts of forcefully removing people happen on a street filled with parked RVs or an encampment in a green belt, the results are the same: people who have already experienced trauma and hardship being retraumatized as they are forced to move from place to place, often losing belongings and connections to their community in the process. These sweeps do nothing to solve the problems associated with being unhoused; they just push people from open space to open space and the cycle continues. We’ve seen time and again how this plays out and it’s disappointing that the powers that be don’t seem to recognize that they are feeding a cycle of displacement that is harmful, inhumane, expensive, and ultimately unproductive.

Oftentimes, cleanup groups and self-identified environmentalists justify these sweeps as preventing environmental degradation, working directly with the police to push houseless communities from place to place. As environmentalists who also care deeply about our unhoused neighbors, the staff of the NEC feel the need to speak out and push for solutions that don’t put people’s lives in danger. While these actions may seem benign to some, they truly are life threatening to the people who are pushed even further to the margins, are severed from their community and service connections, and receive the message loud and clear that their lives are less important than those of their housed neighbors.

So what do we do? One obvious solution is to provide more low and very low income housing to help prevent people living on the streets in the first place. In the meantime, a solution that has worked in other communities is to establish safe parking and camping facilities that are managed by the people who live in them.

First and foremost, we need to start seeing people who are living on our streets as neighbors and community members – not nuisances to be swept away. The NEC supports stopping these sweeps and encourages environmentalists to not fall into the anti-homeless rhetoric spewed by clean up groups. For our neighbors who are living on the streets, it might literally be a matter of life and death.

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Lanphere Dunes, before invasive European beachgrass, iceplant, and yellow bush lupine were removed. Photo by Andrea Pickart.

Lanphere Dunes, after invasive species removal. Photo by Andrea Pickart.
THE RISE OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

When most people think of environmentalism, they think of protests denouncing logging of old growth forests or calls to save the whales. Environmental laws and organizations founded in the 1970s emphasized conservation: protecting the biodiversity of wildlife and preserving natural habitats as untouched wilderness.

However, in the 1980s, the modern environmental justice movement emerged as a counterpoint to this “mainstream environmentalism,” which activists critiqued as too elite, too white, and too focused on beautiful scenery and charismatic species. Sparked by opposition to the disposal of PCB-laced soil in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Warren County, North Carolina, the environmental justice movement draws attention to the uneven distribution of environmental harms and benefits, based on markers of social position like race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

Overall, the environmental justice movement centers equity as its main concern and advocates for expanding conceptions of environmental problems to include not just the “wilderness” but the full range of natural and built environments where people “live, work, learn, and play.”

Rather than focusing on elite forms of advocacy like litigation or lobbying, the strategies of the environmental justice movement center around grassroots activism and empowering poor people and people of color who live with the most severe environmental problems.

SURVEY CREATION AND DISTRIBUTION

For the NEC to effectively engage with the Humboldt County community on issues of environmental justice, a few knowledge gaps needed to be addressed. To do so, the NEC and the Cal Poly Humboldt graduate students crafted a survey with 17 open-ended and multiple choice/short response questions. These questions prompted respondents to consider their own definition of environmental justice and the injustices they may have witnessed in their community.

The survey was distributed to the NEC’s internal mailing list, a randomly generated list of 300 Cal Poly Humboldt students, and through in-person tabling events on Cal Poly Humboldt’s Campus. Over 200 responses were collected.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE

Overall, respondents self-identified as familiar with environmental justice: 78 percent indicated they felt moderately to extremely familiar with the term. This knowledge came from a range of sources, with school and the media holding the top two spots (Figure 2).

Respondents were asked how concerned they are about environmental justice after being provided with the following definition:

A social movement to address the unfair exposure of poor and marginalized communities to harms from hazardous waste, resource extraction, and other land uses. It arose in response to environmental racism and unequal distribution of environmental harm experienced by communities of color and low-income communities and seeks the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

A majority of respondents were at least moderately concerned about environmental justice, with 48 percent identifying as extremely concerned (Figure 3).

Despite major concern for environmental justice issues, several barriers prevent students in particular from joining local environmental groups.

Unsurprisingly, a lack of time was identified as the biggest barrier preventing respondents from joining a local environmental organization. A lack of familiarity with local organizations and other knowledge constraints was the second biggest barrier.

Respondents were asked to identify the environmental justice issues of most importance to them out of the provided list (Figure 4).

Water contamination and climate change were overwhelmingly identified as the biggest concern. The respondents that selected “other” identified urban planning, logging, wildlife habitat, and watershed restoration as issues of concern as well.

NEXT STEPS

The rest of the survey results can be found at www.yournec.org/envjusticesurvey. For updates on upcoming events visit www.yournec.org.
Environmental Activism Across the World

Elena Bilheimer, EcoNews Journalist

Greta Thunberg recently made the news again for standing in solidarity with the Saami, the Indigenous Peoples of Norway, against government plans to colonize their traditional grazing areas under the premise of building a wind farm. Thunberg, a 20 year old Swedish environmentalist, is world renowned for her activism demanding world leaders take climate action. Additionally, she inspired the international movement Fridays for Future, in which students strike from school to draw attention to the current crisis. While Thunberg has accomplished amazing feats, there are many other young activists doing similar work who haven’t gained the same level of attention or accolade.

This is not a coincidence, as Thunberg comes from a Western country and has intersecting privileges — including her race and class — that have contributed to her acclaim. In an article for the Guardian, Chika Unigwe wrote “...other activists are often referred to in the media as the ‘Greta Thunberg’ of their country, or are said to be following in her footsteps, even in cases where they began their public activism long before she started hers – their own identities and work almost completely erased by a western media that rarely recognises progress outside its own part of the world.” In an effort to mitigate this, here are some other young activists to direct your attention towards.

Danielle Rey Frank (she/her)

Danielle Rey Frank grew up in Hoopa Valley California, fishing for salmon on the Trinity river. When she was seven years old, she attended her first protest with her father advocating for the removal of the dams on the Hoopa Valley Reservation’s Trinity and Klamath rivers. Pollution, rising water temperatures, the recent droughts, and water shortages caused by diversions have greatly impacted the Chinook salmon population and threatened the tribe’s ability to participate in their world-renewing ceremonies, which are meant to balance the good and the bad in the world. The fight to remove these dams has been intergenerational and has lasted several decades.

Including youth in water advocacy has been a big part of Frank’s activism, and with the guidance of several matriarchs in her community she helped develop her Hoopa Valley High School’s Water Protectors Club. She also worked with Save California Salmon to create a curriculum called Water Advocacy in Native California that is currently being taught in about 30 public schools in California. This curriculum includes information about the ongoing threats to salmon, as well as education about how to position youth as leaders in this fight.

“I’m able to take the lessons my matriarchs have taught me into my activism and career,” said Frank in an article for Vogue. “My long term goals are to see the public education system change, to include the Indigenous perspective. It’s going to take time to change the public education system—it’s rooted in colonization, and full of lies.”

Frank has also worked on other projects to combat the negative impacts of colonialism, including working on a video series highlighting different Indigenous pathways of success and helping organize an Indigenous Youth Education Conference in L.A. “We are a piece of the land, and it’s a piece of us; When it’s hurting, we’re hurting,” said Frank in the Vogue article.

Nina Gualinga (she/her)

Nina Gualinga grew up in the Ecuadorian Amazon, as part of the Kichwa, the Indigenous People of Sarayaku. When she was around eight years old, an Argentine oil company entered their land against their will, initiating a decade-long battle in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR). This experience inspired her to campaign against oil, mining and logging exploitation and become a prominent climate activist. In 2013, Gualinga joined dozens of women from six Indigenous nations (the Kichwa, Shuar, Achua, Shiwiar, Sapara and Waorani), to march to the capital city of Quito to protest oil concessions the Ecuadorian government was selling that would threaten protected forest land in the Amazon.

Since then, Gualinga has played a prominent role in the movement, fighting gender-based violence and defending Indigenous land. Gender-based violence increases in areas where mining operations occur, compounding the negative impacts of extraction. “The work I was doing previously, which was strictly environmental, has now expanded to become about sisterhood, about healing, about inclusion, about love — that is really beautiful to me,” Gualinga said in an article for British Vogue. “This network of Indigenous women carrying out the same work has been really empowering.”

People can donate to the Legal Fund For Indigenous Women, which helps Indigenous women who have been persecuted for their defense of the rainforest pay their legal fees. Also check out Nina’s sister, Helena Gualinga, who co-founded the organization Polluters Out, a global coalition of youth demanding the exclusion of the fossil fuel industry from every aspect of society.

Wanjiku Gatheru (she/her)

Wanjiku “Wawa” Gatheru is a Kenyan-American “climate storyteller” who is the first Black person in history to receive the Rhodes, Truman, and Udall scholarships. She founded the organization Black Girl Environmentalist, a nonprofit that is committed to empowering and including Black girls, women, and non-binary people in the climate conversation and movement.

Gatheru is passionate about making the climate movement more relevant and accessible, especially for those whose experiences and legacies have been excluded from mainstream environmentalism. “The climate crisis in itself is a political issue in understanding the systems that led us to be here,” Gatheru said in a recent article for Girls United. “In my work as an environmental justice scholar and activist, I try to connect the dots between how colonialism, systemic racism and patriarchy have led us to the point where we have a climate crisis.”
Elizabeth Wathuti (she/her)

- Location: Kenya
- Organization: Green Generation Initiative
- Social Media: @lizwathuti

Wathuti grew up in one of the most forested regions in Kenya, where she had the opportunity to spend time in nature with the animals, trees, bushes and clean streams that were close to her home. Over the course of her life, Wathuti watched the environment around her change, prompting her to become involved in activism to fight deforestation and the negative impacts of climate change.

Deforestation destroys nearly 3 million hectares of Africa’s forest every year, and climate change-induced disasters like droughts and floods are greatly impacting harvests and agriculture. These crises have resulted in 2 million Kenyans currently facing climate related starvation. In 2016, Wathuti created the Green Generation Initiative, which initially focused on planting trees in schools to help children develop a relationship with nature and become climate aware. The non-profit has since expanded its efforts to create food forests in schools in order to address food insecurity and provide environmental education. Planting trees and food forests provides important ecological benefits, in addition to reinstating food sovereignty for communities.

At COP26, Wathuti spoke about many of the issues Kenyans are facing as a result of wealthy countries and corporations, urging world leaders to fully listen to the experiences of those most impacted. “Please open your hearts,” said Wathuti in her speech. “If you allow yourself to feel it, the heartbreak and the injustice is hard to bear. Sub Saharan Africans are responsible for just half a percent of historical emissions. The children are responsible for none but they are bearing the brunt. We are the adults on this earth right now. And it is our responsibility to ensure that the children have food and water.”

To learn more: www.un.org/en/climatechange/voices-of-change-elizabeth-wathuti

Ellen Miles (she/her)

- Location: The United Kingdom
- Organization: Nature is a Human Right and Dream Green
- Social Media: @octaviachill

Miles is a public speaker, environmental justice activist and guerrilla gardener from London. In an interview with Shado Magazine, Miles described guerrilla gardening as “grassroots planting in a public place with a purpose.” During the COVID-19 lockdowns, Miles began guerrilla gardening after she noticed the disparity in access to nature between different neighborhoods and communities. She began a campaign called Nature is a Human Right, with the guiding belief that access to green space is a universal right, not a luxury. After many unsuccessful attempts to pursue legal avenues of making cities greener, Miles realized that nothing was going to be done if she didn’t do it herself.

Miles began documenting her local efforts to grow plants in her neighborhood online, and soon developed a large following. She has since edited the anthology *Nature is a Human Right: Why We’re Fighting For Green in a Grey World* (DK 2022), and written the book *Get Guerrilla Gardening* (DK 2023). She also founded Dream Green, a social enterprise that educates and empowers people to become guerrilla gardeners in their own neighborhoods.

For Miles, guerrilla gardening serves many purposes. It increases biodiversity in cities, leading to cleaner air, and also contributes to community building and better mental health for those who live in cities. Nature deprivation has serious consequences, and the impacts of that are felt most by marginalized communities. Land justice and guerrilla gardening have a long history, originating in the 1600s when The Diggers — a group of Protestant radicals — illegally cultivated common land to grow food and fight land privatization.

“This idea of ownership of land is so ridiculous,” said Miles in her interview for Shado Magazine. “Guerrilla gardening is just about taking back what is ours, and using space in ways which are productive, fair and beneficial to the people and the planet, rather than being just low maintenance areas for councils to neglect.”

Varsha Yajman (she/her)

- Location: Australia
- Organization: Sapna South Asian Climate Solidarity
- Social Media: @varsha.yajman

Varsha Yajman is an Indian-Australian speaker, podcaster and advocate for climate justice and mental health awareness. Yajman began her activism as a teenager as an organizer for School Strike for Climate and the Australian Youth Climate Coalition. Varsha is now a coordinator at Sapna South Asian Climate Solidarity Network and a paralegal for a firm that conducts climate change litigation. She also co-hosts a podcast called Not to be Controversial, which aspires to create a community for young South Asians to feel represented.

After many experiences in the climate justice movement where she was the only person of color, Yajman’s activism has become more focused on promoting intersectionality and elevating marginalized voices and stories. Becoming involved with the organization Sapna was a turning point for Yajman, as she was able to talk about her own experience as a woman of color and incorporate it into her activism.

“It was through Sapna that I understood what it meant to decolonise the environmental movement and work towards justice,” said Yajman in an article for Assembly. “I realised that the current environmental movement is created by and for the privileged. It does not acknowledge or amplify the voices of people of colour, Indigenous people, Black people or those on the front lines of climate change — and that needs to change.”

Yajman believes that one of the ways this can be remediated is through education. “We need our curriculum to go beyond talking about the effects of plastic pollution and carbon emissions but educate students on the legacy of colonisation and its role in the climate crisis to this day,” said Yajman.

Resources

- www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/climate-activists-earth-day
- www.greenpeace.org/international/story/53055/10-women-from-the-asia-pacific-region-steering-the-climate-conversation/
350 HUMBOLDT CLIMATE BOOK CLUB: READ WITH US!

Dan Chandler, 350 Humboldt

350 HUMBOLDT BOOK CLUB PICKS

The 350 Humboldt Book Club has been reading one climate-related book a month for almost three years now: the perfect activity for the Covid years! We've read a bunch of excellent books — novels, like Ministry for the Future by Kim Stanley Robinson and the dark satire Venomous Lumpsucker by Ned Beauman; and books about nature adapting to a warming world, like Rising by Elizabeth Rush or Under a White Sky by Elizabeth Kolbert and Scott Weidensaul’s mind-expanding book on migrating birds, A World on the Wing.

Forests are the subject in three of our choices: The Mother Tree by ecologist Suzanne Simard, whose definitive research on underground forest communication is still not accepted by the clearcut-loving Forest Service; To Speak for the Trees, by Diana Beresford-Kroger, a polymath who tells her own amazing story of growing up learning the Celtic tree-entwined wisdom of nature during summers with her mother’s Irish relatives; and The Treeline: The Last Forest and the Future of Life on Earth by Ben Rawlence, who travels the top of the world visiting forests, glaciers, scientists and Indigenous people.

THE TRELNE LINE BOOK REVIEW

So far, The Treeline has affected me most. Rawlence is a journalist with a penchant for science and a wonderful way with words. The book consists of travel interviews and some adventures in Scotland, Norway, Russia, Siberia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. The common thread is the Boreal Forest and how it is being transformed by warming far greater than that experienced in the lower 48. (This year Greenland has on occasion exceeded 50 degrees Fahrenheit above seasonal averages.) One thing that struck several of us reading the book is how few scientists are studying this area (that includes the methane sequestering permafrost), so how uncertain our knowledge is. Rather than describe the book I would like to share a short quotation about each of the biomes Rawlence visits.

• Scotland: “Over eight thousand years of wooded history and all the birds and insects and mammals that make up the finely balanced systems of forest that has evolved around the Scots pine could be obliterated within the lifetime of a single tree.”

• Sami in Norway: “Sometimes,’ says Sara-Irene, ‘we feel schizophrenic!’ Then both women laugh like crazy. They may be good at their jobs, take pride in their work even, but their soul is not in the town. It is out there, in the hills, running free with the reindeer.”

• Russia: “With increasing drought and more frequent fires, the steppe of Central Asia was projected to expand, consuming the burned-out taiga as it went, preventing it from regenerating: the greatest forest on earth would die from below. ‘And that,’ says Nadezshda [a scientist being interviewed], ‘is what we are seeing now.’”

• Siberia: “Dzasta is the last Nganasan speaker in the town and yet is strangely matter-of-fact about the impending extinction of his culture. ‘There are lots of holy sites in the tundra and the forest. If you pass one you have to stop and make a sacrifice. But my kids don’t know those places because they don’t migrate. No one knows these places anymore and no one will ever know now because we have stopped herding.’”

• Alaska: “The feedbacks and interrelationships between forest systems, water cycles, atmospheric circulation, carbon storage and permafrost melt are complex and far-reaching, too complex for any one computer model alone. ‘All we can say for sure is that there is going to be a lot more climate disruption,’ says [scientist interviewee] Brendan.”

• Canada: “Glades of lichen, their pale spiny fronds pricking the air like coral, swim in and out of view beyond the gnarled limbs of jack pine. Gangs of aspen shoot their straight gray boles skyward like gun barrels. Sunlight reaches the ground in ribbons and spots, or else in sliding beams where a fallen tree has torn a hole in the canopy, as if we are underwater. But this coral forest has air, and what air! Fragrant and heavy, like a perfumery. I realize with a jolt how rare this experience is, how few people have smelled and touched a 7,000-year-old forest. So this is what ‘old growth’ means.”

• Greenland: “We know what is happening. An unfortunate side effect of science is the illusion of human mastery: the idea that if we know what is happening then we can control it. The irony is that we might have been able to. The tragedy is that it is too late. The chain reaction is under way. The curve only gets steeper from here. From emissions already in the atmosphere, [glaciologist] Jason Box says, seventy feet of sea level rise is locked in; it’s just a question of how fast the ice melts.”

What Rawlence found in researching The Treeline is alarming: “The last generation to know a stable climate with seasonal cycles and familiar species — and all the human culture and traditions that rest on that foundation — has already been born.” He does have an affirming response to this fait de accompli: “Suddenly there is so much to do. The struggle to limit the damage and prepare for what is coming has already begun.” So read the book for its science, its detailed descriptions of an area unknown to most of us, its insights, and for its realism.

You can check out Rawlence’s take on Norway’s forests and the Sami people at: www.theguardian.com/news/2022/jan/20/norway-arctic-circle-trees-sami-reindeer-global-heating. The Treeline is available in the Humboldt County Library, or your local bookstore.

BOOK CLUB IS OPEN TO ANYONE

Our climate book club is open to anyone. We would love to have you join us. Just drop an email to 350Humboldt@gmail.com with “Book Club” as the subject and we’ll put you on the mailing list. We’ll be meeting June 26 to talk about An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us, by Ed Yong.
THE GHOST FOREST: 
Racists, Radicals, and Real Estate in the CA Redwoods

Greg King

On June 6, 2023 PublicAffairs Books, an imprint of New York publishing giant Hachette, will publish The Ghost Forest: Racists, Radicals, and Real Estate in the California Redwoods, by Humboldt County author and activist Greg King. King is best known for naming Headwaters Forest, in 1987. King led efforts to protect Headwaters Forest and other ancient redwood groves held by the Pacific Lumber Company and targeted for liquidation by Houston-based Maxxam Corporation.

King’s first presentation of The Ghost Forest will occur in Humboldt County on Saturday, June 10, at 7:00 p.m., at the Arcata Playhouse. All are invited to this free event. Doors open at 6:30. The event is co-sponsored by Eureka Books, which will be on hand to sell signed copies of The Ghost Forest.

Much of The Ghost Forest examines the twenty-year odyssey to protect Pacific Lumber’s ancient redwoods after Maxxam’s 1985 junk-bond takeover and subsequent tripling of the cut of old-growth forests. Yet The Ghost Forest travels well beyond Maxxam to the fraudulent consolidation of redwood land grants during the mid-19th century, which illegally privatized hundreds of thousands of acres of ancient redwood forest in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. From there The Ghost Forest examines how redwood became an essential component of industrial expansion during the late 19th and early 20th centuries—so much so that in 1917 a select group of Bay Area industrialists would create a phony environmental group dedicated not to saving the redwoods, but to ensuring their exploitation. It was the first and most successful example of a phenomenon that today we call greenwashing.

Already, The Ghost Forest has received several important reviews and endorsements. The publishing industry standards Kirkus and Publishers Weekly each gave The Ghost Forest a starred review. Kirkus called the book “Haunting ... [a] wholly engrossing, urgent account of redwood preservation.” Publishers Weekly wrote, “King’s dogged research turns up the closed-door deals and nefarious legal schemes that led to the destruction of 96% of redwood forests, providing a disturbing chronicle of how lumber companies flouted laws and came out on top. The result is a sobering accounting of the forces environmentalists are up against.”

Richard Preston, author of bestsellers The Wild Trees and The Hot Zone, says, “The Ghost Forest is the book I’ve long wished someone would write, and Greg King has done it luminously well.”

Celebrated American novelist Charles Frazier, author of Cold Mountain and The Trackers, writes, “The farther I traveled into The Ghost Forest the more convinced I became that I was reading an epic.” To read all ten endorsements of The Ghost Forest, and to keep up on future reviews, visit gregkingwriter.com/the-ghost-forest.

At this event masks are strongly encouraged to protect vulnerable community members.

Resources:
- www.publishersweekly.com/9781541768673
- www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/greg-king/the-ghost-forest/9781541768673/?len=publicaffairs

CEASEFIRE

Ellen E. Taylor

In May, the Generals made a truce And started shaping words.

The trenches stilled. Still, blood flowed red
As troops sat, stupid. Overhead
They heard the flight of birds.

A boy crept out into the sluice
Of sleet, and scanned for drones.

Midfield, a rush of storks traversed
The front, with patterns long rehearsed:
In flight to summer zones.

The other side, in order loose,
Watched, joyous, from the mire.
In tears the armies came together
Grabbing stick while chasing feather,
Fierce to make a fire.

Mother Earth has often extended a loving hand in the resolution of disputes or even wars. Animals especially have played a role in reminding people of their common humanity, and abiding love of the beautiful and mysterious world.
CDFW and CAL FIRE Urge Obstruction of Public Records Act: “Don’t Create Documents”

Tom Wheeler, EPIC Executive Director

Note: For the past year, EPIC has filed and reviewed numerous Public Records Act requests with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and CAL FIRE to understand recurring issues in timber harvest plans. After pouring over thousands of documents, we have discovered alarming issues that place California’s native wildlife and ecosystems at risk.

Here’s the backstory: The year was 2020 and things were going poorly. The relationship between CAL FIRE, the state agency charged with reviewing timber harvest plans, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, which is tasked with providing advice and recommendations to CAL FIRE concerning impacts to wildlife from logging, had deteriorated. The issues were large and structural, and at their root concerned the degree to which CAL FIRE was obligated to consider the opinions of wildlife experts at CDFW.

Allegedly to resolve issues of disagreements between staff at the two agencies, in 2021 CDFW and CAL FIRE signed a joint memorandum of understanding called the “Communication Protocol for Outstanding Species Concerns.” The protocol, on its face, was “to ensure consistency in the resolution of outstanding questions and concerns related to biological data and species protection measures.” In practice, however, the protocol allows for both agencies to paper over disagreements out of sight of the public record and the public’s watchful eye.

Per the protocol, when an inter-agency disagreement exists—such as whether surveys for northern spotted owls were adequately completed—staffers are supposed to raise the issue to their supervisor. Supervisors from CDFW and CAL FIRE are then to meet to discuss the issue, and if the disagreement persists, it is elevated to higher levels within both agencies. From our review of public records, the communications protocol has been used by CAL FIRE and supervisors at CDFW to hide areas of public controversy in a way that generally benefits the “regulated public.”

In numerous emails unearthed by EPIC, CAL FIRE staffers have used the communications protocol to silence CDFW concerns about wildlife. How this appears in the public record is that a CDFW employee will report to their supervisor that they received a call from CAL FIRE that the forester has disagreed with the opinion of CDFW or has objected to a question raised by CDFW. This “disagreement” then triggers the communications protocol. Within CDFW, employees are directed to maintain the “chain of command” and to voice their disagreements with CAL FIRE to their supervisor. The supervisor then is supposed to articulate the agency’s position to an equivalent supervisor at CAL FIRE. In numerous instances, however, it appears that CDFW supervisors either don’t adequately understand the disagreement or fail to provide a sufficient defense for their agency’s position.

In one Timber Harvest Plan (THP), EPIC found that CDFW staffers recommended that the agency issue a statement of “non-concurrence,” a rarely-invoked situation where CDFW officially disagrees on record with the determination made by CAL FIRE. CDFW staffers believed that the THP would have significant impacts to northern spotted owls, including potential violations of the Endangered Species Act. CDFW staffers raised the issue through the protocol to supervisors. From all indications, it appears that CDFW supervisors failed to sufficiently voice their concerns and the THP was approved without note of the concerns by CDFW.

By using this new protocol, CAL FIRE and CDFW intentionally left the public in the dark about important and substantial disagreements. As one CDFW staffer vented to a colleague in an email obtained by EPIC, “[I]t’s clear to that what we did…is exactly what our ‘coordination training’ was supposed to do, which was to talk about NSO issues offline/separately and minimize the written record.” In the THP where CDFW staff urged supervisors to issue a statement of non-concurrence, the public would have had a difficult time discerning that anything was amiss because the record, maintained by CAL FIRE, contained no discussion of the disagreement. EPIC was only ever able to discover this disagreement by filing a Public Records Act request and sifting through hundreds of emails. That request yielded documents after the THP was approved by CAL FIRE, the trees were cut, and owls were harmed.
RRAS FIELD TRIPS IN JUNE

Saturday June 3 – 8:30-11am. Join RRAS for a free guided field trip at the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary. Bring your binoculars and scope if you have them, and meet trip leader Gary Friedrichsen at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) for easy-to-walk trails, a beautiful view of Humboldt Bay, and the opportunity to hear and see a diverse range of shorebirds, migratory songbirds and raptors, and resident birds likely engaging in breeding activities. Reservations not required.

Saturday June 10 – 8:30-11am. Free guided field trip at Arcata Marsh with trip leader Michael Morris. Meet at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake).

Sunday June 11 – 9-11am. Join trip leader Ralph Bucher for a walk at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. This two-mile walk is along a wide, flat, gravel-packed trail easily accessible on foot. Just outside of town, this refuge offers astounding and easy access to tidally influenced habitats including mudflats, riparian vegetation, conifers, and bay, which host a variety of geese, raptors, shorebirds, and waders. Email Ralph to sign up for this field trip at thebook[at]reninet.com.

Tuesday, June 13 – 6-7:30pm. Enjoy the extended light of the summer months and join RRAS to see what the marsh birds are up to in the evening! Trip leader Michael Morris will guide a trip through the Arcata Marsh on this midweek walk. In the summer the marsh is home to many resident and migratory breeding birds who take advantage of the last hours of the day to get some feeding and singing in, so join us at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) to add some birds to your weekday.

Saturday June 17 – 8:30-11am. Free guided field trip at Arcata Marsh with trip leader Gary Friedrichsen. Meet at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake).

Sunday June 18 – 9-11am. For a walk along the Eureka shoreline, join trip leader Ralph Bucher at the foot of Del Norte Street. This wheelchair accessible walk meets at the pier, where an active Osprey nest can be viewed, along with pelicans, loons, and cormorants. Email Ralph to sign up for this field trip at thebook[at]reninet.com.

Saturday June 24 – 8:30-11am. Free guided field trip at Arcata Marsh with trip leader Ken Burton. Meet at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake).

Saturday June 24 – 8:30-10:30am. Join RRAS in Southern Humboldt on the fourth Saturday of every month at Tooby Park, one mile west of Garberville on Sprowl Creek Road. These walks will be easy walking lasting 2-3 hours each. Start time is variable so please text or call Ann at 707-296-8720 for start time each month. Heavy rain cancels.

Saturday June 24 - 9-11am. Wigi Wetlands Volunteer Workday. Help create bird-friendly native habitat and restore a section of the bay trail behind Bayshore Mall. We provide tools and snacks. Please bring your own water and gloves. Contact Jeremy Cashen at jeremy.cashen@yahoo.com or 214-605-7368 for more information.

Tuesday, June 27 – 6-7:30pm. Enjoy the extended light of the summer months and join RRAS to see what the marsh birds are up to in the evening! Trip leader Janelle Chojnacki will guide an evening trip through the Arcata Marsh on this midweek walk. In the summer the marsh is home to many resident and migratory breeding birds who take advantage of the last hours of the day to get some feeding and singing in, so join us at the end of South I Street (Klopp Lake) to add some birds to your weekday.

RRAS Sponsors 17th Annual Science Fair Award

By Sue Leskiw

In March 2023, the annual Humboldt County Science Fair returned to an in-person event held at Cal Poly Humboldt. The judges awarded a $50 prize for the best project related to birds or their habitat to Eliza Lehman, a seventh-grade student at Jacoby Creek School.

Eliza investigated what is the “best bird feed” by comparing consumption of striped black oil sunflower seeds, unsalted peanuts in shells, and Nyjer seed. She hung trays containing 120 grams of each food near shrubbery, three feet apart. During 35-minute time periods, she observed and recorded the number and species of birds that came in and what seed they consumed. She then weighed the trays, repeating the experiment over three days.

Species observed were House Sparrows, Song Sparrows, Golden- and White-crowned Sparrows, and Spotted Towhees. Between 8 and 15 individuals visited the feeder per day. Each day, the sunflower seeds were the most popular, while no peanuts were consumed.

The results supported Eliza’s hypothesis that the sunflower seeds would be the most popular food because they contain high fiber and energy. Although the birds may have checked out more than one of the feeding trays, they concentrated on the sunflower seeds, consuming 11 grams over the experimental period vs. 5 grams of Nyjer and 0 grams of peanuts. She noted that sparrows were the most common visitors and peanuts in shells were too big for this type of bird. Eliza stated that if she were to repeat the experiment, she would replace the peanuts with another food and leave the feeding trays out longer.
Your membership in Redwood Region Audubon Society supports our field trips, programs, education and conservation efforts.

Membership in our chapter is just $15 a year, and you will receive EcoNews, with the Sandpiper inserted. To join our local chapter, either fill in the form below, and mail it with a check for $15 made to RRAS, or join through our website, RRAS.org. To join National Audubon and receive the EcoNews as well as Audubon magazine, either join through our website link at RRAS.org or follow the instructions below.

Membership Application
Please enroll me as a member of the National Audubon Society and of my local chapter. Please send Audubon magazine and my membership card to the address below.

My check for $20 is enclosed. (Introductory offer)

NAME _______________________________
ADDRESS ___________________________________________
CITY ____________________________ STATE ______ ZIP ______
email ________________________________

Local Chapter Code: C24
Please make checks to the National Audubon Society. Send this application and your check to:

National Audubon Society
P.O. Box 422250
Palm Coast, FL 32142-2250

LOCAL CHAPTER:
Redwood Region Audubon Society
P.O. Box 1054, Eureka, CA 95502

President’s Column

By Gail Kenny
Photos by Gail Kenny

I hope you have been getting out to enjoy all the spring bird activity! Part of what keeps me engaged with nature is the sense of discovery and beauty. Even though I have been birding since 1980, I am still learning more about birds. I also love wildflowers, and my fun discovery this spring has been two flowers new to me that bloom on the sea stacks around Trinidad this time of year. One of them is called Footsteps of Spring and is pictured here. I have been enjoying the spring migrants passing through and hearing the birds singing again. It is more fun birding now that I’m using the Hear Birds Again app that I wrote about in a previous column. I find myself toggling between using that and Merlin Sound ID. I have looked for the California Condors at Bald Hills several times, but haven’t seen them as of this writing. I will keep trying. I enjoyed the pair of Mountain Bluebirds at Lyons Ranch Trailhead in April.

The resident pair of Barn Swallows are back at my house roosting in the shop (it doesn’t have a door) each night. I just found the nest they are building. I had a pair of Chipping Sparrows (see accompanying photo) in the alley too. They pass through during migration. One morning in late April I was treated to an oriole outside my living room window (most likely a first year Bullock’s Oriole) then an hour later a male Common Yellowthroat warbler which was a new yard bird.

It was a perfect weather day for the midweek bird sit at the McKinleyville Vista Point field trip overlooking the Mad River mouth on Thursday, April 27. Seven of us joined leader Janelle Chojnacki in enjoying the beautiful evening. Ken Burton’s eBird list noted 26 species of birds, and that did not include the Bald Eagle that another participant saw as she arrived. A Chestnut-backed Chickadee perched close by giving us good looks, Turkey Vultures flew past, and Common Ravens flew overhead. Janelle recognized a raven pair as ones she had been monitoring for her graduate study project in the Clam Beach area. In the river mouth, there were a variety of shorebirds, including Whimbrels. We learned from Ken Burton that some vocalizations we were hearing were harbor seal pups! It was more of a mew than the strange sounds the adults make.

In RRAS news, we are taking our summer hiatus from the speaker program which will be back in September, maybe on a different night. Our Conservation Committee is staying in the loop regarding port development plans for the offshore wind energy terminal and Nordic Aquafarms’ plans for the fish farm on the Samoa Peninsula. We are looking for volunteers to chair our Education Committee, Program Committee, and for a Volunteer Coordinator. If you want to help or want more information, please email me at gailgkenny@gmail.com.
Results of 20th Annual Student Bird Art Contest

Submitted by Sue Leskiw

Some 650 school kids pulled out paints, pencils, pastels, or paste to enter the 20th Annual Student Bird Art Contest. Cosponsors were RRAS and Friends of the Arcata Marsh.

The contest was held in association with mid-April’s Godwit Days Spring Migration Bird Festival in Arcata. This year, the festival returned to a four-day, in-person event at the Arcata Community Center, so all art entries were posted there for public viewing.

Copies of 2023’s cash prize and honorable mention winning artwork will be displayed at the Arcata Marsh Interpretive Center (AMIC) during May and June. Public viewing is possible Tuesdays through Sundays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. A free cookies-and-punch reception will be held on Friday, May 19 at AMIC between 5 and 7 p.m. A downloadable booklet containing the artwork and photos from the awards ceremony will be posted in late May at www.rras.org, www.godwitdays.org, and www.arcatamarshfriends.org.

Awards totaled $650, with 41 cash prizes plus 39 honorable mentions. Depending on the number of entries per grade, some levels were combined and others received more than one set of awards, to even out the chances of winning.

Winners of the Student Bird Art Contest

Kindergarten & Grade 1

First Place, Morgan Boynton, Aldergrove Charter, Anna’s Hummingbird

Second Place, Harry Davis, Jacoby Creek, Chestnut-backed Chickadee

Third Place, Kayona Brown, Fuente Nueva Charter, Black-crowned Night-Heron

Honorable Mentions: Teddy Mainzer, Jacoby Creek, Bald Eagle; Alia Kurland-Hardy, Fuente Nueva Charter, Barred Owl; Arabella Steele, Seafort Montessori, American Robin

Grade 2

First Place, Iver Vu, Fuente Nueva Charter, Sandhill Crane; Kira Osbourne, Redwood Coast Montessori, Northern Flicker

Second Place, Wren Pittman, Fieldbrook Elementary, Spotted Owl; Aurelia Fosnaugh, Northern United Charter, Ruby-throated Hummingbird

Third Place, Ona Kypta, Garfield Elementary, Osprey; Owen Rogers, Jacoby Creek, Bald Eagle

Honorable Mentions: Sophie Adams, Northern United Charter, Snowy Plover; Joah Nicely Alfaro, Fuente Nueva Charter, Peregrine Falcon; Aiden Salters, Northern United Charter, Bullock’s Oriole; Cully Stack, Northern United Charter-Willow Creek, Bushtit; Jordan O’Connor, Fieldbrook Elementary, Bald Eagle

Grade 3

First Place, Anika Terry, Garfield Elementary, Black-crowned Night-Heron; Penn Kerhoulas, Garfield Elementary, California Quail

Second Place, Heidi Tout, Garfield Elementary, Steller’s Jay; Madden McCall, Northern United Charter, American Avocet

Third Place, Michael Mead, Loleta Elementary, Bald Eagle; Bernardo Freitas, Northern United Charter, American Kestrel

Honorable Mentions: Riley Lawler, Fieldbrook Elementary, Peregrine Falcon; Raven Lovejoy, Seafort Montessori, Northern Flicker; Calvin Angleton, Garfield Elementary, Tufted Puffin; Maelyn Hernandez-Hernandez, Morris Elementary, Spotted Owl; Doc Strong, Coastal Grove Charter, Rock Wren

Grade 4

First Place, Ayla Dunn, Union Street Charter, Chestnut-backed Chickadee; Teus Kytta, Garfield Elementary, Peregrine Falcon

Second Place, Ginger Larsen, Union Street Charter, Great Blue Heron; Ezekiel Giordano, Home Schooled, Black-crowned Night-Heron

Third Place, Maeve Warburton, Fuente Nueva Charter, Steller’s Jay; LaRuca Fleming, Union Street Charter, Steller’s Jay

Honorable Mentions: Zane Niehaus, Fieldbrook Elementary, Red-shouldered Hawk; Lili Kibbe, Garfield Elementary, Snowy Plover; Adelia Olson, Fuente Nueva Charter, Anna’s Hummingbird; Maya Losh, Union Street Charter, Great Egret; Kennedy Howard, Morris Elementary, Belted Kingfisher; Hadley Johnson, Pacific View Charter, Burrowing Owl; Tanner Baxter, Fieldbrook Elementary, Varied Thrush

Grades 5 & 6

First Place, Tadeus Furaha, Coastal Grove Charter, Snowy Egret; Elianna Emery, Agnes Johnson Charter, Northern Flicker

Second Place, Allison Thompson, Sunny Brae Middle School, Steller’s Jay; Alyss Gildie, Jacoby Creek, Great Blue Heron

Third Place, Irena Fugate, Northern United Charter, White-tailed Kite; Levi Duhem, Aldergrove

Honorable Mentions: Keani Pele Young, Arcata High, Marble Godwits; Malia Staffslien, South Fork High, Anna’s Hummingbird; Hannah Webb, Eureka High, Varied Thrush; Iris Hahner, Academy of the Redwoods, Yellow-breasted Chat; October Mintey, Arcata High, Great Egret

continued next page

Anna’s Hummingbird by Morgan Boynton

American Crow by Aria Belli

Spotted Owl by Margot Nims

Belted Kingfisher by Mariia Vasileva

Great Blue Heron by Muhammad (Sultan) Sholahudin
McKinleyville High; Theodore Yarbrough, Grade 9, Jacoby Creek School

6, Agnes Johnson Charter; Alysse Gildea, Grade 6, raw and red. Frosty fangs bite through my jacket and
4-8)

melt away, leaving spring in its wake. I imagine that

this sleeping winter dream—I am a part of this. This

I am winter, biding its time till next year, when it can
turn the world into a silent, glimmering dream once again.

First Place Winner, Senior Division (Grades 9-12)

“Fishing Trip With My Dad”

By Braden Stevens, 9th Grade, McKinleyville High School

I was fishing out in the bay, and there was a big tug

early one morning on Father’s Day, my dad and I got ready to leave with my uncle to go fishing

in Humboldt Bay. I was so tired from waking up so early that I fell asleep in the truck. When we got there, I woke up and got my pole while my uncle and dad loaded the boat into the water. My dad’s friend showed up to fish with us, and finally, after 20 minutes, we got on the water. We motored around for a while looking for a spot to stop and put our hooks in the water. While I was sitting there, I was looking at the birds, the sun, and the boat bobbing through the water.

The sun was dancing on the water, it was hot, and I was melting like popsicles on a baking summer
day. We got nothing, so we decided to go elsewhere. We found a nice place to stop, and there was a cool
afternoon breeze. I was finally cooling down. I threw out my line and waited for a bite. Nibble after nibble
and nothing. Then, all of a sudden, there was screaming. My uncle shouted, “I got something!” He was
happier than a kid on Christmas. It was a big one, 28 inches long! I was as mad as a bull that I got nothing. Left and right people were getting fish except me. I was furious because I was getting nothing.

I was starting to give up when all of a sudden yank! A fish bit my hook. I was pulling and reeling
for what seemed like an hour, but it was more like 15 seconds. I was dreaming about how big the fish was, and I was hoping that it was going to be bigger than my uncle’s fish. I doubted that I was going to catch it because I had no luck all day. When I felt my pole about to slip out of my hands, I pulled back.

I began reeling like a madman. The fish was squirming at the end of my line, and I put it in the boat. I then whacked it with a piece of wood to kill it. Its blood splattered me, but I didn’t care because I was so happy. I finally got a fish. I was jumping up and down, and I almost fell off the boat. It was a big sucker, weighing in at 32 inches!

Finally, my patience paid off. It was the biggest fish that day. We fished a little more that day, and my
dad caught one, but my fish was still the biggest. We all got a snack, and then we started loading the
boat back on the trailer. After we got the trailer loaded up, we got some ice cream and headed home.

Because it was such a peaceful day, because the water was so still, and because I was with my dad
on Father’s Day, this remains my best day fishing.
The American Lung Association recently ranked Humboldt County’s air quality as among the cleanest in the state. But that wasn’t always so. For decades, two pulp mills just across Humboldt Bay from Eureka smothered the city with stinky white smoke. Some say it was the “smell of money,” but the cleanup has cost taxpayers more than $30 million – with a huge mess still left behind.

In 1989, Surfrider Foundation filed a Clean Water Act lawsuit against the Simpson Pulp Mill in Fairhaven and the Louisiana-Pacific Pulp Mill in Samoa for dumping a combined 40 million gallons of untreated chemical waste into the ocean daily. The dioxin-laden, caustic effluent known as pulping liquors often turned the ocean black near one of the best surf spots in the region, causing nausea, rashes, and other ailments.

Surfrider documented 40,000 water quality violations, despite California’s famously-stringent (but often poorly-enforced) environmental regulations. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) later joined the lawsuit and, in 1991, the two companies agreed to what was then the largest Clean Water Act settlement in history. In addition to fines and legal fees, they committed $50 million to clean up their operations.

The mills were also required to conduct lab tests to prove that abalone, sea urchins, sand dollars, and kelp could survive in the effluent. Quoted in the L.A. Times, EPA attorney Christopher Sproul, said, “This represents the first time in the country that there has been any direct requirement placed on a discharger to reduce toxicity as measured by its effects on organisms.”

The larger Simpson pulp mill was demolished in 1998, and the smaller pulp mill changed hands several times and was eventually bought by Evergreen Pulp, a subsidiary of Lee & Man Paper. In 2006, EPIC and Californians for Alternatives to Toxics sued under the Clean Air Act. In 2008, a raid by dozens of local, state, and federal agents found numerous violations. Within months, the company filed for bankruptcy protection, leaving behind a massive toxic mess.

When the Harbor District acquired the former Samoa pulp mill, hazardous materials, dilapidated structures, and debris covered the site. Photo taken from the roof of the 15-story boiler building by Jennifer Savage, Surfrider Foundation, March 2014.

**Harbor District Acquisition**

In 2013, the Humboldt Bay Harbor, Recreation, and Conservation District acquired the Samoa pulp mill at no cost, accepting responsibility for the aboveground hazardous waste at the site (Louisiana-Pacific is still responsible for groundwater contamination).

The Harbor District’s acquisition of the site was financially risky. But in hindsight, the agency’s determination to clean up the site averted imminent disaster. In October 2013, the U.S. EPA declared the site a Superfund emergency. Dozens of decaying tanks contained three million gallons of highly corrosive pulping liquor, 10,000 tons of sludge, 250 pounds of mercury, and 10,000 gallons of sulfuric and hydrochloric acids. Several of the tanks posed an immediate risk of overflowing due to rainwater accumulation.

On March 10, 2014, a 6.8 magnitude earthquake off the coast caused more cracks and leaks in the tanks. This was a wakeup call that sped up the removal of the pulping liquors, which were then hauled to a paper mill in Longview, Washington for reuse - 2,500 gallons at a time - at a cost of more than $15 million. Some tanks remain but stand empty, no longer an imminent threat to the bay.

Initial attempts to reuse the site included a scheme to process gold ore from British Columbia, a plan that was resoundingly rejected due to concerns about the use of mercury and cyanide next to Humboldt Bay.

Today, the site houses 18 businesses projected to pay more than $600,000 in rent this year, including Pacific Flake Salt Company, oyster producers Taylor Mariculture and Coast Seafoods, and two delivery services. Last month, the Harbor District closed the books on its New Market Tax Credit loans. Under this program, equity investments are made in low-income communities in exchange for tax credits. This money funded the renovation of warehouses and the installation of the largest rooftop solar system in the county.

Nordic Aquafarms hopes to demolish the asbestos-laden smokestack and boiler building, remove contaminated soil, and build a land-based aquaculture facility to raise Yellowtail Kingfish, a warm-water species more commonly known as hamachi. Pending permits for Nordic’s ocean discharge and bay intakes are expected to apply modern standards to structures built in an era without environmental protections.

Until the site is fully cleaned up, it will continue to threaten Humboldt Bay’s water quality and habitat. Humboldt Baykeeper will continue to watchdog any and all plans to ensure that the bay and ocean are protected. And until the site is redeveloped, the 1.5-mile long ocean discharge pipe will continue to attract industry, given the barriers to building a new one.

To stay up to date on bay-related news, email us at alerts@humboldtbaykeeper.org or visit our website.
**Field Trips**

**June 23-25. Oregon Caves Overnight and Day Hikes.** Oregon Caves National Monument near Cave Junction offers botanical fun on mountain trails, as well as the cave itself. We will camp at Chinquapin Group Campground and probably hike to Bigelow Lakes. Contact Carol: theralphs@humboldt1.com or 707-822-2015.

**Restoration Day**


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**Evening Programs**

Evening programs will resume in September.

**Native Plant Nursery**

In June the nursery will be open on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays from 10am -1pm with possible other weekend hours/days. Check our website for changes.

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**Why We Shouldn’t Be Worried About Traffic**

Nobody likes sitting in traffic. Consequently, “congestion relief” is one of the most popular things a planner or politician can propose. After all, when you’re stuck in gridlock on a freeway, desperate to get moving, it seems like common sense that the people in charge should add more lanes to accommodate the traffic. But here’s the dirty little secret behind congestion relief projects: they don’t work.

Researchers have studied these projects for decades, and the evidence is overwhelming: when you add capacity to a road that is currently congested, more drivers will soon use that road, and within a few years it will end up just as congested as before. (The academic term for this phenomenon is “induced demand.”) Nevertheless, we keep trying this same failed approach year after year.

It may seem odd to even be addressing this topic on the North Coast, where there is no real traffic congestion to speak of. But even here, the idea of congestion relief is deeply ingrained in our plans and projects. Review any local government’s transportation policies, and you’ll find references to “level of service,” which is traffic engineering lingo for how much congestion they’ll allow on their streets and roads. In an attempt to address this issue, the Arcata Planning Commission recently voted (at CRTP’s urging) to “de-prioritize” congestion management in the city’s General Plan. But most of the actual projects contained in that plan still list congestion relief as their primary purpose!

While largely ignoring the fact that congestion can’t actually be relieved by adding capacity (whether that’s a new road, a turn lane, a traffic signal, or any number of other “improvements”), defenders of the status quo continue to perpetuate other myths in support of congestion relief projects. Here are a few of the more popular myths:

- “Congestion relief is good for air quality and/or the climate.” It’s true that individual (gas or diesel) cars produce fewer pollutants per mile when not stopped in traffic. But the fact that congestion relief projects lead to more driving means that the overall effect is a lot more emissions.
- “Congestion relief projects improve safety.” Sometimes people argue that a smoother flow of traffic reduces collisions, because stop-and-go traffic leads to a lot of fender-benders. But the fact is that few people are injured in collisions when cars are stuck in traffic, because they’re driving really slowly. Creating the conditions for them to drive fast is the actual safety threat.
- “If we don’t relieve congestion on this major artery, the traffic will divert to other neighborhood streets where we don’t want it.” Like the other myths, this one seems logical on the surface, but there is little evidence to support it. Research has shown that even actively removing lanes or whole streets usually does not result in significant traffic diversion. One possible explanation is that capacity limitations on nearby smaller streets make them just as slow as a bigger street clogged with traffic, so there’s no incentive for drivers to change their routes. Which means that any diversion that might occur can be reduced or eliminated by implementing more measures to slow traffic on the alternate routes.

Hopefully it’s clear by now that, while it may be annoying to wait a few extra seconds at an intersection, traffic congestion isn’t something we should be collectively worried about. In fact, where it exists, it can even have a positive impact by improving safety (slow cars are safe cars) and encouraging people to use healthier, lower-carbon modes of transportation. Let’s get congestion relief out of our local plans and start encouraging the only thing that will really make it more fun to commute: doing it without a car!
CRAFT FOR THE COAST
TRASH ART CONTEST

The NEC is hosting its Third Annual Craft for the Coast Trash Art Contest. This is an exciting event that engages the local community through art, upcycling, trash cleanups, and community activism. Leading up to June, local artists were invited to submit art creations made from trash and upcycled materials for a chance to win a variety of prizes at the upcoming contest. Their work will be on display during Arts Arcata on June 9.

- **When:** June 9, 4-8pm
- **Where:** Our Space in the Feuerwerker Building at 854 9th St., Arcata

The community can show support for their favorite art piece by voting for the People’s Choice Award from June 5-15 online at yournec.org/craft4coast. Each vote costs $1. Funds raised from Craft for the Coast will directly benefit the NEC’s programs such as EcoNews, community activism workshops, Coastal Cleanup Month and compassionate cleanups, Environmental Justice programs, paid internships, citizen science projects, and more.

The EPA estimates that the average American throws away 4.9 pounds of solid waste every day, however those of us who have trash service can easily ignore this reality because our waste is magically whisked away and we don’t have the experience of watching it accumulate. Craft for the Coast strives to bring awareness to issues of production and consumption and give litter a new life. By doing neighborhood cleanups and mining their own trash bins for upcycled art materials, people can prevent trash from going into our oceans and landfills. To take it a step further, the NEC embraces the idea that art is activism and has the power to influence policy and change the way we deal with waste as a community. Through the works of art that are made using trash we can bring awareness to production, consumption, our societal notions of worth and usefulness, the flaws in our trash and recycling systems, and associated environmental degradation.

Craft for the Coast encourages people to recognize the possibilities in what may have once been considered “waste.”

JUNE TRASH CLEANUP

Celebrate the start of summer and come collect trash with us!

- **When:** June 21, 5:30-7pm
- **Where:** Meeting at the Hikshari Trail Parking Lot and heading north along the Eureka Waterfront Trail
- **What:** Enjoy the sunshine and help keep litter out of the bay this summer by collecting trash along the waterfront. Trash collecting supplies and refreshments will be provided.

2023 “Bribes” made at the NEC Trash Craft night for the Kinetic Sculpture Race Team Trashlantis.
CREATURE FEATURE
SUPERBLOOM FROM DUNES TO DESERTS

Sable Odry, Coastal Programs Coordinator

Thirteen years of living here and an environmental science degree from Cal Poly Humboldt has taught me to appreciate this amazing region. As I work through my California Natural History certification course, I have gotten to broaden and focus my perspective and really take in how Humboldt and the Klamath region interact and create a unique region within the California landscape; to understand how we can find the same genuses on our coasts as there are in our southern California deserts; and to learn how the state’s once wide-roaming antelope are now sequestered to the only two remaining grassland plains in California. This spring I took the opportunity to explore the Carrizo Plain, a National Monument east of L.A., during a superbloom. I marveled at the sea of flowers, and was surprised by the ones I recognized from our moist, northern region.

On the crests of the hills we find blankets of Common Goldfields (Lasthenia gracilis), quilted with Tansy Phacelia (Phacelia tanacetifolia), California Poppy (Escholzia californica), and San Joaquin Blazing Stars (Mentzelia pectinata). The yellow and orange curtains create the perfect backdrop for the towering bushes of Silver Lupine (Lupinus albifrons) or, in Karuk, amataparas. This shrub is considered native from Oregon to Northern Baja, and is often seen as large as five feet tall. The light blue to violet flowers grow on stalks up to a foot long, crested stems with silver, palmately compound leaves, and can be found blooming along our coasts and foothills. Many visitors and locals over the years have gone to witness their grandeur in the Bald Hills.

However, locally it is not to be confused with the Yellow Bush Lupin (Lupinus arboresus), which is considered invasive to our region. In the 1900s Yellow Bush Lupine seeds were spread along the North Spit of Humboldt Bay to stabilize dunes and protect railroad tracks from sand immersion, however its natural range is believed to be from the San Francisco Bay area south. The Yellow Bush Lupin’s ability to fix nitrogen aids in its own and other invasive species’ persistence in previously open dune mat communities, reducing the biodiversity and presence of native species.

Continued on next page
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As we descend into the basin winding through the ravines, Purple Owl’s Clover (*Castilleja exserta*), speckles the blankets of Common Goldfields. Called me’-k’aa-num’, meaning clover, in the Tolowa language, they can be found locally along our coastlines. Growing about a foot tall, the hairy stems culminate in a cluster of pink, purple, or white flowers resembling clovers, but are unrelated taxonomically. They have alternating, narrow leaves often tipped with the same color as the flower, and are considered a crucial host plant for the threatened Bay Checkerspot butterfly. Species within the genus Castilleja frequently hybridize, however there are three recognized species of Owl’s Clover in California. Within Humboldt, the subspecies latifolia, commonly known as Sand-dune Owl’s Clover, is often found in sandy areas and is considered endemic to California.

In pockets tucked into the hillsides, we find the thick stalks of Desert Candles (*Streptanthus inflatus*), their burgundy crowns contrasting with the vivid orange of the San Joaquin Blazing Stars at their base. Both flowers look like they belong in our moist climate, and yet their lush blooms emerge along the slopes of these dry grasslands.

**AB99: Integrated Pest Management**

**Patty Clary, Californians for Alternatives to Toxics**

A bill advancing through the California legislature on a tide that could carry it to the governor's desk, AB99 would bring all of California the opportunity to enjoy what residents of Humboldt and Mendocino Counties have experienced for thirty-four years, often without realizing they have it: Highways free of thousands of pounds of toxic herbicides that were once used to kill weeds where today, mowing and other vegetation management have taken their place.

AB99 has survived review by three committees in the Assembly where moderates frequently torpedo environmental bills. It is now headed to a floor vote where there's a good chance AB99 will pass and be taken up for consideration in the state Senate.

Under AB99, Caltrans would be required to develop a statewide policy of integrated pest management (IPM) using a variety of scientifically developed methods to manage roadside vegetation as the agency has promised for years it would do. This IPM policy, with little or no herbicide, would be required on state highways in counties where restrictions or bans regulate the counties’ own use of the chemicals. Advance public notification of spray sites would be required under the law and a detailed report on Caltrans’ herbicides released to the public each year.

Last year the total amount of herbicide used by Caltrans was 420,000 pounds in 53 counties. In thirty-four years since Caltrans stopped using herbicides in Humboldt and Mendocino, the agency has sprayed twelve to fifteen million pounds of herbicide throughout the state, touching on every California county that’s not in a desert – or Humboldt and Mendocino – a practice that got its start in the early 1960s and grew rapidly thereafter.

Herbicide spraying on Humboldt and Mendocino state highways was halted by Caltrans in 1989 in response to a lawsuit threatened under California’s Environmental Quality Act by locally-based anti-pesticide groups following a decade of opposition to the chemicals. A later attempted return to herbicides met with intense public resistance supported by elected officials of Humboldt and Mendocino counties and several cities to continue Caltrans’ no-spray policy while tribes chose to ban the chemicals outright from their lands.

The successful three-plus decades of no-spray vegetation management on 730 miles of state highways in Humboldt and Mendocino counties provide a solid basis for development of a Caltrans’ IPM policy. Several other counties have chosen to regulate their use of herbicides and are ready for a Caltrans IPM policy while others will soon join the movement.
Ts’ De Noni, which means “where the bears play” in the Bear River dialect, is a youth beekeeping program and garden located in Loleta. The program began in January of 2022 when the Bear River Environmental and Natural Resources (ENR) Department asked Allen Rode to help set up some bee hives in order to help tribal youth cultivate environmental stewardship and entrepreneurship while also learning about the vital role that bees play in nature.

Before embarking on this project, Rode had recently retired and was in the process of expanding his personal beekeeping project called Bee Rode. With help from Shannon Lamb, a wildlife technician from the ENR Department, and Bonnie Parker, the Tribal Garden Coordinator, the three have formed an interconnected team that is working to develop the program. This year, they have added more bee hives, fruit trees, a vegetable garden, and chickens.

Over the past year and a half, Ts’ De Noni has had about 15 youth — ranging in age from elementary to middle school — attend their classes and demonstrations. In addition to learning how to harvest honey, participants also collected beeswax and worked with the cultural department to make native healing salves with recipes that originated from Bear River and Karuk elders. They then gave some jars of honey and body salves to the tribal elders as Christmas gifts, helping connect the youth with elders and build community.

“The educating youth part is extremely important...because it’s just really neat to see their faces when they learn something new or see all the bees in the beehive,” said Lamb. “You can tell on their faces that they never thought about that before. And same with harvesting the honey or seeing the big thing of beeswax, when you tell them ‘oh, that’s from all the bees that we took care of,’ you can see the wheels in their head turn.”

Incorporating gardening and chickens into the project has been a big endeavor, as previously there was no greenhouse or raised beds. Over the past year, Parker has created a garden bed that has four 100 foot rows in it that are filled with a variety of berries, asparagus, artichokes, garlic and onions. She is currently in the process of building 40 raised garden beds that will be for community members to use. This will allow anybody who is interested to sign up to tend to their own four by eight foot raised bed. Free fruit, vegetable, and native plant and flower seeds (many of them originating from Parker’s own garden) will be available to use in the raised beds or in other garden projects.

Parker is particularly proud of the 67 chickens that were raised from scratch, all of which will hopefully begin egg laying in August. The eggs from the chickens will provide an important protein source for tribal members, in addition to the beans that Parker is in the process of growing. Incorporating protein options into this project is an important part of developing self-sustainability and food sovereignty, both of which are other big goals of the project.

“Bear River on the whole is trying to move towards total food sovereignty and being more self-reliant and more independent of external systems,” said Parker. “And while it’s still in its infancy, I feel a huge sense of pride just being able to be a part of it, and just being able to feel like I’m doing good work for other people.”

In order to involve youth in the garden component of this project, Parker has received a grant from the Native Cultures Fund that will supply materials for the children to paint basketry and traditional designs on the outer surfaces of the raised beds. She is also working with the California Native Plant Society to create a six week course designed for both children and adults that will teach about wildlife, plant identification, food preservation, beekeeping, gardening, and farming basics. As the program continues to grow, the team hopes to work with the Tribal Youth Council, which includes some high school aged participants.

Starting the first Friday in June, Bear River will be hosting a farmers market every Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. across the street from the Bear River Family Entertainment Center. The market will include 30 craft and agricultural vendors, food trucks, and possibly music. While the honey will not be sold until later in the season, skin care products made from the Ts’ de Noni beeswax will be available to buy at the farmers market. For anyone interested in purchasing the honey this coming September, Lamb described the honey as having a really special light and floral flavor.

Although the project is young, Rode is looking forward to watching the project continue to evolve and flourish. “It is like the germinated seed of a fruit tree,” said Rode. “It is very tiny and small, but with tender loving care, it will one day bear fruit for years to come.”

In addition to visiting the farmers market, community members can help support this project by volunteering in the garden on Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. If you are interested in purchasing some Ts’ De Noni honey, look for their name and label at health and craft fairs this coming winter. To learn more, please contact Parker at bonnieparker@brb-nsn.gov, Rode at beerode2020@gmail.com, or Lamb at Shannonlamb@brb-nsn.gov. There is also the Bear River Community Garden and Farmer’s Market Facebook page or www.beerode.com.
Barriers Removed for Trinidad Rancheria to Gather and Access their Ancestral Lands

California State Parks and Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria Press Release

California State Parks and the Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria (Trinidad Rancheria) signed a historic 5-year memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the tribe and State Parks on Monday, April 24. The MOU removes barriers for Trinidad Rancheria to gather and access their ancestral lands and recognizes that a collaborative approach will better facilitate managing and preserving cultural and natural resources in the North Coast Redwoods District.

During a formal signing at Sumeg Village at Sumeg State Park in the presence of the Trinidad Rancheria Tribal Council and tribal members, and State Parks staff, Trinidad Rancheria Chairman Garth Sundberg and State Parks Director Armando Quintero executed the MOU. This MOU formalizes a government-to-government relationship between Trinidad Rancheria and State Parks to discuss, in a systematic manner, park unit management actions of concern or interest within the ancestral homelands of Trinidad Rancheria. The MOU also establishes a protocol for continuing open discussions and outlines the responsibilities of State Parks and the Trinidad Rancheria to promote successful cooperation and partnership between the parties for the mutual benefit of State Parks and the Trinidad Rancheria.

“I would like to thank State Parks for their acknowledgment of equal standing and rights for all tribes within shared ancestral territory,” said Garth Sundberg, Trinidad Rancheria Tribal Chairman.

“Through this act, we remove barriers for the Trinidad Rancheria Tribal Members to access and gather in their ancestral lands,” said State Parks Director Armando Quintero. “State Parks also formally acknowledges the benefits of traditional ecological knowledge in the land management of these lands and processes as we better learn how to care for and sustain the land in which we all live and love.”

“It is our natural born right to gather and manage cultural resources within our ancestral lands,” said Trinidad Rancheria Vice Chair Robert Hemsted. The Tribe and State Parks shall develop a mutually beneficial approach for the maintenance of traditional cultural practices by providing the Trinidad Rancheria tribal members access to places within the park units and properties covered in this MOU, including sacred and spiritual places.

“This is a small but significant step toward restoring and acknowledging the inherent relationship of the people to the land from which we come,” said Rachel Sundberg, Trinidad Rancheria Tribal Programs Director and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. “For years, we have been required by the State of California to be permitted to exist in relationship with the lands of our ancestors. As the original people of this land, with the responsibility to take care of our plant relatives, many of us have rightfully refused to be permitted. We have always gathered the plants and medicines gifted to us by the wo-ge in these lands. We have done it according to the way our grandmothers taught us and their grandmothers before them, sustainably and with consideration for those who would come after us.”

In 2019, Governor Newsom issued Executive Order N-15-19, also known as the state’s formal apology to California Native Americans, which acknowledged that: “the relationship between the State of California and California Native Americans was fraught with violence, exploitation, dispossession and the attempted destruction of tribal communities.” As part of addressing these wrongs, State Parks is taking stock of and critically reexamining its past, looking specifically at contested place names, monuments, and interpretation in California’s State Park System as part of a Reexamining Our Past Initiative. This work includes efforts to expand mutually beneficial agreements with California Tribal Nations through the Tribal MOU Program.

“By entering into this agreement, State Parks and North Coast Redwoods District specifically acknowledge Trinidad Rancheria as a sovereign nation and supports contemporary traditional cultural practices on their ancestral lands,” said North Coast Redwoods District Superintendent Victor Bjelajac. “We enter a period of cooperative stewardship of these special places with the Trinidad Rancheria and commit to strengthen and support the good relationships that have been developed and supported by so many Indigenous elders for so long.”
BIKE JUSTICE HUMBOLDT: COME RIDE WITH US!

Caroline Griffith, NEC Executive Director

Transportation accounts for 53 percent of our emissions in Humboldt County, so there is an obvious need to shift to low- and no-emission ways to get where we need to go. Unfortunately, the lack of cycling infrastructure locally often means many aspiring bicycle commuters feel unsafe making the transition. In addition to environmental reasons, there are also economic reasons why people might want to shift from driving to biking more often. To help folks learn about the basics of commuting and how to advocate for cycling infrastructure, the NEC has teamed up with the Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities (CRTP) and local bike shop Moon Cycles to host educational and enjoyable bike rides around the Humboldt Bay region. These rides are funded through a Whale Tail grant from the California Coastal Commission.

The goal of the project, which we’re calling Bike Justice Humboldt, is to get folks who might not feel welcome in mainstream cycling culture (which, let’s face it, tends to be very white and very male-dominated) out on the streets and more comfortable using bikes as transportation. We’re pairing basic bike maintenance and safety skills, route finding and infrastructure information, and local ecological knowledge to bring the joy of cycling to a new crowd.

One of the benefits of getting around by bicycle is getting to see your community from a different vantage point, meaning that you can explore areas of town that you might not normally see while going slow enough to enjoy the birds and flowers along the way. We think it’s important to get more people on bikes not only because it’s an emissions-free form of transportation, but it is also a way to foster relationships between humans and the world around them.

We hosted our first ride on Earth Day. Thanks to an unplanned flat tire, participants learned how to change a tire as well as how to do a general safety check (air, brakes, chain, wheels) before heading out for a ride. We rode through the Arcata Bottoms to the Mad River bridge hoping to see some Aleutian cackling geese but, alas, they’d already headed north. We did, however, enjoy a sighting of some non-native peacocks in the Bottoms. After lunch at the bridge, some of our crew headed north (like the geese) to the Decolonizing Economics Summit Earth Day celebration in McKinleyville.

We will be hosting more rides throughout the year, so stay tuned on our social media or sign up for our email alerts at yournec.org. Rides already in the works include bilingual birding with Daisy Ambriz-Perez and an edible plant tour by Josefina Barrantes. All rides include a short lesson in basic bicycle maintenance from our friends at Moon Cycles, route finding and bike infrastructure information from CRTP, a general outline of the environmental significance of our destination by the NEC or one of our local experts, and a hefty dose of environmental enjoyment. To learn more or get involved, drop us a line at director@yournec.org. See you on the road!

Earth Day 2023 Bike Ride en route to Mad River Bridge.
Get on Board for the Climate

Must We Electrify Our Homes?

Martha Walden

Our house in Westhaven last winter experienced four power outages that lasted from ten hours to forty hours. That’s the price of living with trees when the wind blows hard, and your local for-profit utility neglects the maintenance. Grid problems are much worse in Southern Humboldt where PG&E has thrown future developments into deep doubt. Looking forward, much seems uncertain as climate change increasingly rattles the status quo.

Civilization must wean itself from fossil fuels, and the faster the better. So far, the most recommended approach worldwide is to electrify everything from buildings to transportation. Marching towards this goal, California is phasing out natural gas by 2045. Humboldt County’s Climate Action Plan takes modest steps in that direction. Incentives would encourage people to replace dying gas appliances with electrical counterparts. The targets are small. However, individual jurisdictions may possibly decide to pass ordinances limiting sales of gas appliances or requiring new buildings to be all-electric, which isn’t so bad, considering that natural gas will be unavailable in 22 years.

Yet all-electric houses seem like a liability when coupled with an unreliable grid. What a choice – global warming fossil fuels or putting all our eggs in the electrification basket. Is there a third alternative? Biogas used to seem promising, but scaling it up would cause another set of disastrous problems. Hydrogen might work, but that’s pretty far down the road. How about propane?

Propane emissions compare very well to other fossil fuels. Particulates are probably the biggest concern indoors though many of us have lived with them for a long time. The biggest problem with propane is its origin as a by-product of refining petroleum and natural gas. How to separate out its impacts from its parents? Just to make this issue even more interesting, propane in uncombusted form is extremely valuable as a refrigerant. Compared to the f-gasses currently used as refrigerants, propane is a saint. It will probably be around for much longer than natural gas.

When the electricity goes out, we need back-up systems. Many battery-powered options are available for lights and small appliances. Grid-charged residential storage batteries are increasingly available. They’re still fairly expensive, but much cleaner and quieter than a generator. Of course, solar with storage is the best DIY solution, and more and more people are taking that route.

Cooking and keeping food is a top priority when the power goes out. A propane camp stove can fill in. To keep food cool, we keep a small chest freezer full of mostly ice. It lasts for days without electricity.

Heating the house is the biggest problem. Many gas furnaces require electricity to run, so a lot of people are in the same boat. Small propane heaters can furnish back-up heat but require ventilation for indoor use. Wood stoves are a useful back-up. Burning wood is extremely carbon-intensive and polluting but hard to resist if it’s the only way to heat the house.

Inconvenience and discomfort when the power goes out is a bummer, but continuing to rely on fossil fuels is creating a catastrophic future. Our best hope at this point is to electrify as much as we can and use propane appliances and wood stoves only as back-up systems for when a falling tree takes out our neighborhood’s electricity.
the seaweed becomes pliable, thick, and capable of stretching into long sheets of film. The result is a type of biopolymer.

Existing compostable plastic alternatives can take months or a year to decompose in a compost heap; the sargassum compound needed just one week. And even though it can break down relatively quickly in those conditions, the sargassum film was robust at temperatures around 450 F (230 C).

In another test, the film didn't leach out any of its chemical components when soaked in water for 10 days. These results suggest the film is a viable option for the many hot, cold, and damp applications that businesses, restaurants, and home cooks use cling wrap for.

"Studying the whole supply chain really is where ideas for sustainable materials make it or don't," said one of the researchers. "We want to find one best application for our material and study the environmental impact of pursuing it from the lab to the consumer." To that end, the team will have to test how the seaweed product holds up to current plastic wrap production processes. Factories that produce large quantities of plastic wrap do so by blowing enormous plastic bubbles and forming sheets from there. If the sargassum product cannot be mass-produced by similar means, the team will begin calculating how much water and energy would be required by a new production method.

In general, seaweeds are highly versatile plants. In countries around the world, different types of seaweed are being transformed and tested as materials for all sorts of uses. From baby diapers to jet fuel to medicine for cows to ocean decontaminants to packaging to cosmetics, the future of seaweed is full of possibilities.

Source: Good News Network

GRAY WHALE ECOTOURISM

The lagoons of Baja Sur, Mexico are the site of whale-petting ecotours, a way to safely meet the gray whale's desire for affection and fund local marine conservation.

Naturalist Jim Dorsey has been guiding ecological tourism activities in Baja Sur for over two decades. He says the three lagoons, which are a whale sanctuary and UNESCO World Heritage Site, are the only places in the world where wild animals seek physical contact without being attracted by food offerings. A 40-ton gray whale will reach her massive head out of the water so you may pet her chin, or roll over and ask for a belly rub, or open her mouth to get a good tongue scratch — a tongue which can weigh 3,000 pounds. Some gray whale mothers will even buoy their calf up near the boat to make sure the young ones get some love. "Their calves are just like human infants," Dorsey explains, "bumping into you, tumbling, playing. They don't know their own strength yet."

It’s not clear why gray whales seek human contact, especially considering the violent history between whales and humans. Around the world, whales were hunted for centuries, some species nearly to extinction, until many anti-whaling laws were passed. The last commercial whaling station in Baja Sur closed as recently as 1971. Dorsey speculates that whales "were always friendly; humans just never gave them the chance to show it," going on to say, "They do not fight among themselves. They openly display affection and protect the weaker among them." Even though gray whales were once nicknamed ‘devil fish’ because of how fiercely they fought to protect young calves from whalers, the Baja area has had zero reports of any whale attacking a ship since whaling was outlawed.

More than 3,000 gray whales migrate from Alaska to the Baja area every winter (5,000 miles each way), and many mother whales give birth in the safe, warm lagoons. In the 2022-23 season, scientists counted 268 whales in the smallest lagoon alone, 50 of them mothers with calves. The area has seen a lot of teamwork between conservationists, local government, commercial fishing cooperatives, and ecotourism agencies in order to preserve the waters and the life they shelter.

Whale researcher Asha de Vos says, "Everybody thinks we want to protect the whales because they’re charismatic and magnificent…. They’re ecosystem engineers — without them, the oceans wouldn’t function properly…. [We should] respect these animals in their own homes, not just for their sake, but also for our sake." Source: Reasons to be Cheerful
As many of our readers know, we have reported on the state of our rivers many times over the years. Here are a few of our latest articles found on our website:

- Friends of the Eel River File Lawsuit Against Humboldt County
- Klamath River Woes but Progress on Dam Removal
- Big Irrigators Under Scrutiny for Fish-Killing Practices in Shasta River
- Proposed Dam Could Have Big Impacts on the Trinity River
- Organic Toxins Found in the Mad River

As we enter into what is projected to be a years-long planning and permitting process for the development of the Humboldt Wind Energy Area and associated energy transmission infrastructure, one of the first – and most noticeable – aspects of this development will be the proposed wind terminal in Humboldt Bay. In October of last year, the Humboldt Bay Harbor and Recreation District, the agency with permit jurisdiction over all tide, submerged and other lands within the Bay, announced it was entering into a partnership with Crowley Wind Services to develop a terminal to serve the wind energy industry, including the construction of the turbines.

Crowley Wind Services is a division of Crowley, a privately-held logistics, marine and “energy solutions” company. Wind energy is one of its newer offerings, as Crowley has been involved with fossil fuel storage and logistics for some time. One area of concern for us as we think about the development of our sleepy bay into a busy port is making sure that this company doesn't shift to “energy solutions” like liquid natural gas in the interim before the offshore wind project takes off. We will be pushing for the Harbor District to include in the lease agreement with Crowley a provision that the terminal being developed will not be used for the export or storage of liquid natural gas or other fossil fuels. In fact, we'd like to see a full prohibition of new fossil fuel storage, export or import facilities on the Bay.

In addition, we'd like to see Crowley and the Harbor District commit to building a zero emissions port, something that the much larger ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles have recently committed to. Both of those ports decided to make the shift when they realized the adverse effects that diesel emissions were having on surrounding communities, as well as the environment. Port equipment such as terminal tractors, forklifts, yard trucks, cranes, and handlers commonly run on diesel, which is not only a source of greenhouse gas emissions, but can also increase respiratory issues and cancer risk for those living and working in areas with heavy diesel exhaust. Making the commitment now, as the wind terminal is being built, will be much easier than shifting later on as state electrification mandates come into effect.

The Harbor District and Crowley are looking to execute a lease within the year, so let them know that responsible port development needs to be a priority. You can find commissioner contact information at humboldtbay.org/commissioner-profiles.
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**Rainbow Extravaganza 3.0**

June 3rd, 2023

11:00AM-2:00PM

Pookeys Park, Hoopa CA

Join Two Feathers and Queer Humboldt for the 3rd annual Rainbow Extravaganza! Come celebrate Pride month, learn about organizations in the area, build community and have fun. This is a family friendly event. Food and prizes provided.

For questions email tai.p@twofeathers-nafs.org

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**Help bring Juneteenth to Eureka June 2023!**

This Community celebration will create safe inclusive spaces for the Black and BIPOC community, as well as create safe spaces for meaningful conversations around race, equity and inclusion.

Learn more about how you can support this event at blackhumboldt.com/juneteenth-celebration