

ECONEWS



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en español

FORESTS TO BIOMASS: GREEN ENERGY?



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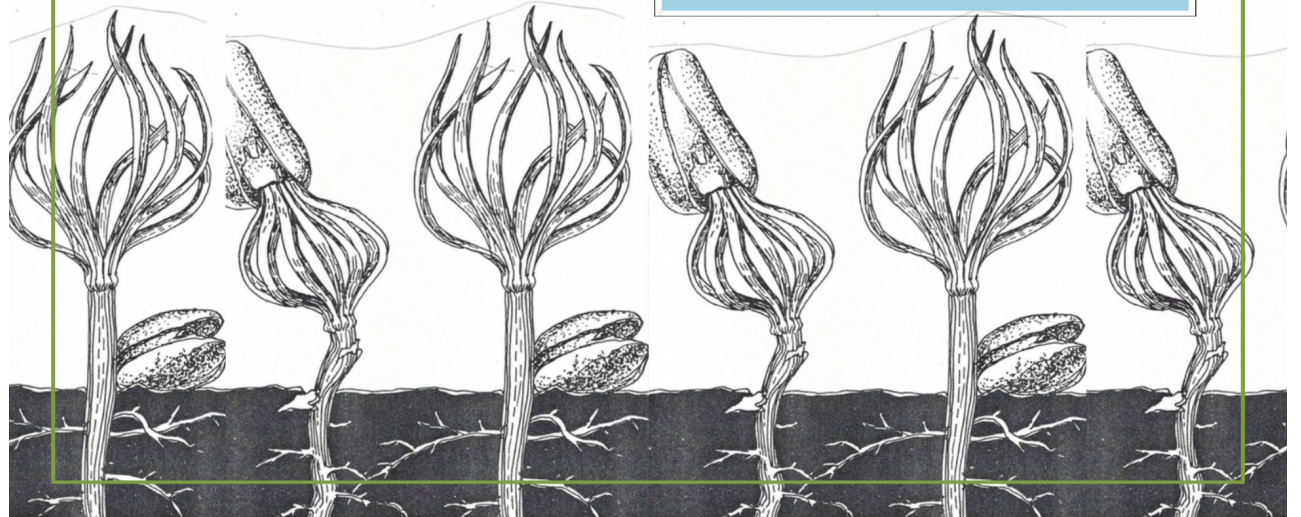
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BOUQUETS

Sincere Gratitude To...

All of the panelists at the Double Film Screening held April 13:

- Elizabeth Azzuz
- Guylish Bommelyn
- Loren Me'-lash-ne Bommelyn
- Roni Jo Draper
- Dave Jannetta
- Margo Robbins
- Moderator Melissa Defenbaugh
- And Marva Jones and Maddie for delicious elk stew



ECONEWS

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GUESTS ON GOUDI'NI, WIYOT TERRITORY

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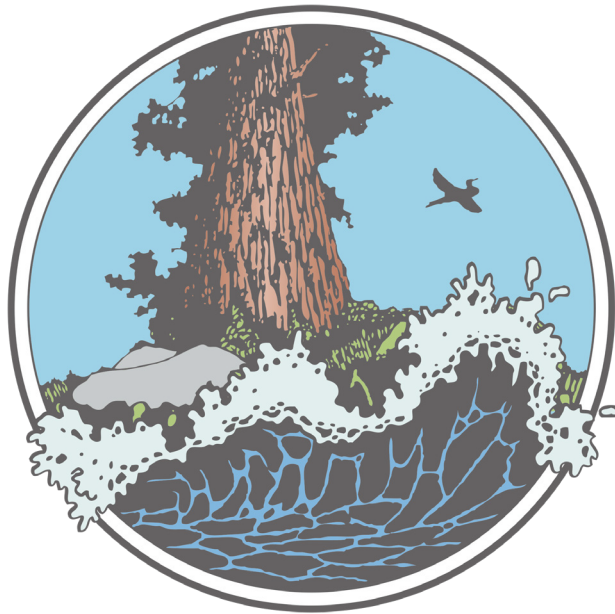
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NEWS FROM THE CENTER



Larry Glass, NEC Board President
Caroline Griffith, NEC Executive Director

In the roughly 150 years since Wigi (named Humboldt Bay by settlers) was “discovered”, there have been countless schemes (some successful, many not) to industrialize. From pulp mills to aquaculture to cockamamie plans to process gold ore from Alaska or export liquid natural gas — and let’s not forget the East-West Railroad — there is a history of our Bay being seen as a tool to facilitate business.

One of the consistent barriers to large scale industrial development has been the fact that the Bay is essentially a breached lagoon, and the mouth needs continual dredging to remain safely passable by large vessels. The Humboldt Bay Development Association (the branch of the Harbor District that manages real estate) is entertaining a solution to this problem that is raising red flags for us. At its March 20 meeting it revealed that MARAD, the United States Maritime Administration, has been exploring the possibility of storing up to three military cargo ships (each up to 800 feet long) in Humboldt Bay. As discussed in the meeting, one of the benefits of this (aside from the ever-present promise of economic prosperity and jobs, jobs, jobs) would be increased dredging of the mouth of the Bay so that ships could be deployed on short notice. This is a dream come true for advocates of development; regular government funding for continuous dredging of the Bay could finally be within reach.

While we’ve made our opposition to militarization clear throughout the years and we know that many others feel the same way, we worry that advocates of alternative energy and wind terminal development will support this as a way to facilitate what they see as positive development. Humboldt Bay is at a critical crossroads. Development forces using the public’s well-intentioned desire to move to alternative energy sources are poised and ready to use wind energy development as a foot in the door to make money off of the reindustrialization of the Bay.

This debate about large-scale development, how we move forward in addressing emissions and who will benefit from these projects is bubbling through the community with many local leaders and some in the environmental movement signing on for (or resigned to) the full industrial development of Humboldt Bay as a step towards renewable energy development. We remain more wary and watchful.

To the east of us another supposed green energy project is causing controversy. A plan for two industrial plants in Tuolumne and Lassen counties to produce one million tons per year of compressed wood fiber pellets is being opposed by a coalition of local, national and international groups. The project proposes to make pellets from trees logged on 16 national forests, and to store and ship them from the

Port of Stockton to foreign markets.

Last month Golden State Natural Resources’ Board of Directors (GSNR) entered into an agreement with UK-based biomass company Drax, as reported by our allies from Biofuel Watch on page 5 and by columnist Martha Walden on page 21. Some of you may recognize Golden State Natural Resources as an affiliated group of Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), a group that our own County supervisor Rex Bohn plays a major role in. (Perhaps you remember the scandal he caused by donating a handgun for an RCRC gift basket raffle?)

The GSNR homepage (goldenstatenaturalresources.com/) touts the project as one of forest resilience saying, “By transforming excess and unmarketable biomass and fire fuels into higher-value wood products, Golden State Natural Resources will create jobs, stimulate rural economies, and begin the process of mitigating dangerous wildfire conditions.” Advocates who have fought other pellet projects by Drax warn that pellet plants lead to more logging and worse logging practices. Part of the problem is that once the infrastructure is built – either to make pellets for burning or to burn said pellets for energy — it creates a financial need to keep logging to feed the machine. Drax has a bad track record that includes burning pellets sources from Old Growth forests in British Columbia. And then there is the environmental justice impact on the already-burdened community of South Stockton.

Largely absent from conversations about energy transition is any mention of energy usage, and we don’t just mean personal use. Although much of what we hear about proposed energy developments has to do with how many homes could be powered by a particular project, the largest piece of the energy-use pie goes to industry.

According to the US Energy Information Administration, in 2022 the industrial sector (manufacturing, forestry, agriculture, mining and oil and gas extraction) accounted for 35 percent of total energy consumption. Projections of future energy usage operate under an assumption of endless growth, for example it is estimated that by 2025 the IT industry could use 20 percent of energy produced globally because everyone will have internet-enabled everything. But it doesn’t have to be that way. There are so many possible ways to live on this earth that are not tech-dominated, consumer-based and extractive, ways that reject the myth of endless growth and require less energy and fewer resources. We often get told that we’re unrealistic or naive when we suggest that we need to transform our systems and dream up better ways of being, but we kind of think that’s part of our job as environmentalists: to dream and push for a better future. Get in touch if you want to dream together.

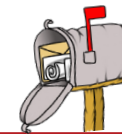
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Dear Editor,

Thank you for the very informative summary of the various aspects of the proposed offshore wind project (“Winds of Change: Getting Up to Speed on Offshore Wind”, March 2024 Econews).

Before being swept up in the “we need every type of alternative energy” tide, thoughtful people should view the carefully researched and clearly presented arguments of scientist Mike Graybill in a presentation to Redwood Region Audubon on October 19, 2023. (A recorded version is viewable here: <http://www.rras.org/programs--coming-and-recorded.aspx>)

Mike pointed out that the costs of floating offshore wind turbines (FOSW) as a source of alternative energy are so high that it makes no sense to proceed on that path. Our resources would be much more effectively spent on other technologies.

Each of the proposed giant turbines uses more than 600,000 tons of steel, the manufacture of which releases millions of tons of CO2 into the atmosphere. Each tower needs 1200 miles of cable to hold it in place. The cables carrying electrons through water from the turbines to the floating offshore substations (which have never been built anywhere) and thence to land will need enough copper to affect the world copper market. The myriad electrical switches will all require polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAs), known to be “forever chemicals.” Constructing, transporting, installing, and maintaining these enormous structures, their anchors, and cables requires various specialized, expensive, limited-supply vessels. Think: heavy-lift crane with a crew of 700, or a cable-laying vessel for \$30,000/day. Anyone who boats on or lives by the ocean knows the physical and corrosive power that challenges any structure in it. Floating offshore wind turbines would be anchoring their rafts and stringing their cables in that hostile environment.

The environmental effects of the monstrous turbines proposed are geologic in scale. Calculations show that an array of these floating offshore wind turbines would intercept enough of our persistent, strong, northwest winds to reduce the ocean upwelling that nurtures the fish that are the basis of our fisheries.

Floating offshore wind turbines are contrasted with bottom-fixed turbines, which cost half as much, and land turbines, which cost half that. Construction and transmission challenges for these non-floating options are not trivial but will produce many more kilowatts per dollar spent and ton of copper used. Furthermore, these technologies are tested and proven. The floating turbines are still experimental. Arrays such as those being dreamed of off our coast are just that — dreams with engineers’ blueprints.

Please watch the video, and be sure your local politicians do too.

**Carol Ralph
Arcata**

To Whom it May Concern,

“A mistake constantly made by those who should know better is to judge people of the past by our standards rather than their own. The only way men or women can be judged is against the canvas of their own time.” —Louis L’Amour

My sentiments exactly.

The recent nonsense of kicking to the curb John Muir, who founded the Sierra Club in 1892 and is arguably responsible for the founding of some of the National Parks enjoyed by the Sierra Club today, because he said things that would not be tolerated today, not taking into account that today is not 1892.

The same thing for John James Audubon, famous for being a self-taught ornithologist and artist, best known for the excellent *The Birds of America* with its lifelike drawings. You might call him an early birder.

And so, when the bird watching and citizen science organization was founded in 1905, it wound up being called The Audubon Society in his honor.

Now that it has come out that he was a racist and a slaveholder, he is similarly being thrown under the bus.

However, it must be taken into account that he lived most of his life in the southern US where at that time, holding slaves was a way of life and even today racism is especially prevalent in those former confederate states.

Again, his viewpoints on slavery would not be tolerated today, but then he’s not living today, is he?

Having died in 1851, he didn’t even have the Civil War to show him the error of his ways.

Which brings me to the renaming of birds.

I’d been hearing rumors of the sordid idea, which reminded me of the way several raptor names were changed to eliminate the word “hawk,” such as the Sparrow Hawk to the Kestrel. Apparently, the AOS has nothing better to do these days than to go around coming up with new appellations for our feathered friends, since new species are not likely to be found. In North America anyway!

For new birders, and even old codgers like me (81 years) this can be unnecessarily confusing.

While I’ve never heard an explanation for eliminating the word “hawk”, I suppose someone decided it was pejorative. Will “falcon” be the next to go?

Anyway, to address the current mess regarding bird names...

I’ve been shining on the current political correctness (PC) about names and personas until an article in the *North Coast Journal* about renaming birds, which had someone’s name as part of theirs, on grounds that

many of these people “weren’t very nice.”

Of course, some of them were — nice that is. And some of those people were just friends of the discoverer, so, hell, let’s go ahead and confuse everybody. But how about this: let’s just go ahead and admit that some of the heroes (and heroines) of our youth had feet of clay, and leave the names as they are to remind us of that fact.

The thing that really got me up on this soapbox was Ken Burton’s column in “The Sandpiper” which listed 38 candidates for renaming!

I was so disgusted by the point of view that I couldn’t even finish reading it.

Someone once said, “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” There is entirely too much fixin’ going on these days.

Yours truly,

**Bruce Slocum
Ferndale**

EcoNews Responds

Although owning other humans and exploiting their labor may have been accepted by some during John J. Audubon’s time, we are reasonably certain that there were many people who wouldn’t have tolerated his views on slavery during his lifetime, particularly the estimated 3 million people who were enslaved in the United States at that time, not to mention numerous abolitionist contemporaries such as the famed

Frederick Douglass (1818-1895), or John Brown (1800-1859), who gave his life actively participating in slave rebellions. And while we do see some merit in continued reminders and conversations about historical wrongs so that we can be sure not to repeat them and so we can address the repercussions of their perpetuation, as Ken mentions in the article referenced, this is also an opportunity to rename these birds to “elucidate unique characteristics of the birds and help beginners associate birds with their names.” For example, Steller’s Jay doesn’t tell us a whole lot about the bird, but the locally-generated

suggestion of Black-crested Jay does. Renaming birds to highlight their appearance, habitats or behavior can make birding easier, for beginners and old codgers alike.

Regarding the “renaming” of the Sparrow Hawk to Kestrel, that had nothing to do with the word “hawk” being offensive; Sparrow Hawk was actually a misnomer as the American Kestrel (*Falco Sparverius*) belongs to the Falcon family and is not a “true hawk” like members of the Accipiter family. The word “hawk” is not, in fact, being eliminated at all.



An American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*). Photo taken at Surrenden Farm in Groton, MA. Photo Credit: Tom Murray, Flickr



MAY IS BIKE MONTH!



Caroline Griffith, NEC Executive Director

WHAT IS BIKE MONTH?

May is Bike Month, which, according to the League of American Bicyclists, was founded in 1956 as a way to showcase the many benefits of bicycling and encourage those who are bike-curious to give it a try. Here in Humboldt County, there are plenty of opportunities to get on (or back on) your bicycle and experience the joys of human-powered transportation. Doing so is also a form of direct action activism that can help improve the safety of our roads for everyone who gets around by bike, regardless of why they do so.

No matter why you are riding a bicycle, you have a right to safely get where you are going. Bike Month is a great opportunity to join a group ride or hit the streets solo and exercise your right to the road. More cyclists on the road means more visibility and more legitimacy for cycling as a serious form of transportation, which

is exactly what we need in order to advocate for the changes that will make us all safer. So get out there and have fun. And don't forget your helmet.

KINETIC GRAND CHAMPIONSHIP

It's that time of year again! Don your festive garb, grab your kinetic wheels, and join the masses from Arcata to Ferndale, **May 25-27!** Visit kineticgrandchampionship.com for all the details.

Day 1 - May 25, 2024:

The race starts at the Arcata Plaza @ noon(ish). Sculptures end day 1 at Halvorsen Park in Eureka.

Day 2 - May 26, 2024:

Sculptures enter the water at the Wharfinger Boat Ramp in Eureka between 10:07 am and 12:07 pm and exit under the Samoa Bridge.

Day 3 - May 27, 2024:

The finish line in Ferndale opens at 1:00 pm this year (it used to open at noon).

Last year the NEC had the honor of assisting the Reigning 2023 Grand Champions Trashlantis! We battled with the Trashlantians to keep trash out of the sea, helped decorate Team Pineapple's kinetic sculpture, and made bribes at our monthly Trash Craft Nights.

We'd love to participate again, so if you're thinking you'd like to be the NEC's

featured team next year, don't hesitate to reach out!

And don't forget to keep that trash out of our waterways, otherwise Trashlantis will rise! If you're interested in borrowing trash pickers and other trash collecting supplies during the grand championship, check out our Zero Waste Lending Library on our website to request supplies.



Trashlantis in Humboldt Bay.
Photo Credit: Teri Lynn



MAY IS BIKE MONTH!

Ride in the Bike Challenge from **May 1st - 31st!**

Create a free profile on Love to Ride and earn points every time you ride! Fun for all levels!

Sign up at lovetoride.net/humboldt

Plus, try the Love to Ride app on your smartphone to help track your bike rides



Come to the Bicycle Celebration!

Saturday May 18th, 11 AM - 2 PM at the **Jefferson Community Center Park at 1000 A Street, Eureka.**

Join us at the Jefferson Community Center Park in Eureka for free bike helmets and mini bike tune-ups, pedal-powered music by Frogbite, raffle prizes, Los Giles food truck, and much more!

See the full calendar for more events as well as the list of great deals from Bike Friendly Businesses at BikeMonthHumboldt.org

BIKE MONTH HUMBOLDT

2024 BIKE MONTH CALENDAR



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Love to Ride Bike Challenge Starts!	2	3	4 Newton B. Dury Parkway Bike and Hike Day
5 Street Story Ride with CRTP	6	7	8 National Walk, Roll or Bike to School Day	9	10	11
12 National Ride a Bike Day	13 Bike to Wherever Week	14	15	16 Bike to Work Day Eureka	17	18 Bike Celebration & Expo, 11 AM - 2 PM Jefferson Center, 1000 A Street Eureka
19	20	21 Mural Ride Eureka 5:30 - 6:30 PM	22	23 Bike to Work Day Arcata	24	25 Bike to the Kinetic Sculpture Race
26 Kinetic Sculpture Race	27 Kinetic Sculpture Race - Finish	28	29	30	31 Bike Challenge Ends	
Visit BikeMonthHumboldt.org for more information						

Who and What Is Drax?

The Climate Villain That Humboldt County Is Bringing to California

*Gary Graham Hughes,
Americas Program
Coordinator, Biofuelwatch*

Over the past year and a half many Californians, Humboldt County residents among them, have been alarmed by the emergence of the Golden State Natural Resources (GSNR) wood pellet export scheme.

Our organization, Biofuelwatch, with extensive experience monitoring the global bioenergy sector, was among the first groups in California to sound the alarm about the risks and dangers of building two new wood pellet manufacturing facilities, one each in Lassen and Tuolumne counties, for making wood pellets to sell to foreign markets.

The two new GSNR wood pellet plants would be the largest industrial wood product facilities sited and constructed in California in decades.

GSNR plans to extract any tree of any size of any age from a 100+ mile radius around each facility to produce 1,000,000 tons of wood pellets per year for export through the Port of Stockton to global energy markets.

Represented on the GSNR Board of Directors, Humboldt County has a leadership role in the GSNR scheme. Biofuelwatch reported previously for EcoNews on these dynamics in the April 2023 issue (“Rural Counties Wood Pellet Export Scheme Raises Concerns”).

International civil society organizations have been monitoring GSNR knowing that the global wood pellet sector was hungry to establish the industry in California.

In February of this year our suspicions were confirmed when our organization revealed that GSNR had signed a “memorandum of understanding” with a USA subsidiary of the United Kingdom (UK) based Drax Power Group (DPG). Since GSNR has never actually made even one wood pellet, it is reliant on bringing a global player to California to develop the project.

Biofuelwatch — with staff in the UK and the USA — has a long history of watchdogging DPG, a company with a growing legacy of environmental and social harms. We smelled Drax lurking behind the scenes with the GSNR scheme from the moment we began to research and investigate the proposal.



Drax power station in Yorkshire, England.
Photo Credit: Biofuelwatch

Though many people have never heard of the company, we see the appearance of Drax in California as cause for serious alarm.

Notably, this company is the single biggest carbon emitter in the UK. Once the biggest coal powered plant in the UK, the Drax power plant in Yorkshire is now the world’s biggest biomass power station.

Drax is the second largest producer of wood pellets in the world, after Enviva, which has recently filed for bankruptcy.

The work that Biofuelwatch has done to address the destructive ramifications of Drax Power Group has been multi-faceted, with extensive organizing in the UK to challenge the characterization of DPG burning biomass as renewable energy. The qualification of Drax burning biomass as renewable energy has entitled the company to billions of English pounds worth of subsidies from the UK government over the years.

Biofuelwatch research has revealed Drax Power Group to be a global case study in brazen corporate welfare; without those subsidies, DPG would not be a viable business.

But exposing the fiscal and climate impacts from subsidizing dirty biomass as renewable energy is not the only work Biofuelwatch has done to reveal Drax as a climate villain. Our research and collaboration with partners investigating the impacts from extracting feedstock to make wood pellets has proven that irreplaceable forests are on the chopping block due

to DPG biomass burning.

As an example, earlier this year Biofuelwatch, with grassroots forest defense organizations from Canada, released a report titled “Logging What’s Left: How Drax’s Pellet Mills Are Sourcing Logs from British Columbia’s Rarest Old Growth Forests.”

Drax owns seven pellet mills in BC after acquiring the province’s biggest pellet maker, Pinnacle Pellets, in 2021. The report, which was covered by BBC Panorama news, exposed how DPG is logging rare Old Growth Forest and other Primary Forest in BC to provide feedstock for its pellet mills.

Biofuelwatch also released a video investigation this winter with the Portuguese organization ZERO that reveals how the Pinewells pellet plant in Portugal, whose biggest customer is Drax in the UK, has been sourcing trees from clearcuts in a protected nature reserve.

This company is not only notorious for the destruction of rare forests. The voracious biomass burning company has also been the subject of years of campaigning in Mississippi by local communities, environmentalists and state regulators to rein in emissions from its Gloster pellet plant. Drax has been mired for years in controversies related to the clear environmental racism associated with its polluting operations in some of the poorest rural communities in the Southeastern United States.

Drax Power Group has paid millions of dollars in fines because of its violations of air quality standards at its plants in Mississippi and Louisiana.

The proven pattern of the disregard that DPG has demonstrated for environmental compliance is one of the primary reasons Biofuelwatch is raising the alarm about Humboldt County, with a leadership role in GSNR, opening a door to Drax for starting operations in California. Experience shows that Drax’s claims to being “green” are countered by its actions.

Holding Humboldt County accountable for rolling out the red carpet for a known climate villain is the responsibility of all of us. Stopping the GSNR/DPG biomass boondoggle is imperative for protecting forests and communities here in California, and around the world.

Quién y qué es Drax?

El villano climático que el condado de Humboldt esta introduciendo a California

Traducido por Denise Villalva

Durante el último año y medio, muchos californianos, entre ellos residentes del condado de Humboldt, se han alarmado por el surgimiento del plan de exportación de palets de madera de Golden State Natural Resources (GSNR).



Reciente propuesta en Inglaterra oponiéndose a los subsidios gubernamentales masivos para Drax.

Crédito de foto: Biofuelwatch

Nuestra organización Biofuelwatch, con amplia experiencia en el seguimiento del sector bioenergético mundial, fue uno de los primeros grupos en California en hacer sonar la alarma sobre los riesgos y peligros de construir dos nuevas instalaciones de fabricación de palets, en los condados de Lassen y Tuolumne, para fabricar palets de madera y venderlos a los mercados extranjeros.

Las dos nuevas plantas de palets de madera de GSNR serían las instalaciones industriales de productos de madera más grandes ubicadas y construidas en California en décadas.

GSNR planea extraer cualquier árbol de cualquier tamaño y edad en un radio de más de 100 millas alrededor de cada instalación para producir 1.000.000 de toneladas de palets de madera por año para exportar a través del Puerto de Stockton a los mercados energéticos globales.

Presentado en la junta directiva de GSNR, el condado de Humboldt tiene un papel de liderazgo en el esquema GSNR. Biofuelwatch informó anteriormente para EcoNews sobre esta dinámica en la edición de abril de 2023 (“El plan de exportación de palets de madera de los condados rurales plantea preocupaciones”).

Las organizaciones internacionales de la sociedad civil han estado monitoreando GSNR sabiendo que el sector mundial de palets de madera estaba ansioso por establecer la industria en California.

En febrero de este año, nuestras sospechas se confirmaron cuando nuestra organización reveló que GSNR había firmado un “memorando de entendimiento” con una filial estadounidense de Drax Power Group (DPG), con sede en el Reino Unido. Dado que GSNR nunca ha fabricado ni un solo palet de madera, dependen de traer un actor global a California para desarrollar el proyecto.

Biofuelwatch — con personal en el Reino Unido y Estados Unidos — tienen una larga historia de vigilar de cerca a DPG, una empresa con un creciente legado de daños ambientales y sociales. Olimos a Drax acechando detrás de escena con el esquema GSNR desde el momento en que comenzamos a investigar e investigar la propuesta.

Aunque muchas personas nunca han oído hablar de la empresa, consideramos que la aparición de Drax en California es motivo de grave alarma.

Esta empresa es el mayor emisor de carbono del Reino Unido. La central eléctrica de Drax, en Yorkshire, que alguna vez fue la mayor central alimentada por carbón del Reino Unido, es ahora la central eléctrica de biomasa más grande del mundo.

Como ejemplo, a principios de este año Biofuelwatch, junto con organizaciones de base de defensa forestal de Canadá, publicó un informe titulado “Talandlo que queda: cómo las fábricas de palets de Drax obtienen troncos de los bosques antiguos más especiales de la Columbia Británica”.

Drax posee siete fábricas de palets en Columbia Británica después de adquirir el mayor fabricante de palets de la provincia, Pinnacle Palets, en 2021. El informe, que fue cubierto por BBC Panorama News, expuso cómo DPG está talando bosques primarios raros y otros bosques primarios en Columbia Británica para proporcionar materia prima para sus fábricas de palets.

Biofuelwatch también publicó este

invierno una investigación en vídeo con la organización portuguesa ZERO que revela cómo la planta de palets de Pinewells en Portugal, cuyo mayor cliente es Drax en el Reino Unido, ha talado árboles en una reserva natural protegida.

Esta empresa no sólo es conocida por la destrucción de bosques raros. La voraz empresa de combustión de biomasa también ha sido objeto de años de campañas en Mississippi por parte de comunidades locales, ambientalistas y reguladores estatales para controlar las emisiones de su planta de palets Gloster. Drax lleva años sumida en controversias relacionadas con el claro racismo ambiental asociado a sus operaciones contaminantes en algunas de las comunidades rurales más pobres del sureste de Estados Unidos.

Drax Power Group ha pagado millones de dólares en multas por violaciones de las normas de calidad del aire en sus plantas de Mississippi y Luisiana.

El patrón comprobado de desprecio que DPG ha demostrado por el cumplimiento ambiental es una de las razones principales por las que Biofuelwatch está dando la alarma sobre el condado de Humboldt, con un papel de liderazgo en GSNR, abriendo una puerta a Drax para iniciar operaciones en California. La experiencia demuestra que las afirmaciones de Drax de ser “verde” se ven contrarrestadas por sus acciones.

Responsabilizar al condado de Humboldt por extender la alfombra roja a un conocido villano climático es responsabilidad de todos nosotros. Detener el despilfarro de biomasa de GSNR/DPG es un imperativo para proteger los bosques y las comunidades aquí en California y en todo el mundo.



Viejo Bosque recientemente talado asociado con la marca de madera FX9020.

Crédito de foto: Biofuelwatch

Caroline Griffith, NEC Executive Director

Carbon Capture & Sequestration is a powerful tool to capture public funds out of thin air and safely store them in corporate bank accounts. ~Hoodwinked in the Hothouse, Third Edition~

On March 31, in what seemed like an early April Fools Day joke, the *New York Times* reported on a massive project in Iceland (appropriately called Mammoth) that is essentially a giant vacuum designed to suck carbon dioxide out of the air and pump it deep underground to be stored. Although it might seem like something out of a science fiction book, this project is an example of Direct Air Capture (DAC), a type of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), which is just one of many technological or market-based schemes being promoted as a solution to climate change. CCS is one of a suite of “solutions” including carbon pricing, cap and trade, and carbon offsets, that allows companies to green their images while continuing to emit climate-changing carbon and other pollutants. These silver bullets are dangerous distractions that allow business as usual to continue; although they may reduce carbon in the atmosphere they do nothing to address the underlying causes of climate change and environmental destruction, namely profiteering and endless growth. In fact, they facilitate them by allowing fossil fuel production and use to continue, prolonging the much-needed transition away from fossil fuels.

Once Mammoth is online (perhaps by the time you are reading this) it is projected to be able to capture and store 36,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year, which is just one one-millionth of global annual emissions. A much larger Direct Air Capture plant is being built in Texas by Occidental Petroleum, but with a twist: A portion of the CO₂ captured by this plant will be pumped into the ground to facilitate the extraction of hard-to-reach oil in a process called Enhanced Oil Recovery.

Despite the fact that planned DAC projects are estimated to only be able to suck up a fraction of the carbon in the atmosphere, we can expect to see CCS (which captures carbon at the source from power plants and refineries and pipes it to locations to be stored underground) and its sibling DAC become more prevalent in the US in coming years as the Biden Administration has expanded funding and tax credits for projects like these. These technologies are still developing and construction of the massive facilities is extremely expensive, so fossil fuel companies are reliant on government subsidies to build them.

SILVER BULLETS

Perhaps it would be worth the subsidies and resources to build these facilities if they were sucking up carbon while we were simultaneously changing systems and lifestyles to produce less of it (although that is certainly still up for debate and depends on the resources needed to build and operate these facilities). However, once built, these plants will subsist by selling pricey carbon credits to companies like Amazon, Microsoft, JPMorgan and others who have made carbon neutrality pledges. According to the *New York Times*, “it currently costs between \$500 and \$1,000 to capture a metric ton of carbon dioxide with direct air capture, compared with just \$10 to \$30 per ton for most carbon credits today.” No matter the price, projects like these facilitate polluters wiping their consciences clean and greening their images while still extracting and polluting. So what are carbon credits and how does the carbon market work?

CARBON CREDITS: PAY TO POLLUTE

The carbon market, which is largely unregulated, basically turns greenhouse gas emissions into a commodity to be traded. The assumption is that market forces (the cost to continue emitting carbon) will drive a decrease in emissions, but in reality what has emerged is a pay to pollute scenario. One of the first examples of this was Cap and Trade, which emerged after the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. This system set a cap for how much an entity could emit, but then allowed the purchasing of allowances to emit more than the cap. Like buying a permission slip to emit carbon.

In California, the Cap and Trade program is regulated by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The current program is up for renewal and the Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policies is looking to amend the program by 2024. Theoretically, funds paid by corporations are used for climate mitigation projects through the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Program. Senate Bill 535, passed in 2012, dictates that 25 percent of the proceeds from Cap and Trade must go to disadvantaged communities who are impacted by pollution but, as some environmental justice advocates have pointed out, it doesn't make these companies stop polluting so communities next to extraction and refining facilities, or power plants, are still disproportionately impacted.

CARBON OFFSETS

Carbon offsets are on our minds here at the NEC because they've been bandied about as a potential way to help meet our emissions reductions goal in

the Regional Climate Action Plan. The way offsets work is that consumers can compensate for their emissions by investing in projects that sequester or remove carbon, often forestry or renewable energy projects. Basically, companies and individuals (like Bill Gates, who reportedly spends \$5 million per year to offset his family's lifestyle) can pay to take advantage of someone else's climate-friendly work while still consuming and emitting at their usual rate, and then claim to be “carbon neutral.”

As the Indigenous Environmental Network recently pointed out in a letter to Senior Advisor to the President for International Climate Policy in opposition to the development of a global carbon market, “We now have several decades of experience that demonstrate how carbon market schemes do not reduce fossil fuel extraction and combustion or deforestation.” One of the reasons is the lack of “additionality”, meaning that any reduction in carbon dioxide emissions attributed to the offset might have happened anyway, so the offset is not adding to that. It's essentially double-counting of emissions reductions. Add to that a lack of accountability and continued harm to frontline communities who live near polluting facilities and we have schemes that allow polluters, from corporations to the extremely wealthy, to green their images while still continuing with business as usual.

In early April, one of the main entities that verifies carbon offsets, the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), was accused by its own staff of greenwashing the carbon neutrality claims of corporations and financial institutions, further calling into question the efficacy of market-based solutions to the climate crisis.

CLIMATE REDUCTIONISM

All of these schemes are driven by corporate pledges for carbon neutrality that are based on a desire to meet the emissions reductions goals set by international agreements without actually making substantial changes to the way that they operate. These are basically accounting tricks that allow these companies to falsely claim that they are reducing emissions while continuing on with business as usual, in some cases even producing more emissions.

Support of schemes like these distract from the real, systemic and transformational changes that we need. When we only look at carbon impacts and don't see the other intertwined ecological and social impacts of “solutions” we risk propping up the very same bad actors that have gotten us in this situation in the first place. Not to mention allowing them to profit off of the mess they made.

Get to Know Your Tap Water in Humboldt Bay

Emma Wilson, *EcoNews Intern*

Drinking water is something that we as mammals do pretty often, yet the process of how we get our drinking water can be very complicated. In Humboldt Bay, we get our tap water from the Mad River wells below the river bed. After being taken from the ground below the river, the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District distributes the water to the domestic system for drinking water purposes. The District then sells water to municipalities like the cities of Arcata and Eureka.

The Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District (HBMWD) was formed in 1956 by a group of businessmen in Eureka, California, to strengthen the economy and to develop a regional water system to provide a reliable water source for customers.

John Fridenbach, the general manager of HBMWD since 2017, has worked for the District for twelve years. Fridenbach works with the five members of the Board of Directors to implement the policy through all of the other employees throughout the district.

According to Fridenbach the basic concept for HBMWD is to store water during the winter when there is a high flow in the river, and release it in the summer when there is low flow in the river and ample water available to drink.

“What we do with that stored water is we just store it there during the winter so that we can release it during the summer,” said Fridenbach. “It adds to the river flows so that when we’re taking it out of the groundwater, there’s enough water in the river to saturate back down and recharge the groundwater during the summer, when there’s no rain or very little rain, and the natural flow in the river decreases, we add water to the river.”

R. W. Matthews Dam forms Ruth Lake which is located in Trinity County, on the Mad River, near the headwaters for the Mad River Basin. The water we end up drinking starts in Ruth Lake, and travels down the river 75 miles, where it percolates down into the groundwater. Then, the water district pulls it out of the ground. That’s where your drinking water comes from. During six months out of the year, the district runs that water through their treatment plant to filter out the sediment. Then all drinking water systems have to inject chlorine for disinfection. This kills the bacteria that might be in the water so that when you drink it people don’t get sick. There are very strict rules about how much chlorine you can put in and how much residual you have in the water.

Dr. Tesfayohannes Yacob, assistant professor for the Environmental Engineering department at Cal Poly Humboldt, is passionate about access to clean water and a hygienic living environment for all communities regardless of economic status,

according to the Cal Poly Humboldt website.

“Chlorine is a chemical agent that oxidizes chemicals and microorganisms. It can be added as a gas, liquid, or solid form,” said Yacob. “Whichever form is added, it has to eventually dissolve in the water and react with the ‘impurities’ for it to be effective. What this entails is having a chlorine dosing (adding) mechanism followed by a device or reactor that mixes it to make sure chlorine is well dissolved in the water that is to be treated.”

In the US, all public water supplies must use chlorine. Within a tank or reactor, it takes a few minutes to about an hour to accomplish the chlorination process. But this is highly dependent on how large the tank or reactor is. Both HBMWD and our own city utility workers put chlorine in the water. But it is mainly HBMWD.

“In the US drinking water has to be disinfected using one of various agents, by law,” said Yacob. “It is also required that a chlorine residual be present at every point within the water distribution system, including a customer’s tap at any point in time. The maximum allowed chlorine concentration in water is 4.0 mg/l as Cl₂.”

For HBMWD’s systems, based on the most recent report on average in 2023, the detected chlorine was 0.69 mg/l as Cl₂ with a range of 0.4 to 1.21. This shows that it was below the maximum allowed (4.0 mg/l as Cl₂), which is good. In the US, all public water supplies must use chlorine. Households with wells are excluded from this regulation.

Microorganisms (harmful bacteria, viruses, protozoa, cysts, etc.) are the primary reason why we need chlorine. Even though we can kill these with other means at the treatment plant such as UV, microfiltration, nano filtration, or reverse osmosis, once the water gets transported through the distribution system it almost always picks up harmful microorganisms. If there is no residual chlorine, then the microorganisms can multiply and eventually sicken people, especially the immunocompromised, children, and elderly.



Humboldt Bay gets its tap water from the Mad River wells below the river bed.

Photo Credit: HBMWD

Dr. Christa Meingast, assistant professor for the engineering department at Cal Poly Humboldt, explores the intricate interactions of microbial communities in water.

The Safe Drinking Water Act was passed in 1974. This act requires the government to tell everyone what’s in their water. The Safe Drinking Water Act’s regulations are designed to examine a number of potential drinking water hazards including: improper disposal of chemicals, animal and human waste, pesticides, wastes injected deep underground and naturally-occurring substances. Each of these can contaminate drinking water.

“If there are any chemicals that are harmful, they have to let people know that these chemicals are in their water,” said Meingast. “You can check it out by going to <https://www.ewg.org/tapwater/>. You can look up any zip code and it will tell you all the contaminants that are in your water.”

The water treatment for our tap water is happening at the HBMWD. There are five steps: 1. coagulation (when a liquid forms into a solid) where they add chemicals; 2. flocculation (the process that helps in forming large aggregates of particles) when they mix it; 3. settling the solids out; 4. filtering; and 5. disinfection, when they add chlorine.

HBMWD’s mission is to “Deliver high quality drinking water to the communities and customers we serve in the greater Humboldt Bay Area at a reasonable cost; reliably deliver untreated water to our wholesale industrial customer(s) at a reasonable cost; and protect the environment of the Mad River watershed to preserve water rights, water supply and water quality interests of the District.”

The five members of the HBMWD Board of Directors set the policy for the designated division and represent a specific geographic footprint for the entire district. This does not represent the whole of Humboldt County — just around Humboldt Bay.

The following people comprise the Board of Directors of the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District. Division 1: Neal Latt covers Manilla Community Services District CSD; Division 2: Sheri Woo covers McKinleyville and Fieldbrook CSD; Division 3: David Lindberg covers the city of Blue Lake; Division 4: J. Bruce Rupp covers the city of Eureka; and Division 5: Michelle Fuller covers the city of Arcata. Board meetings are generally held the second Thursday of each month and begin at 9:00 am. Members of the public can participate in person at 828 7th Street, Eureka or virtually.

Visit HBMWD.COM to learn more about your district’s distribution of tap water and how it gets to your home. Visit to also learn more about how you can attend the board meetings.

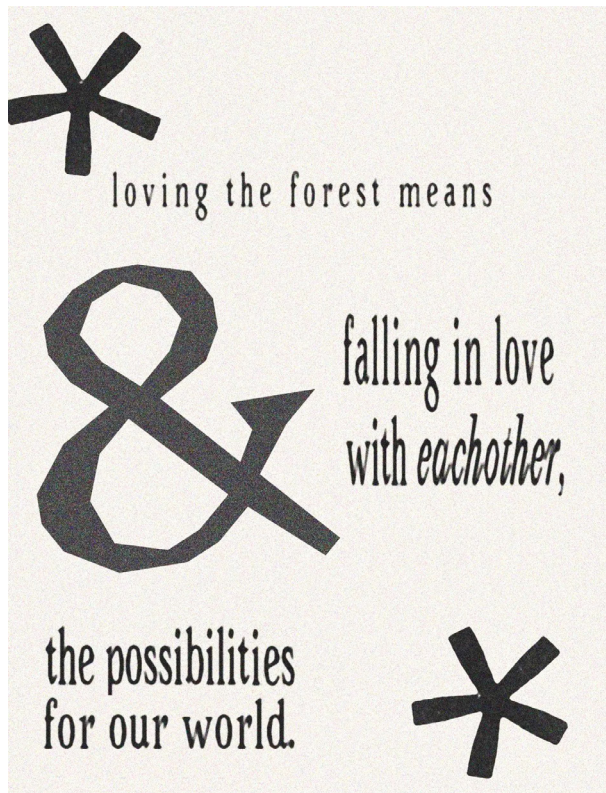
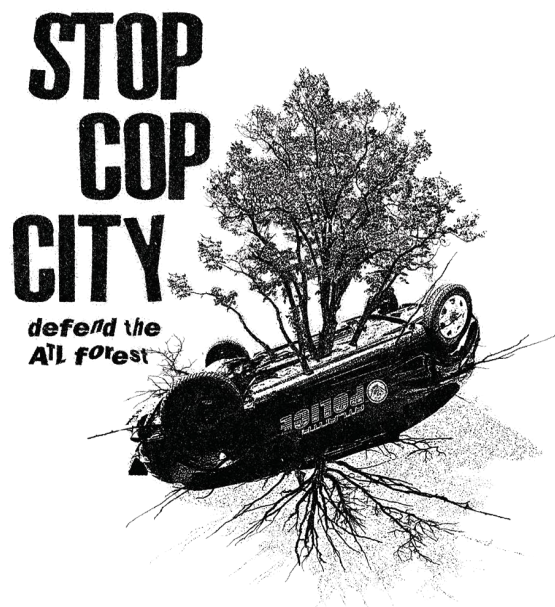
Stop Cop City Updates and Thoughts

EcoNews Staff

NEC staff understand that if you haven't been following the struggle to Stop Cop City, movements for Black Lives and liberation, abolition, and critical ecologies, you might be wondering how the situation in Atlanta became so tense, and why activists — including mainstream, above ground organizers — express solidarity and gratitude with arsons.

Those with long historical knowledge of ecological movements in the Pacific Northwest will remember a time when arson and other acts of “eco-sabotage,” blockades, lockdowns, and the widespread sharing of corporate/government information were the norm. In fact, much of the most successful tactics and strategies of the 1990s and early 2000s were targeted by the state and reframed as acts of “domestic terror”. Property destruction — including arson — did not previously carry the social stigma or criminal sentencing it does now. Criminalizing efforts have a long history, including fights against the Dakota Access and Keystone XL pipelines. Over the last 30 years, previously minor crimes have seen increased sentencing. Now, flying and charity bail are being targeted in the continuing process of criminalizing dissent. “The New Green Scare” by Elizabeth King, October 6, 2019 in *The Progressive Magazine* does an excellent historical walkthrough on shifting criminalization of environmental and political activists in the US.

It is important to consider the current diversification of tactics to not be a new development, but rather a return to tried and true methods (used worldwide) that governments and corporations work hard to vilify and punish. Contemporary sentiments produced by Post-9/11, Patriot Act, and Green Scare repression are melting away as activists remember winning



All art sourced from Defend the Atlanta Forest.
(<https://defendtheatlantaforest.org/library/>)

strategies of old.

Vital to remember that, despite government propaganda describing earth defenders as “terrorists,” no Earth Liberation Front, Animal Liberation Front, nor any action to defend the Atlanta forest (or any forest in the so-called “United States”) has ever resulted in loss of human life — except in the murders of David Chain and Tortuguita, who were murdered by industrial and police employees. According to top sociologists and legal experts, the state sought and continues to seek to label property destruction as “violence” and corporations as “people” so that the laws can define effective responses to ecocide as “terrorism” (see *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* by Dr. David Pellow). Activists continue to assert that property is not life, that corporations are not people, and that the countless human, plant, and animal deaths resulting from industrial capitalism, state/imperialist violence, and climate chaos are the actual forces of terror in the world.

Staff at EcoNews are sounding the alarm for political repression of activists fighting to defend the earth as our climate is pitched into chaos by the twin forces of Production (industry) and Destruction (militarization/policing).

We will continue to keep watch as these conditions unfold.

Repression Updates

February 8, 2024: According to *The Guardian* and *It's Going Down*, multiple coordinated raids were conducted by heavily armed agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Georgia police, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms. These raids were reported to be incredibly violent, happening at the early hours of the morning. One woman reportedly had a nude photograph of her displayed for view on her own kitchen table by police forces. A man was reportedly dragged by his hair through his own home. A topless woman was photographed by a government agent (while being told it was “only” her face).

Jack Mazurek, who was the only individual arrested during the raids, is out on 24-hour house arrest and is ordered “no contact” with “movement” associates. The state requested a \$2 million bail; the judge ordered \$75,000. Mazurek is facing an arson charge.

Just after the raids, organizer Mary Hooks from the Movement for Black Lives was asked by a reporter to condemn the alleged arson in an interview posted to Instagram, she replied, “**Hell no. No. Not at all... But some of us, we cannot take that risk. And those who can? Bless ‘em. Bless ‘em. I cannot take that risk, but Lord knows I’ll sit with my lighter and be like ‘Damn!...I put my body on the line, and show up as much as we can. Because we need every means necessary to deal in the police state in which we are dealing with. We’re not going to condemn nobody for burning...for doing righteously what they need to do, when our city has silenced every quote unquote ‘democratic proper democratic’ process. As one of the students say, if we don’t get this in the courts, if we can’t get this at council, then we gonna take it in the streets! Because our people, our children, my babies are worth the risk.**”

Other arrestees:

Larry Clark, as of this writing, is the only actively jailed Stop Cop City forest defender. Larry is being held in Fulton County Jail, GA. Larry would love to receive mail from outside. See @StopCopCity on Instagram or email EcoNews staff for information about how to write to Larry.

Victor, an Indigenous land and water protector was held in the infamously terrible ICE Stewart Detention Center, but has been released and is seeking financial support. Victor was arrested during an action on March 5, 2023, along with several others, but was held under indefinite detention for 11 months — long after all others were released — due to his citizenship

Stop Cop City (Continued)

status. Victor was released largely due to the tireless efforts of his support team. Victor, like many others participating in this struggle, is facing domestic terror and RICO charges. Now that he is out, Victor is trying to raise funds to survive, pay for medical expenses, and prepare for legal expenses. Paypal: donation@peacefuluprising.org Venmo: @peacefuluprising

While activists may be released from jail, it is important to remember that people like Jack, Larry, Victor, and numerous others currently targeted by the state will need ongoing, long-term financial support. Their fights are not over, and all those sympathetic should try to keep updated on their changing needs.

Action Updates

April 8, 2024 via *The Guardian*: An exclusive report states that two human rights organizations — Robert F Kennedy Human Rights and the Southern Center for Human Rights — partnered with the University of Dayton Human Rights Center to file a 37-page petition on behalf of Tortuguita and their mother, calling for an investigation into the murder of the young, Indigenous forest defender who Georgia State Troopers shot over 55 times during a forest raid. The petition cites violations of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, linking Tort's murder to a broader strategically executed pattern of human rights violations targeting Stop Cop City protestors and sympathizers.

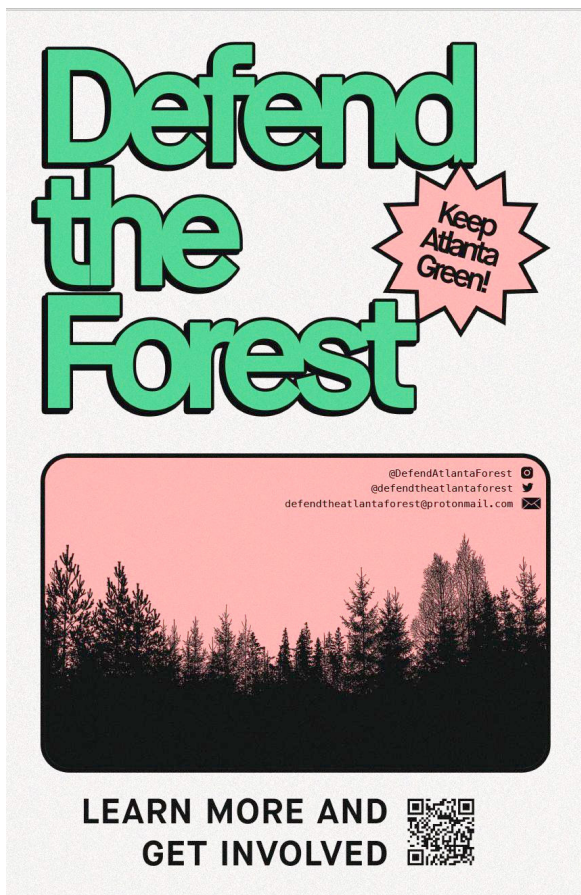
March 27, 2024; Atlanta, GA: Two trans women lock themselves to the top of a 250-foot crane on a Brasfield & Gorrie construction site with a banner reading "Drop Cop City." The message encourages the construction company to abandon their contract to build the police training facility. The women deliberately drew connections between Georgian laws curtailing the rights of LGBTQ+ people, the rising police state, and the destruction of the environment. Onsite witnesses reported that despite protesters leaving a clear exit for the crane

operator and encouraging the crane driver to exit the machine, police told the operator to remain. The women were eventually extracted and then charged with "false imprisonment" of the crane operator, "criminal trespass", "obstruction", and "reckless conduct." Support for the women say police then chained both women to a wall for 10 hours without access to water or a functional toilet and forced them to misgender themselves on intake forms.

March 11, 2024; Austin, TX: Protestors interrupted Atlanta Mayor Andre Dickens at South by Southwest (SXSW) during a panel titled "Policy Collision: Local Officials & Governors at Odds". The panel featured Democratic mayors supposedly being in conflict with Republican Governors. Activists pointed out Mayor Dickens's close relationship and work with Governor Brian Kemp (R) to suppress voters and repress protestors struggling against Cop City in Atlanta. Protestors carried a banner reading "Andre Dickens, GOP Stooage. Stop Cop City." Chants of "Stop Cop City" and "Viva! Viva! Tortuguita!" followed Dickens offstage and out of the room. One protestor with great vocal projection called to Dickens, "We are in every city! ...Your political career is over!" Video footage of the protest is available online.

February 23-26, 2024; Tucson, AZ: The Stop Cop City Summit was an incredible success as around 150 activists from many cities coalesced to have multiple panels, cultural events, and skillshares working toward the collective goals of stopping Cop City style projects across the country. Multiple actions were planned and executed including multiple lockdowns and a militant night smash at banks and funders connected to Cop City and the Mountain Valley Pipeline. Three activists were arrested after the night march. Tucson Anti-Repression Crew is requesting support for these activists. Donation info can be found at bcctucson.org/donate (put "TARC" in the donate memo).

And so many other fundraisers, music shows, arsons, rallies, and disruptions that we could not possibly communicate them all!




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LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED



Evergreen

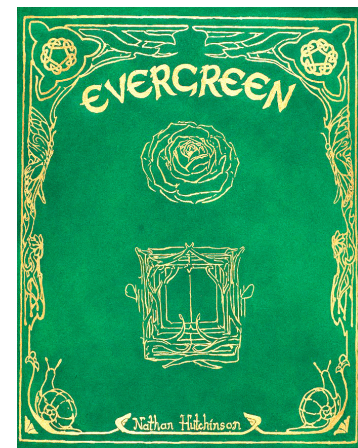


Nathan Hutchinson, Author and Artist

Evergreen is an original, one-of-a-kind art book dedicated to our special and sacred old-growth forests and ancient wild lands of any kind. Ninety-five percent of profits from each book sold go to organizations helping our remaining old-growth forests and wild, open spaces. The book is printed on 100 percent recycled chlorine-free paper by Eco-Friendly Printers; it is as green as is possible, including the cover stock, yet still retains the high quality necessary for fine art. Over 100 illustrations – watercolors and drawings – parallel the text of the book, which is a sequential series of essays concerning the need to rewild ourselves, and the world. Written as a forest journey of sorts, a voyage into the center of our being, through many evolutionary and cultural layers, the book is a poet's passage, beyond what words and explanations may provide. It is an invitation to go where we all agree, visit our innermost depths, bring out our hearts, and to share with the world, thereby healing the current world-wide ecological disassociation by going into it as deeply as possible. The images begin with realism, then expand to magical realism, or surrealism, then into visionary, fantastic color formations which may reflect the world's beginnings, where all the troubles of this climax start. After we return out of this wilderness of the mind, back into the relative world, we bring with us what we've learned through our period of travel. All these gifts are to be had in the cathedral of a forest old, which are presently running thin. Preserving, protecting, and propagating these few remaining miracles will ensure we can stay easily and readily in touch with this native link to our original

spiritual nature. All proceeds coming from this connection through the EcoNews will be donated to the Northcoast Environmental Center.

To learn more and order a copy for \$50, visit. https://www.nathanhutchinson.com/evergreen_album/.



Safe Harbor, but for Who?

EPIC staff

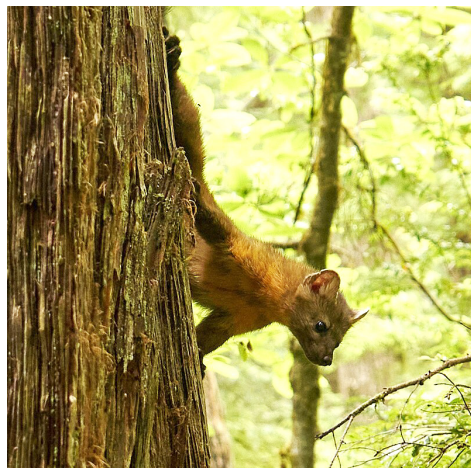
For the protection of the wild, the Endangered Species Act and the California Endangered Species Act are some of EPIC's most powerful tools. Because they are effective, they are also a target for extractive industries and their allies in government. While direct attacks by the legislature are unlikely to be effective — the Endangered Species Act is indeed one of the most popular American laws, drawing 84 percent support, with support across the political spectrum — more subtle changes in the application of the laws often evades public scrutiny. EPIC is engaged in two cases to challenge what we believe is a new attempt to bypass the strictures of the federal and California Endangered Species Acts for the benefit of the rich and powerful (and at the expense of species).

The Endangered Species Acts' primary tool for conservation is a prohibition against the "taking" of any listed species. A timber company would, for example, be prohibited from logging old-growth forests that are occupied by a marbled murrelet, as the logging would impair the ability of individuals to reproduce. (The "hypothetical" here is drawn from the actual case, *Marbled Murrelet v. Babbitt*, brought by EPIC to challenge PALCO's old-growth logging plans for a forest known as Owl Creek.) Safe Harbor Agreements work to bypass this ordinary system. Individuals or companies with a valid Safe Harbor Agreement are instead permitted to take listed species, provided that this taking is "incidental" to an otherwise lawful activity, meaning that provided that the taking was not deliberate, things like habitat modification are no longer prohibited.

Safe Harbor Agreements are rooted in a sound idea: We should try to encourage landowners to make better land management decisions that could support threatened and endangered species and one of those encouragements should be to remove potential penalties if something should inadvertently happen to the species drawn to the property. In theory, this is a good thing, as we want to expand habitat for listed species. But in application, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the California Department

of Fish and Wildlife have abused the law to forgive habitat destruction. Here's how: Under a Safe Harbor Agreement, the landowner must make land management changes that result in a "net conservation benefit" as measured against the baseline of what the land management practices were prior to the agreement. But if the baseline conditions were bad to begin with—if the landowner was previously a bad actor—then nearly any improvement, however trifling, appears to count as a "net conservation benefit."

For example, in the Shasta River, large landowners adjacent to the river have nearly ruined the river. By applying the cold, clean water of the river and its tributaries, seeps and springs to agricultural lands, the water becomes hot and nutrient-loaded before it is released back into the river. In this way, these large landowners have been in violation of the Endangered Species Act by creating conditions impossible for listed salmon to survive. But in an approved Safe Harbor Agreement, the National Marine Fisheries Service gave legal cover to these landowners by finding that minor changes to how they use water would result



A Humboldt marten
(*Martes caurina humboldtensis*)
Photo Credit: Ben Kazez, Wikimedia Commons

in a "net conservation benefit"—even though these changes are not sufficient to create conditions in the river where salmon could survive! EPIC sued the National Marine Service and won.

EPIC has also sued the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for its issuance of a Safe Harbor Agreement for Green Diamond Resource Company. The company's clearcuts make its property deathtraps for the Humboldt marten, as the clearcuts are prime habitat for the bobcats and coyotes that prey on the marten. In its Safe Harbor Agreement, the company agreed to very minor changes, including things that were already done—

locking gates to prevent trespass cannabis grows, leaving slash piles to provide woodrat habitat, leaving as a "reserve" poor quality forests on serpentine soils—but that did not address the threat to martens from its poor forest management. Unfortunately, EPIC lost our challenge against this permit. Now, with their Safe Harbor Act in hand, Green Diamond is immune from prosecution under the state Act, and for reasons too long to explain here, the federal Act too. A double-whammy.

THE ECONews REPORT

Recent EcoNews Reports:

Can We Clean Up Humboldt Bay Before the Sea Rises?

March 23, 2024 – The industrial legacy of the 20th Century left many contaminated sites around Humboldt Bay. Our second special episode on communities at risk from sea level rise features local residents talking about several of the most vulnerable sites, including Tuluwat Island, Butcher Slough in Arcata, and the nuclear waste storage site above King Salmon.



How Do Fish Get Counted, and Why Does Genetic Diversity Matter?

March 30, 2024 – This week on the EcoNews Report we discuss how fish are monitored and counted. Our host Alicia Hamann from Friends of the Eel River is joined by Dave Kajtaniak from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Samantha Kannry from TRIB Research. Tune in to learn about the hopeful salmon returns on the Eel and why preserving genetic diversity is so important to giving species the adaptability they need to survive our changing climate.

Coping with Climate Anxiety

April 6, 2024 – Do you also have a gnawing, seemingly ever-present hum in the back of your head — an intrusive thought about the immensity of the climate crisis and your own minuscule ability to do anything about it? If so, you are not alone. Some 83% of the United States thinks that climate change poses a "serious and imminent threat to the planet" and "59% of youth and young adults said they were very or extremely worried about climate change." Doomerism is not the only option. Would you like to reduce your own eco-anxiety? This show is for you. Join Chelsea Pulliam, EcoSomatic Coach at Somatic Earth, for a discussion about how you can cultivate resilience.



KHUM 104.3
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Evening Program

Wildflowers on the Trail: Northern California Pacific Crest Trail Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Energetic explorer, botanist, photographer, and speaker Dana York will lead a virtual botanical adventure through the PCT's ecoregions in California. As co-author with Jim André of two field guides to the vascular plants along this part of the trail (Timber Press), he has many stunning photographs to share as he weaves a story of his relationship with the PCT. Attend at Six Rivers Masonic Lodge, 251 Bayside Rd., Arcata, refreshments at 7:00, program at 7:30, or join from home via Zoom through www.northcoastcnps.org.



Fritillaria recurva
Photo Credit: Dana York

Field Trips

Native Plant Garden Visit Saturday, May 4, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Pete Haggard will point out native plants and wildlife in the Arcata Community Center Native Plant & Wildlife Garden. The garden is on the hillside to the left of Healthsport, Arcata (300 Community Park Way), opposite the Arcata Community Center. This free walk repeats every first Saturday. If it rains, bring an umbrella. Learn more about the garden at <https://northcoastcnps.org/>

native-plant-nursery-sales/arcata-community-center/

Stony Creek Day Hike Saturday, May 18

The Stony Creek trail, Darlingtonia fen and the confluence of Stony Creek and the North Fork of the Smith River — this is hallowed ground for the North Coast Chapter. This was the site of our first field trip following the creation of our chapter 54 years ago, and has been a favorite many times since. This year we'll be joined by Greg King, Director of the Siskiyou Land Conservancy, which owns the majority of this incredible serpentine gem located within Six Rivers National Forest. Come explore the interesting geology, vegetation and species. We'll visit the site a little later than usual and hope to catch some different things in flower, such as three carnivorous plant species, the rare western bog violet, and Siskiyou paintbrush. The hike is a 1-mile round trip on a narrow and uneven trail. Dress for the weather and all its changes; bring lunch and water. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at Pacific Union School (3001 Janes Rd., Arcata), or 10:30 a.m. at the Gasquet Ranger Station (approx. 2-hour drive from Eureka), or arrange another place. Please tell Dave Imper you are coming (707-444-2756); dimper@suddenlink.net.

Rohner Park Restoration Work Party Saturday, May 18, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Help preserve Fortuna's exceptionally old second-growth Redwood forest by removing invasive plants. Meet at the Fireman's Pavilion. Tools and gloves provided, but it helps to bring your own. Co-sponsored by the North Coast CNPS Chapter and the Fortuna Parks and Recreation Department. A third-Saturday event. Organizer Steve Underwood (707-601-6753).

Spring Native Plant Sale

Sat. May 4 By Appointment &

Sun. May 5 drop-in

10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Freshwater Farms Reserve

5851 Myrtle Ave., Eureka

- Go to www.northcoastcnps.org to sign up and see a species list
- 1000+ plants of 100+ species grown by our chapter volunteers plus local nurseries
- Perennials, annuals, grasses, shrubs, ferns, trees
- Experienced gardeners to assist you
- Bring a box to carry your plants home
- Cash or check preferred over credit cards

For more information, contact
northcoastcnps@gmail.com



Phacelia tanacetifolia
Photo Credit: Jessi VonFloto

Spring Wildflower Show and Art Share

The Annual North Coast Celebration
of Wild California Plants

Spring Wildflower Show

May 3 - 5

Fri. 2–8 p.m. | Sat.–Sun. 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

"Native Plants in the Neighborhood"

- Admission is free, ADA accessible
- Hundreds of fresh, wild flowers to see and smell
- Art Night **Friday evening, 7:00–9:00 p.m.**: Draw or paint fresh flowers
- Special feature: wetland plants
- Expert to identify samples or photos of wild plants
- Pop-up talks throughout the weekend
- Invasive plants as well as native
- Learn more at northcoastcnps.org

Jefferson Community Center,
1000 B St, Eureka, CA 95501



Castilleja ambigua ssp. humboldtiensis
Photo Credit: Andrea Pickart

Wildflower Art Share

April 1 - May 5

- Little Free Wildflower Art Galleries open
- Share 3" x 3" wildflower art
 - in neighborhood boxes
 - on Facebook
 - on Instagram

Locations listed at:
northcoastcnps.org >
Art Share



Little Free Wildflower Art Gallery
Photo Credit: Carol Ralph

Colin Fiske, Executive Director

Street Story is an online platform where you can report a traffic crash or a near-miss, or a place you feel safe or unsafe on a public street or road. Making a report is quick and easy, and every report helps create a more complete picture of the safety and comfort of our local communities for people walking, biking and rolling.

The Street Story platform (online at streetstory.berkeley.edu) was created by the UC Berkeley Safe Transportation Research and Education Center (SafeTREC) and can be used anywhere in California. Starting in 2019, CRTP began partnering with SafeTREC to use Street Story in Humboldt County. Since then, almost 700 local residents have made almost 1,200 reports in the county — probably more by the time you read this!

Before Street Story, many decisions about street safety improvements in our region — whether to install a traffic signal or a pedestrian curb extension or a bike lane, for example — were based almost entirely on the record of official, police-reported collisions in a

Street Story: Community Engagement for Safer Streets

given location. Crash records are very important, but they don't provide a complete picture. Many crashes, especially those involving bicyclists and pedestrians, are not reported to police. Even when a crash is reported to police, the information can be incomplete, and it is recorded in a format which assigns blame to one of the people involved. A police report cannot blame bad street design for a crash, even though there is overwhelming evidence that the design of streets is one of the main factors influencing crashes.

Additionally, relying only on crash data to plan safety improvements means that nothing can happen until somebody—or more often, several people—have already been injured or killed. At CRTP, we don't think that's acceptable. We think public agencies should be preventing crashes, not just reacting to them.

Street Story helps address these problems. While Street Story is not a replacement for reporting a crash to the police, it does allow someone who experienced a crash to provide a personal narrative about their experience, and to offer their opinions about what might have prevented the crash from occurring in the first place.

Perhaps even more important, Street Story allows people to report when a crash almost happened, but

didn't, along with reporting places that just don't feel safe. These near-miss and hazard reports help planners and advocates identify unsafe locations before someone gets hurt.

Street Story is a crowdsourced safety tool. That means the more people who use it regularly, the more useful it is. After all, we want to base street safety planning on the experiences of a broad cross-section of the community over time, not just a few reports by one or two people. If you're not a regular Street Story user yet, we encourage you to get in the habit! CRTP recently started promoting a weekly "Safety Sunday" as one way to remind people to make reports regularly, but you can report any day of the week. And if you're on social media and don't mind sharing, post a picture of yourself making a report and encourage your friends to use the tool as well.

If you'd like to learn more about Street Story in Humboldt, please contact CRTP's Outreach Specialist Kelsey Martin at kelsey@transportationpriorities.org. Kelsey is available to answer questions, and can provide presentations and trainings on Street Story to local community groups, public agencies, or anyone else who's interested in helping make our streets safer.



FEATURED BUS RIDER

An Interview with Arlo, Cal Poly Humboldt Psychology major

Interviewer: Caroline Griffith, NEC Executive Director

Where do you ride the bus to?

I go to school at Cal Poly, so I mostly just ride it there.

What do you like about riding the bus?

There's a little distance between when you get to the first stop in Arcata and here [Eureka], and you can see looking over the water and you'll see animals and I think it's so pretty. It's one of my favorite things, especially when the weather is like this, not too aggressive and too sunny. You can see out and you can look at the mountains. Just really pretty. It's one of my favorite things actually. And looking at birds, and seeing all animals. There's so many! Also right before you begin to drive into the animal areas there's a little inlet. And you can see the little ducks walking and you can see their little footprints. And that makes me so happy. Like they're just waddling and they're happy. They're living their life and that makes me really happy.

The bus drivers have gotten to know me because I'm on the bus every single day. And there's one specific bus driver that I literally love to see because anytime he pulls up to the bus stop he'll look at me and give a little wave. And so I hop onto the bus. "Hello. Hi. How are you doing?" And I'm like "Hi, I'm good. How are you? It's been a while." And then as I'm getting off like, "Okay, I'll see you next time." I literally saw him a couple of days ago and he's like, "It's been a hot second." And I feel like those connections, those moments are so nice. And a thing that you only get in a small town like this.

Are there things you wish were better about the bus?

I wish that on Saturdays there were more frequent buses. Because there shouldn't be a bus every hour and a half. And if you missed the bus, then you just missed the bus. I don't live in Manila, but I think there should be more buses that go in that direction, because there are people that live there and people that want to go other places and they shouldn't have to wait hours to get in that direction.



Arlo at the bus stop.
Photo Credit: Caroline Griffith

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE HUMBOLDT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

February 23rd 2024
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors
825 5th Street
Eureka, California 95501

Dear Supervisors,

I'm writing to you regarding the Humboldt County Cannabis ordinances.

I attended Board of Supervisors meetings, as the ordinances were being developed and offered comments to the board. I have attended Planning Commission meetings as the applications before the Planning Commission were being considered and I have submitted comments in writing and verbally to the commissioners. I have been involved in developing Appeals of particular cannabis projects that I felt were detrimental and I have made extensive written comments on those Appeals that were heard before your board.

My opinions have been fairly consistent throughout these last 9 years. I have been primarily concerned with the possible adverse repercussions for the health of our recovering watersheds, the potential for increasing fire danger, damaging effects on our roads (both county & private), harmful impacts on our neighborhoods, negative ramifications on our efforts to work towards less reliance on fossil fuels, and time, energy and financial consuming negative impacts on our community volunteer first responders.

It was my experience that my concerns, which were shared by many others, were answered with "we have to follow the ordinance" and allow these permits to proceed. We often heard the phrase "we can't change the goal post at this late in the game".

And every time an Appeal by concerned neighbors went before your board it was denied. Your board has had the opportunity to seriously consider all of the above mentioned concerns and made the decision not to. You decided that those concerns were not serious enough to deny the expansion of industrial cannabis in the outlying areas far from services in already suffering, barely recovering watersheds and against the concerns of the affected neighbors.

From the beginning the fable of existing has guided the expansion. Employees of the planning department with no prior experience were allowed to determine that the claimed thousands of existing square feet of cannabis growing by applicants existed. And the fable was developed that the negative impacts we're lowered because we have eliminated so many grows - without taking into consideration that almost every applicant inflated their numbers of what was existing. The ordinances required this inflation by applicants; because of the cost- it was a negative business decision to apply for less than 10,000 sq. ft.

When comparing the numbers of no longer existing grows with the number of now permitted grows – it is possible that the square footage of the now permitted farms is greater.

No on the ground analysis was done to determine how many square feet of cannabis with varying types of growing methods should be allowed in each watershed. It has always been an arbitrary number. No on the ground analysis was done to determine the impact of permitting of wells in the upper watersheds. No Analysis was done to determine the impact on our volunteer first responders who are the ones who respond to medical and fire dangers far from concentrated services. Response by a first responder always requires them to risk their personal safety. No analysis was done to determine the fire danger from generators running to supply energy for operations under plastic with five and six harvests per year using lights, heaters, dehumidifiers etc.

The public was continually told everything is better now because we have eliminated so many grows and we only have these few permits so far without taking into account the enlargement and the industrialization of those permitted grows. The ordinances were developed on the model of the green rush.

In May 2018 as part of the EIR process for ordinance 2.0 it was established that an annual public review (18-43) would occur to assess possible necessary amendments. No annual review has happened.

Recently at the February 15, 2024 Planning Commission meeting Director Ford when answering questions about the (arbitrary) watershed caps explained that the Humboldt County Planning Department had been assuming that the state agencies would be doing the monitoring that would eventually be relied on for analysis as to whether the caps should be adjusted. Director Ford explained that he has recently learned that in fact the state agencies have not been monitoring either. So for the last seven years we have had no watershed monitoring taking place either by the county or the state agencies to measure the impacts of the industrialized legally permitted cannabis farms.

And now we are faced with an initiative developed by neighbors who felt they had no choice and supported by many community members who feel it is important to prevent further industrial expansion.

I do not support the initiative and I have said so since it was filed.

For many of the Humboldt County farms the permitting process and the collapse of the market has been economically devastating. Here in Southern Humboldt it's affecting everyone. With State & County requirements & regulations being overly expensive and burdensome for the small farmer continuing in the legal market is very difficult. But unfortunately

with arbitrary caps, oversight and enforcement not keeping up with permits issued and without serious analysis and monitoring there is the potential for further detrimental industrial expansion.

I am writing to you today to request that your board address the above-mentioned concerns by: holding public annual reviews, conduct an analysis of: well impacts on watersheds, noise impacts on wildlife & neighborhoods, impacts on roads, increased fire danger, and impacts and reliance on first responders and amend the ordinances where necessary and also develop monitoring & oversight capabilities. I ask that in order to move forward as soon as possible – that you please put this request on your Board Agenda as a topic for future discussion and action.

Thank you,
Robie Tenorio

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

HUMBOLDT COUNTY SUPERVISORS

1st District - Rex Bohn

707-476-2391 | rbohn@co.humboldt.ca.us

2nd District - Michelle Bushnel

707-476-2392 | mbushnell@co.humboldt.ca.us

3rd District - Mike Wilson

707-476-2393 | mike.wilson@co.humboldt.ca.us

4th District - Natalie Arroyo

707-476-2394 | narroyo@co.humboldt.ca.us

5th District - Steve Madrone

707-476-2395 | smadrone@co.humboldt.ca.us

U.S. SENATORS - CALIFORNIA

Senator Laphonza Butler

www.butler.senate.gov

Senator Alex Padilla

www.padilla.senate.gov

Look up other senators here:

www.senate.gov/senators/index.htm

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE - CALIFORNIA DISTRICT 2

Congressman Jared Huffman

www.huffman.house.gov

Look up other representatives here:

www.house.gov/representatives

CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR

Governor Gavin Newsom

www.gov.ca.gov

Look up other California state legislators:

www.findyourrep.legislature.ca.gov/

LOOKING FOR SOMEONE NOT ON THIS LIST?

www.usa.gov/elected-officials

TALES FROM COWTOWN: FACING CLIMATE DISASTER WITH THE HELP OF PUPPETS

Elena Bilheimer, EcoNews Journalist

This May, Tales from Cowtown, a puppet show for all ages, will be coming to various locations throughout Humboldt, Mendocino, Lake, and Trinity counties. Using a collage of art and performance styles and taking inspiration from the outdoor spectacles of the Bread and Puppet Theater in Vermont, the show explores themes of rural community resilience and social and emotional intelligence in response to climate disasters.

The concept for the show was conceived by Daniel Nickerson and Tayloranne Finch, with help from a wider web of local artists including Rory Cullifer, Sara Kei Wegmüller, Damla Ari, Soph T. Kastel, Natalie Williams, Violet Crabtree, Carissa Clark, and more.

In addition to playing music locally as the Blueberry Hill Boogie band, Finch and Nickerson have been involved in a number of previous local art and puppet shows. The impetus for creating this latest project came from the Upstate California Creative Corps, an artist funding grant cycle put forward by the California Arts Council, as part of a New Deal style effort to put artists to work to help with pandemic recovery and create community driven projects that address local issues.



The Sun and Moon in conversation. Puppets by Natalie Williams and Rory Cullifer, painting of downtown Cowtown by Daniel Nickerson.
Photo Credit: Tayloranne Finch

Finch and Nickerson first met while in college and became interested in puppetry because of its incorporation of many different creative art forms and ability to communicate stories in a unique way. “We’re musicians, and we’re visual artists and writers and we’re collaborators and we do social practice work and performance art,” said Nickerson. “And all of that is tied together in the creation of a puppet show. So even though it’s an unusual art form that not many people do, we think it’s one of the most inclusive art forms because no matter what your skill set is, you have something to offer.”

In their approach to the show, Finch and Nickerson have integrated various different environmental philosophy concepts (including input from Cal Poly Humboldt’s Environmental Studies Program Leader Sarah Ray), in addition to their own expertise garnered from teaching gardening in schools. Instead of teaching kids to save the planet, Finch and Nickerson are interested in teaching kids to love the planet, specifically guided by the idea that a love for the earth comes from knowing and relating to it.

“One of the other big goals with the show and talking about environmental issues, and especially wanting to have kids part of the conversation, is we’re focusing on social emotional goals or social emotional literacy, which is part of some of the work we do in school classes that we’ve been part of in the last few years,” said Finch.

Through her teaching, Finch found the garden to be the perfect place to understand social and emotional learning concepts, as kids not only learn so much in the embodied place of the garden, but also through the rich metaphoric world of caring for plants and understanding how their behavior affects their local and larger environment.

After the earthquakes last year, Finch was teaching a class and asked the students what their wish was for the new year. A significant number of the students wished for no more earthquakes ever again. While this desire was completely understandable considering the fear and trauma that many of them had experienced, this struck a chord for Finch, as earthquakes are a natural phenomenon that will inevitably recur. Learning to adapt to these natural disasters, especially as they

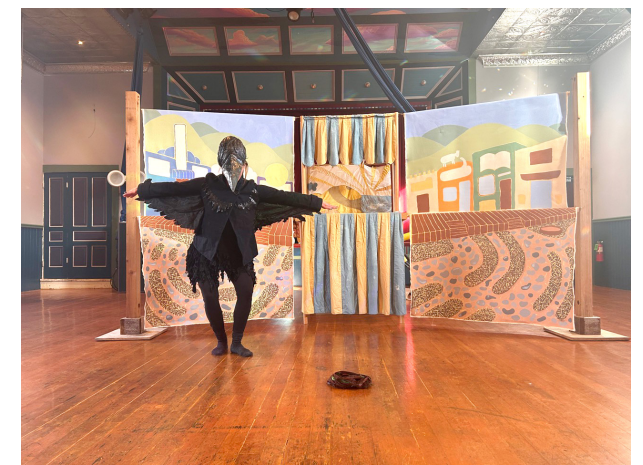


Daniel Nickerson and Tayloranne Finch performing at Eureka's Fringe Festival.
Photo Credit: Andrew Goff

PUPPETRY TEACHES US TO CARE ABOUT THE OTHER.

increase in unnatural frequency, is a necessary part of resilience, as is making space for the emotions and reactions they bring up. Because of this, the show is not only an exploration of the ways communities can respond to exterior environmental challenges but also how to deal with interior emotional landscapes.

In the show, they address three specific natural disasters: a fire, a flood, and an earthquake. However, they reframe these events within the folk tale reality of Cowtown; for example, when an earthquake happens in the show, it’s because the earth is laughing. Because an abstract explanation of climate change is not always useful for explaining these major events that can



Crow flying through downtown Cowtown at Synopsis in Eureka. In progress paintings by Daniel Nickerson.
Photo Credit: Tayloranne Finch

TALES FROM COWTOWN: FACING CLIMATE DISASTER WITH THE HELP OF PUPPETS

I HOPE THAT THE SHOW WILL MAKE PEOPLE CURIOUS TO LISTEN MORE CLOSELY TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND THINK MORE OPENLY ABOUT THE VOICES OF PLACE AND NATURE...

evoke strong emotional reactions in both children and adults, understanding them through story and puppetry can provide valuable talking points and tools.

“Because we've all been children, and we've all had that history of believing in our stuffy or stuffed animal or playing make believe there's this way that puppetry invites our imagination into creating stories and into believing in worlds that are new,” said Finch. “And I think that's been a big part of why we're creating this too. It's like, what world is possible with our imagination? How do we talk about things and how do we process things? Using our minds and our emotions and body intelligences as well, it's kind of giving language to all those processes.”

According to Nickerson, puppetry also teaches another significant idea that is prevalent in many different environmental philosophies: an understanding and appreciation of that which is different from the self or the ego (this includes different species, environments, people, etc). This appreciation and respect for something that is separate from the self and has its own sovereignty is inherent in puppetry, as it gives life to imagined independent beings. “Puppetry teaches us to care about the other,” said Nickerson.

In alignment with this concept, the performance involves active community participation, including a section after the show in which Finch and Nickerson will be hosting and facilitating audience conversations. With the help of Lulu Michelson from the People's Dreaming Collective, whose expertise is in data collection, they are hoping to frame the conversation so that focus is on what community members who live rurally have in common, as well as what assets everyone already has and could help provide for each other.

Another big component of the show is that it has been designed to be performed in outdoor spaces, which means Finch and Nickerson, with help from collaborators Rory Cullifer and Soph T. Kastel, had to be inventive in order to make it easily transportable and not reliant on electricity. This will allow them to travel to more rural locations that don't necessarily host a lot of outside theater and art. Accessibility is also prioritized, as all of the shows are

happening at public parks, farmers markets, cultural hubs, or street festivals where people don't have to pay to watch. By not relying on electricity, the show's self-sufficient nature mirrors the experience of those living rurally who have to provide for themselves when dealing with power outages from an unreliable grid with limited outside help.

“We're students of the history of theater and music and we know that low tech, outdoor performances are the history of theater, except for certain tiny little affluent corners of European society and stuff,” said Nickerson. “And so we want to be a part of that tradition and keep that tradition alive here in the north coast and offer an experience to people that they might remember.”

In addition to making art and theater and teaching gardening, Finch and Nickerson are also long-time farmers who have spent a significant amount of time engaging directly with their environment. Finding the overlap between art and environmentalism has been a longstanding pursuit for both of them. “The connection between the two [art and environmentalism] revolves around imagining possible futures or imagining worlds that don't exist,” said Nickerson. “You know the environmentalist is just like the artist in that they're imagining a world that's better than this current one, and then looking for opportunities to push things in that direction. But it involves a lot of imagination, because there's tons of problem solving and troubleshooting to do just on the ground in reference to the current things that are going wrong.”

Another component of both art and environmentalism is a deep form of listening, of observing and responding to what is happening in



Toe Tappin' Tommy marionette puppet seen at sunset in Cowtown.

Photo Credit: Tayloranne Finch

the world with a desire to understand and learn more. “I hope that the show will make people curious to listen more closely to the environment and think more openly about the voices of place and nature and what they might say about the decision-making power people have... There's so much that's happening that is heartbreaking when we're talking about the environment, and the things that we've lost or we're losing,” said Finch. “And there's also so much to be witness to and be amazed by and to be learning from the resiliency of nature and the resiliency of communities. That's been one of our guiding themes in this is that word resilience and the words rural resiliency and what does that mean. And really, for me, I think it's summarized in that we need each other.”

To learn more, visit <https://www.greetingsfromcowtown.com/> or follow The Cowtown Serenaders on Instagram.

PERFORMANCE ITINERARY

- **Saturday, April 27** - Blue Lake Block Party - 3 p.m.
- **Friday, May 10** - Covelo Farmers Market - 4 p.m.
- **Saturday, May 11** - Willits - Recreation Grove Park - 6 p.m.
- **Saturday, May 18** - Weaverville - Lee Fong Park - 6 p.m.
- **Sunday, May 19** - Hyampom Community Hall - 6 p.m.
- **Saturday, May 25** - Redway - KMUD Block Party - time TBD
- **Friday, June 21** - Middletown Farmers Market - 7 p.m.
- **Saturday, June 22** - Lucerne - Harbor Park Artists Village - 11 a.m.
- **Saturday, June 22** - Lakeport Waterfront Park - 6 p.m.



Residents of Cowtown depicted by artist Natalie Williams
Photo Credit: Tayloranne Finch

Community Coastal Column

WELCOME PLANKTON MONITORING INTERNS!

Sable Odry, Coastal Programs Coordinator

We're excited to announce the launching of our Plankton Monitoring (PM) program as part of NOAA's Plankton Monitoring Network (PMN). We would like to welcome our two new interns, Marta Fabregas and Lorena Dominguez, who will be helping us get it running smoothly!



Marta Fabregas at Jalova Biological Station, Tortuguero National Park, Costa Rica

MARTA FABREGAS

Marta Fabregas is a dedicated marine biologist, educator, and founder of Nature and Oceans Adventures, a nonprofit based in San Francisco, California. With an extensive and international background filled with educational studies and volunteering in biological, oceanic, and wildlife fields, Marta has dedicated over six years to supporting marine conservation projects, environmental education in local schools, and local permaculture initiatives. She completed a Master's in Psychology and Life Empowerment Coaching in Mount Shasta, California, and an Ayurvedic Health Coach program in Arcata, California. She currently teaches marine biology, conservation, natural medicine, scuba diving theory, and more, using experiential education methods that empower students to engage actively with their learning.

We're excited to have Marta's expertise to help develop the educational portion of our PM program.



Lorena Dominguez at Asilomar State Marine Reserve (June 2022).
Photo Credit: Itomi Rossi

LORENA DOMINGUEZ

My name is Lorena Dominguez, and I am a junior at Cal Poly Humboldt State University in hopes to obtain a bachelor's degree in marine biology. I have a passion for making science more accessible and engaging for the everyday person, as well as an interest in combining art and science to achieve that goal. Having been born on the island of Cozumel in Mexico, growing up in Minnesota (the land of 10,000 lakes) and spending my young adult years with Monterey Bay as my backyard, it has been ingrained in me to have a love and curiosity for our water systems. I am excited to be joining NEC's Plankton Monitoring Network and continue my work in helping facilitate citizen science.

We're excited to have Lorena's passion, knowledge, and dedication to the PMN program on our team.

Keep an eye out for upcoming monthly events to learn about plankton identification, plankton monitoring, and volunteer opportunities to get involved with the PMN program!

To learn more about plankton and the PMN program, check out the Community Coastal Column from the February issue of EcoNews.

TRASH CRAFT NIGHT!

Join us for another night of turning trash into art!

This month we'll be prepping for the Kinetic Grand Championship! Come zhuzh up your helmets, make recycled bling for your bikes, shore up your baskets, and borrow trash collecting supplies from our zero waste lending library!

Trash, tools, space, and snacks provided. More cool trash always welcome!

STATEWIDE PLASTICS AND MONITORING

The California Ocean Protection Council (OPC) has been working in collaboration with the State Water Resources Control Board (WRCB), the San Francisco Estuary Institute (SFEI), and the Aquatic Science Center on developing a Statewide Plastics Monitoring Plan and Strategy (Plan). They are currently in the engagement phase with review from a technical advisory committee while developing a draft plan.

Following a series of webinars aimed at informing and facilitating public input, the NEC submitted comments for consideration in the draft plan. Included below are some notes from our suggestions— check out the full letter at <https://www.yournec.org/comment-letters/StateStrategies,LocalGuidance+Engagement>

- Statewide strategies are only effective when operating with local needs and engagement at the forefront.
- Vital importance of sustained tribal and Indigenous-led consultation and engagement throughout plan development, implementation, and on-going modifications.
- Pollution impacts generally hit low-income and disinvested communities harder.
- Engagement and funding should focus on these communities.

Current Local Data and Efforts

In Northern California, many local groups, including the NEC and Surfrider Humboldt, have been gathering and compiling data on plastic and other waste materials for years. Monitoring efforts have been useful for developing local responses, such as in 2020, when locally-collected data was used to support a Single Use Disposable Foodware Ordinance in Arcata, aimed at reducing plastic waste from our local food service industry.

- Data resources like these should be utilized for guiding future monitoring and plastic reduction efforts.
- Single-use food containers, plastic food wrappers, and cigarette butts are commonly found in our estuaries and rivers.

- Monitoring, identifying productive sources of pollution, and providing incentives and support for reducing production have been found to be most effective.
- Monitoring with a goal of identifying sources would be helpful in informing future efforts to prevent it.
- Legislation at a variety of levels must review its efficacy and how it is impacting local ordinances.
- Developing a recommended standardization for data collection will help unify citizen science and other data collection efforts.
- State plan should include an array of monitoring tactics that includes multiple pollution types and points, rather than prioritizing current “worse” concerns. Surfrider Humboldt recently noted several types of plastic debris that weren't included in OPC's list, including foam docks, plastic pellets, and artificial turf.

The NEC has developed guides that help citizen science data collection to denote distinguishing features that have been helpful in pinpointing sources of maritime waste. For example, by distinguishing the diameter and color of a rope regularly found along our bay shoreline, the source was able to be identified to a specific mariculture company that was not implementing waste reduction efforts. Thus, local efforts can provide direct engagement in developing relevant local monitoring techniques.

State Funding for Local, Pragmatic Implementation

To sustain locally-informed, locally-implemented, and locally-guided efforts to monitor and reduce waste production and pollution, the state should provide direct funding to those monitoring waste and provide funding to materially implement monitoring and solutions.

- Funding public services: providing trash receptacles in public spaces.
- Waste gathered from these receptacles can be weighed or further assessed in order to determine how much waste was diverted, and possible sources of the waste.
- Monitoring efforts that also collect plastic and other waste preventing it from entering the natural environment should be proposed and implemented whenever feasible.

The NEC is currently implementing a plankton monitoring program in collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), as part of its national Plankton Monitoring Network (PMN).

We plan to include microplastic identification and monitoring within our PMN program. Programs such as these require training, resources, and human labor to implement and continue. The state should fund such needs.

More information regarding the plan, timeline, and opportunities for engagement can be found at www.sfei.org.



The Restoration Gardener Questions

MAY 2005 RESTORATION GARDENER REVISITED

Carol Mone, Restoration Gardener

Question: What about lawns?

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that approximately 20 million acres of land in the United States are dedicated to lawns — more than is used for any single crop. *Wrote that in 2005. The figure is now over 40 million acres!*

And lawns are, as I've mentioned before, pretty useless unless you have a soccer ball or somebody in your family who regularly kicks one. Lawns are a better bet than asphalt for the kids to play upon, but basically, they're a fossil fuel sop: fertilizer, pesticides, lawnmower fuel. All that mowing causes air and noise pollution. Unless it is composted, the grass is more solid waste to be trucked to Oregon using more fossil fuel. *We do have better green waste options now.*

How to do a native plant lawn? Probably not possible because native grasses seem to want to be bunch grasses. Make the lawn really small, mow with an electric or hand powered mower and surround it with natives. How about a border of Pacific Reed Grass? Grass surrounded by grass. Fertilize with coffee grounds and kill the broadleaf plants you don't like with boiling



Native azaleas on the west coast (*Rhododendron occidentale*).
Photo Credit: Colin Durfee, Flickr

water from the teakettle like grandma did. Of course, your little prairie will attract gophers, but just think of them as little rototillers and be sure the artichokes are planted in cages. Smile. Hawks like to eat small rodents. Maybe a hawk will be fed.

Question:

What's about four feet high and has pretty flowers and is native?

It's all those women's magazines making us think that our job is to decorate the outdoors, tart everything up! “Gardening” is perversion. We need to change the way we think. Stop thinking “gardening” and start thinking habitat restoration and food.

The weather is looking good. Take a long hike in Nature and study the first place you feel totally comfortable lingering. Just look at it. What is there? Probably in the mix of vegetation something is four feet high and with pretty flowers. Pretty, of course, is your personal call, but check out what a real master gardener can pull off.

I personally prefer western azaleas. Because they lose their leaves in the winter, they are an even greater treat in springtime, fragrant and with delicate, gorgeous flowers in sweet pastels. Understated and over the top at the same time.

Look for suggestion, irregularity, simplicity, and yes, perishability. The Japanese figured out what gardening is a long time ago when native plants were the only option.

Borrow scenery from afar and join it to your own by muting the borders with masses of modest plants. Something like toyon, myrica. *Toyon is still toyon, but myrica is now morella, Pacific Wax Myrtle.* Plant that which is interesting at different times of the year so that the focus of the garden changes. Early in the year a manzanita or a red flowering currant or a silk tassel call the eye. Soon western ninebark takes the stage. Then, of course, the western azaleas. Summer is flowers and vegetables — the focus shifts from natives, many of which become dormant in summer. Fall requires at least one vine maple, and winter a hazelnut for form.

Here we are, 19 years later, and I wouldn't change much of what I said then. Please come to the Northcoast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society plant sale the first weekend in May and meet your new botanical buddies.

STEWARDSHIP IS THE MOST SINCERE FORM OF ADVOCACY

Press Release

Amanda Barragar, Ascend Wilderness Experience

Since 2005 a Trinity County nonprofit, Ascend Wilderness Experience, has been guiding youth into the Trinity Alps Wilderness with their flagship backpacking program providing environmental education, team building activities, immersive experiences in nature and opportunities for transformation. Most importantly, Ascend highlights the deeper benefits nature brings by simply being in wilderness and taking the opportunity to connect more with ourselves, each other and our place in the bigger world.

For two decades Ascend has witnessed the transformative powers these experiences have had on its participants. Most quantitatively it is seen in choices youth make as they grow into adults, whether it be entering college with an environmental science focus, pursuing environmental careers, or returning to work for Ascend as adults guiding the next generation of youth. Some of the most inspiring and prevalent outcomes have come in the forms of advocacy showing how positive experiences in nature contribute to individuals giving back to the land that they love and cultivating a deeper relationship with wildplaces.

Stewardship has always been one of the foundational pieces to Ascend's mission and vision. At times youth have paired up with the California Conservation Corps (CCC's) groups in the Trinity Alps to help them for a day, or been taught to clean up campsites as they through-hike. In 2021, Ascend decided to raise the stewardship bar quite a few notches by creating a Teen Internship Trail Crew, Adult Stewardship Program and Multigenerational Stewardship Trips that accommodate families, individuals

and people from all experience levels. Each year Ascend's stewardship projects have exponentially increased due to the enthusiastic response from its community of wilderness advocates and adventurers. In the last three years, 359 participants have volunteered for Ascend stewardship trips achieving over 6500 hours of volunteer time on Trinity Alps Wilderness trails.

Eighty-two miles of trail have been maintained with brushing, treadwork and logouts. An additional 232 miles have been monitored for trail conditions.



All photos of campers and Ascend Wilderness participants courtesy of Amanda Barragar.

Due to the dedication to stewardship and supporting our local agencies in maintaining public lands, Ascend Experience Wilderness was recently awarded the prestigious national Volunteers & Service Leadership Award for "innovative, impactful, and visionary leadership in the delivery of volunteerism and citizen engagement on National Forest System lands" (Randy Moore, United States Forest Service Chief). During the award ceremony, it was shared from local Forest Service trail staff that Ascend is accomplishing roughly 40 percent of the volunteer trail maintenance in the Trinity Alps and is currently the only non-government organization based in Trinity County doing boots on the ground work in this local wilderness.

As Ascend grows and builds capacity, it is able to accomplish more every year. In 2024 alone, Ascend hopes to maintain 49 miles of trail, offer opportunities for 175 youth and teen interns and 75 adult volunteers.

Ascend's Teen Internship Program is also expanding to offer field science work experience in the Trinity Alps with botanists and geologists from Cal Poly Humboldt in addition to its annual Teen Trail Crew Internship. Teens walk away from these trips with resume building skills that have already proven

to contribute to young people's success in qualifying for jobs out of high school.

On its surface, Ascend strives to maintain its

mission of eliminating barriers to nature. This is in part done by offering all programming for free and providing everything necessary for any experience level including food, gear, trained guidance, transportation and even boots if you need them. Engaging the public to the degree of shifting culture around caring for our public lands, encouraging healthy outdoor recreation activities, and cultivating a deeper connection to our wild places is part of the deeper work Ascend hopes to achieve. When a person participates in the physical efforts of caring for these places that are so important to humanity and ecology, they are expressing the sincerest forms of advocacy.

This backpacking season, consider joining Ascend in efforts to give back to land that nurtures us. Find fulfillment in the simple act of clearing brush from a trail, connecting with like minded individuals working alongside you, and feeling the wind and sunshine on



your face in the deep solitude of wilderness. Ascend's trips are designed to accommodate any experience level and available to absolutely anyone regardless of residency or age. Ascend's homebase is in Weaverville, CA and projects are primarily in the Trinity Alps Wilderness, but Ascend is also expanding into the Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, Klamath National Forest and Six Rivers National Forest. If you're new to backpacking, Ascend's trips serve as a gateway to learn how to be in nature in inspiring and safe ways. If you're a seasoned backpacker, the trips are an opportunity to give back and broaden your wilderness community.

For more information about the organization, summer schedule, trip description and to register for a trip, visit Ascend's website: ascendwilderness.org. The deadline to apply for youth trips is May 15, and August 15 for Multigenerational and Adult trips that take place in the Autumn. Cheers to the 2024 backpacking season and hope to see you out on the trails!

CREATURE FEATURE

Molly Taylor, NEC Intern

The Botta's Pocket Gopher (*Thomomys bottae*)

The Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*) belongs to the Geomyidae family, which includes 41 burrowing rodents endemic to North and Central America. Despite similarities with other species of gophers in appearance, Botta's pocket gophers are identifiable by their short legs, elongated front claws, and short, smooth, brown fur. These gophers typically measure between 11.5 to 30 cm in body length, with tails ranging from 4 to 9.5 cm. They have small eyes and ears, along with a tail that is hairless at the end.

Thomomys bottae habitat ranges from southern Oregon and central Colorado to southern Baja California and central Mexico. They thrive in various habitats, including high mountain valleys, deserts, and sometimes in agricultural areas with artificial irrigation in more temperate climates. Solitary creatures, these gophers spend the majority of their lives underground. They craft intricate underground systems, 1-3 meters deep in the ground that include burrows for resting and shallow tunnels for feeding. The nesting chambers are made cozy with some dried grass, but the chambers are left rather bare, and used for food storage.

Botta's pocket gophers face numerous predators including owls, badgers, coyotes, and foxes, which contributes to their relatively short life span of 2.5 years. Female pocket gophers produce a single litter annually, typically ranging from 3-7 offspring per litter.

Their diet consists mainly of roots, bulbs, tubers, and



A Botta's pocket gopher
Photo Credit: David A. Hofmann, Flickr

above-ground plants, and occasionally cultivated crops when in proximity to human habitation. Employing their adept burrowing skills, they often tunnel beneath desired plants, bite off the roots and pull the stems into their burrows. Underground, they cut the plant into smaller bits and store the food in their cheek-pouches.

The European Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*)

The European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), also known as the Common starling in Ireland and the UK, is a medium sized passerine bird in the Sturnidae, or starling family. Native to European regions, these birds and hundreds of others were intentionally released in the US in New York during the 1890s by a group who wanted America to have all the birds that Shakespeare ever mentioned. European starlings are well-known songbirds throughout North America.

With an estimated global population of 310 million, the European starling can be found all throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Preferring grassland habitats with low tree and shrub cover, they have carved out an existence in many diverse habitats, even cities and towns.

The European starling is around 19-23 cm long, with an average wingspan of 31-44 cm. Their feathers are an iridescent black, glossed purple or green, and speckled with white dots, most noticeable in winter. Females sport a bright yellow colored beak with pink bases, while the males have yellow beaks with blue/gray bases. Juvenile birds are gray-brown in color, but by their first winter they begin to resemble the adults, while still maintaining some of the brown feathering on their head.

European starlings are primarily insectivorous, indulging in a wide variety of insects, arthropods, amphibians, grains, and seeds. These birds obtain most of their food by foraging close to the ground. When in a larger flock, starlings engage



A European starling
Photo Credit: Becky Masubara, Flickr

in a behavior called "roller feeding", where the birds at the back of the flock systematically fly to the front of the flock to get first dibs on the feeding opportunities.

The Yellow-Spotted Tussock Moth (*Lophocampa maculata*)

The yellow-spotted tussock moth (*Lophocampa maculata*), belongs to the Erebidae family. Found across North America, these moths thrive in habitats dense with deciduous trees.

Females of the species lay around 100 to 200 eggs in clusters of roughly 5 to 15. Caterpillars then hatch from these eggs after about one week, and pupate around two months after hatching, though this depends on factors like temperature and food availability.

The larvae are picky eaters, preferring leaves of poplar and willow, but settling for alder, basswood, birch, maple, and oak. They pupate on leaves, forming a brown silk cocoon, and eventually emerge as adults in the spring. Adults on average live between five-ten days, making the average life cycle of a yellow-spotted tussock moth one year.

The yellow-spotted tussock moth has an alternating brown and white striped pattern on the wing, and a wingspan of 35-45 mm. The caterpillars are covered in long hairs, giving them a furry appearance. Caterpillars are 40 mm in length and have a distinctive yellow/orange stripe of hair around the middle of their body. Coloration of a yellow-spotted tussock moth can vary depending on geographic location. Notably, this moth gets the name "tussock" from the tufts of hair present on the caterpillar.

As nocturnal creatures, yellow-spotted tussock moths are attracted to natural sources of light, like the moon. This behavior is called phototropism, and it is common among most moths. Unfortunately, this attraction to light can often move the moths into urban areas, posing potential harm to their wellbeing.



A yellow-spotted tussock moth
Photo Credit: Jenn Forman Orth, Flickr



Get on Board for the Climate

A Woody Problem

Martha Walden, Guest Contributor

Wildfires terrify people whose homes and lives are threatened. Wildlife desperately flees. Massive amounts of carbon and air pollution fill the sky and atmosphere. Why, then, are so many environmentalists and climate activists suspicious of the Forest Resiliency Project (FRP) proposed by Golden State Natural Resources (GSNR)? Thinning forests that have been previously clear-cut and thickly replanted may make them more likely to survive wildfire instead of burning so hotly that the flames become invincible and spread throughout thousands of acres, rampaging through cities and towns. These fires have turned the dry part of the year into a nightmare for huge areas of the West, including Humboldt County.

According to its Forest Resilience Project page, GSNR is a non-profit corporation that was formed to address the “urgent issue of catastrophic fires from overgrown and under-managed forests.” On its home page, GSNR’s mission statement doesn’t specifically mention wildfire prevention but speaks more expansively as striving “to enhance the quality of life, public safety, economic development, and the environment in California.” Nothing wrong with any of those priorities, but #3 has a reputation for taking over. As a big fan of Pacific Forest Trust, which produces timber while increasing forest diversity and carbon stocks, I believe it’s possible to harvest what we need while keeping forest health foremost. Unfortunately, such ecological wisdom has not yet caught on widely.

So a lack of trust haunts GSNR’s proposal to build two wood pellet manufacturing plants in Tuolumne and Lassen counties that would process woody waste. Their combined output would amount to a million tons every year. For how many years? How long before the forests within feasible transporting radius have been thinned? Then what?

Let’s assume for the moment that forest health really is and always will be the priority of the proposed FRP. The pellets would be transported to Stockton and then shipped overseas to be burned as a substitute for coal. Perhaps that wouldn’t be such a bad deal if burning wood didn’t emit more carbon and air pollution than coal. Even if we accept the first premise of the FRP, we must still acknowledge that a different fate for all that wood would be much better for the climate outlook.

What to do with woody waste challenges our ingenuity. According to our way of doing things, biomass utilization has to be monetized, but how to do that without creating an incentive for increased logging? Cutting down trees in order to turn them into “woody waste” is obviously at odds with ecosystem health and climate health. Many new and old biomass utilization technologies — pyrolysis, composting, wood products — can certainly be a big improvement over the high carbon and air pollution emissions of incineration. Of course, most technologies come with their own impacts, especially if they are to turn a profit.

Maybe that’s the problem right there. In addition to sequestering carbon, producing oxygen, storing water, protecting streams, lowering temperatures, and hosting a staggering amount of life — not to mention providing us with wood — forests are supposed to be cash cows. But one of the frightening truths about climate change is that we can no longer take them for granted. Many forests emit more carbon than they sequester, which is one of the reasons why California’s latest Scoping Plan fell short of its carbon reduction goal.



PLEA for WILDLIFE
Poetry reading and reception. Learn about ten endangered species of Del Norte County through poetry and wall art.
Terri Glass, Grantee of Upstate California Creative Corps
Refreshments served



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TIDEWATER GOBY

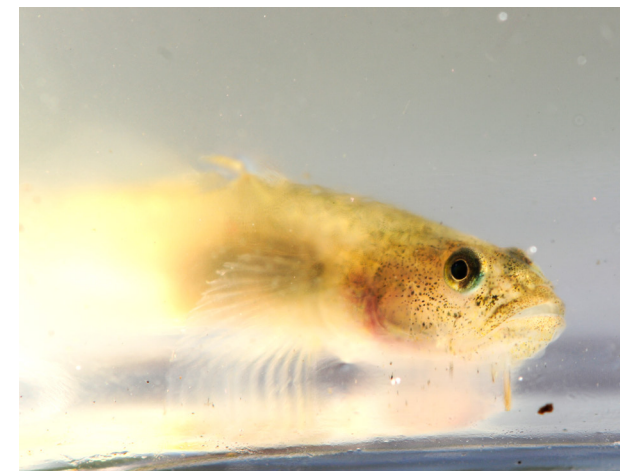
Tiny, semi-translucent, like looking through smoky quartz, the tidewater goby is the Thumbelina of fish. Intricately woven into the food web of estuaries, it propels with delicate pectoral fins, dainty as lingerie searching for insect larvae and aquatic invertebrates. In turn, the goby becomes nourishment for shorebirds and fish that humans prize such as halibut, steelhead.

The ingenious male digs mini burrows for fertilized eggs where it encloses itself like a plug, guarding the eggs for days. The newly hatched juveniles will only survive in no or low salinity.

Once flourishing in estuaries, lagoons, marshes along the Pacific coast, the goby is harder and harder to find—its habitat devastated by drought, invasive fish, artificial removal of sandbars that change water quality, salinity.

Now endangered— and some fish that prey on it, endangered too. How something so tiny has a rippling effect, how something so precious with pebble black eyes, sees only trouble ahead.

Poem by Terri Glass, Plea for Wildlife project funded by Upstate California Creative Corp



Tidewater Goby
Photo Credit: USFWS Pacific Southwest Region, Flickr

GATHERING THE GOOD

Compiled by the NEC Staff

During times of deep upheaval (of which we are all living through), it can be easy to sink into feelings of despair, burnout, and overwhelm. One of the best tools we have found when experiencing climate anxiety or distress about social justice issues is to connect with people, things, art, media, ideas, or organizations that bring us solace and make us feel interested, inspired, connected, or more human in some capacity. Here are a few recommendations and threads to follow if you are in need of gathering some good things.

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

If you have something you want to share with other EcoNews readers (including books, movies, podcasts, art, poetry, music, magazines, activists, people, movements, organizations, or local happenings, etc), we would love to feature your recommendations in future issues or on our social media.

Please reach out at nec@ournec.org or stop by our office in Arcata.

More Art!

Lonnie Holley

According to Holley's website, "Since 1979, Holley has devoted his life to the practice of improvisational creativity. His art and music, born out of struggle, hardship, but perhaps more importantly, out of furious curiosity and biological necessity, has manifested itself in drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, performance, and sound. Holley's sculptures are constructed from found materials in the oldest tradition of African American sculpture. Objects, already imbued with cultural and artistic metaphor, are combined into narrative sculptures that commemorate places, people, and events."

To learn more, visit <https://www.lonnieholley.com/>

Art

Just Seeds

According to the Justseeds website, "Justseeds Artists' Cooperative is a decentralized network of 41 artists committed to social, environmental, and political engagement...We believe in the transformative power of personal expression in concert with collective action. To this end, we produce collective portfolios, contribute graphics to grassroots struggles for justice, work collaboratively both in- and outside the co-op, build large sculptural installations in galleries, and wheatpaste on the streets—all while offering each other daily support as allies and friends."

To buy prints or learn more, visit <https://justseeds.org/>

Book

Undrowned: Black Feminist Lessons from Marine Mammals

By Alexis Pauline Gumbs

According to the AK Press site, *Undrowned* is a book-length meditation for the entire human species, based on the subversive and transformative lessons of marine mammals. Alexis Pauline Gumbs has spent hundreds of hours watching our aquatic cousins. She has found them to be queer, fierce, protective of each other, complex, shaped by conflict, and struggling to survive the extractive and militarized conditions humans have imposed on the ocean. Employing a brilliant mix of poetic sensibility, naturalist observation, and Black feminist insights, she translates their submerged wisdom to reveal what they might teach us. The result is a powerful work of creative nonfiction that produces not a specific agenda but an unfolding space for wonder and questioning.

To learn more, visit <https://www.akpress.org/undrowned.html>

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