

# Redwood Needles



Spring 2024

Sierra Club Redwood Chapter

Volume 66, No. 2



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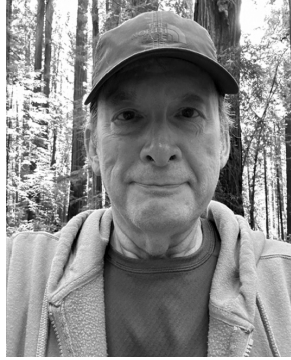
*View from Bodega Bay, Sonoma County. Photo by Jim Horn*

# Message from the Chair

## Dan Mayhew, Chapter Chair

Hello and welcome to Spring! And not a day too soon! As much as I know every drop counts, I'm looking forward to walks with my wife Jenny and our two golden retrievers that don't require full-on rain gear for survival. It won't be long before we'll miss cooler and wetter days, but for now, warmer and drier feels very good.

As we enjoy the warming temperatures of Spring, the heat index of the Redwood Chapter is also rising--we have more than our fair share of social and environmental justice threats on our plate. Thankfully, our capacity to deal with these challenges has also been rising. Our 2023 leadership election cycle resulted in two new Chapter At Large ExCom members, Elayna Trucker of Napa and Steve Scalmanini of Mendocino, both of whom also serve on their respective Group ExComs. Teri Shore, our new Chapter Conservation Chair, is hard at work supporting conservation issues throughout the Chapter. Chapter ExCom and Conservation committees now meet via Zoom at 6:00 PM on the fourth Thursday of each month.



Our Forest and Water Committees, led by Jeanne Chinn and Theresa Ryan respectively, are growing and engaging new voices from across the Chapter, significantly adding to our capacity. During a recent Water Committee meeting, Robin Gray Stewart, our North Group Marine Chair, presented an excellent overview of the Humboldt Bay offshore wind energy project. The controversial Potter Valley Dam decommissioning and Lake Pillsbury restoration plan campaign are supported by three Redwood Groups--Lake, Sonoma and Mendocino--working together to assist in creation of a just solution and restoration of the Eel.

The Forest Committee is working to repudiate the variety of ways PG&E is trying to gain unfettered control over its tree removal processes--undermining all oversight. Another is the new Legislation (AB 2276) that started last year as an Energy bill for new jobs and has morphed into a Forestry Bill similar to 2022's dangerous SB 396. It seeks to allow PG&E carte blanche over tree removals, including removing any requirement for notice to property owners.

Then there's Flannery's "California Forever" development project determined to build an entirely new city of up to 400,000 people on 17,500 acres of prime farmland in Solano County. The Chapter is supporting the Solano's Groups efforts to defeat a ballot initiative by the developer to circumvent the county's Orderly Growth Ordinance for approval to build.

Our capacity to preserve Jackson Demonstration State Forest via 30x30 increased dramatically due to collaboration with our colleagues including the Far North Region of Power in Nature, EPIC (Environmental Protection Information Center), Robin Leler and the Mendocino Group and the SCCA 30x30 Task Force. Thanks to Matt Simmons, of EPIC, for his excellent article for this edition of *The Needles* on conserving Jackson by means of the 30x30 initiative.

Thanks to all of our many volunteers and supporters without whose assistance, none of this would be possible.



# SIERRA CLUB

REDWOOD CHAPTER

### Redwood Needles

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## Support Your Passion

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Create a legacy that protects and restores the natural world for future generations by naming Sierra Club's Redwood Chapter in your will or trust. Or, name Sierra Club Foundation as the beneficiary of your retirement plan for the benefit of your local chapter and leave less highly taxed assets to your loved ones.



To learn more about the advantages of making a planned gift and to become a member of the Rachel Carson Society, please contact us.



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## Redwood Chapter Leadership

The Executive Committee is the governing body of the chapter, with one (1) member delegated by each of six (6) regional groups and six (6) members elected at large. Each group elects its own Executive Committee. The chapter ExCom meets every-other month over Zoom.

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\* Signifies voting member of the ExCom

## The Case for Conserving Jackson Demonstration State Forest under the 30x30 Initiative

Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) is a 48,652 acre, state owned, coast redwood forest located in Mendocino County on the unceded traditional lands of the Coast Yuki and Northern Pomo peoples. California purchased most of the land that would become JDSF in 1947 with the goal of demonstrating

sustained timber production for private timber companies. The [organic act](#) for the forest requires that it be operated as a commercial timberland by the State of California.

For the past 77 years, the California Department of Forestry & Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has operated the forest as a commercial timberland under a management plan approved by the Board of Forestry. Dozens of timber harvests have occurred under State management, including the harvesting of many old-growth groves in the name of “sustainable forestry.” CAL FIRE has thankfully stopped harvesting old-growth trees, but they continue to harvest mature second growth trees, some of which are more than 100 years old. These [incredibly rare](#) mature second growth trees are some of California’s best hope for creating new old-growth coastal redwood groves that can begin to replace the magnificent forests we lost. Mature trees are incredibly vital habitat for rare and endangered species like the [marbled murrelet](#) and [northern spotted owl](#). If they were allowed to grow, these trees would [sequester carbon at an astonishing pace](#) and help us fight climate change.



JDSF is also a beloved recreation destination for campers, hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, mushroom foragers, and folks looking to connect with nature. The adjacent [Mendocino Woodlands State Park](#), which is surrounded by JDSF, was origi-

nally built during the FDR Administration to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation to low income communities. Unfortunately, as recently as 2020, CAL FIRE proposed logging the forest directly adjacent to the State Park where campers would be forced to hear the sound of chainsaws throughout the summer. Thankfully, that plan was [withdrawn](#) in response to community activism, public comment, and tribal consultation.

JDSF is home to many sacred cultural sites belonging to the Northern Pomo and Coast Yuki Peoples that are threatened by logging. A [report](#) conducted by CAL FIRE archeologists in 1999 concluded that systematic and continuous destruction of Northern Pomo and Coast Yuki ancestral cultural sites had been the pattern and practice at JDSF for many years. The archeologists also determined that because of the prevalence of archeological sites, JDSF should be “eligible for listing” on the National Register of Historic Places.

*Cont'd on page 7*

# Against The Wind

## ***Climate-science deniers, right-wing think tanks, and fossil fuel shills are plotting to foil the renewable energy revolution***

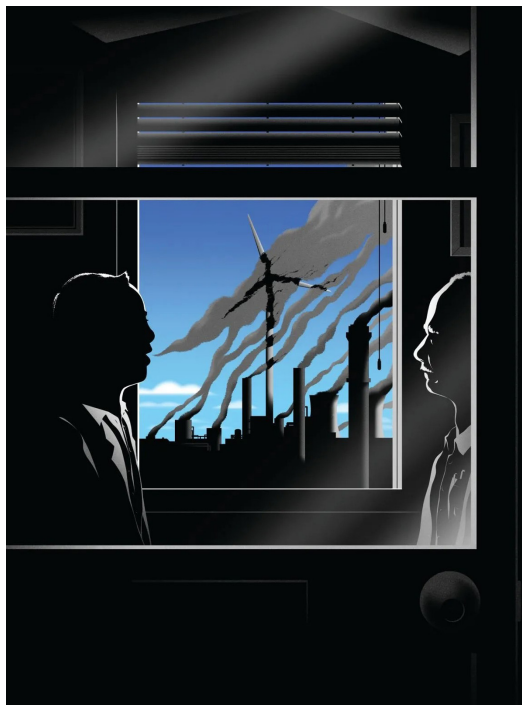
This article is excerpted from the Spring 2024 issue of *Sierra*, the national club newsletter, available here (<https://bit.ly/3TPrieE>)

Article by **Rebecca Burns**  
Illustrations by **Anson Chan**

**LAST JULY, A SMALL GROUP OF RABBLE-ROUSERS** boarded a trio of powerboats, banners and bullhorns in hand. They were headed for the massive floating construction site of an offshore wind farm 35 miles from the eastern tip of Long Island, New York. As the boats motored through the swells, the self-styled activists broke into a chorus of pleas for the wind farm construction to cease—chants likely intended less for the still-faraway workers than [for the camera there to capture footage](#). “Hear this message: We’re here to save the whales!” called out a man in a black polo shirt. “If you were a fossil fuel project, you would have been shut down long ago.”

That apparent conservation activist was, in fact, [an infamous climate change disinformation artist](#): Marc Morano, who’s done more than perhaps any other person to manufacture doubt about global warming. From his perch at *Climate Depot*, the blog he’s run since 2009, Morano has elevated fake climate experts, [encouraged the harassment of real climate scientists](#) and promoted the myth of “global cooling.”

More recently, Morano has been talking about whales—specifically, the idea that the higher-than-usual number of dead ones washing ashore along the East Coast is the result of President Joe Biden’s push to develop 30 gigawatts of offshore wind power by the end of the decade. In fact, the spate of whale strandings began in January 2016, before most survey activity for ocean turbines had even begun. Federal agencies are



still investigating “unusual mortality events” for three whale species, but regulators and academic researchers say [there’s no evidence of a link to wind development](#). Since 2019, hundreds of gray whales have also washed up dead on the West Coast, where offshore wind development is only now getting underway. The clearest common factor is rising ocean temperatures, which are disrupting whales’ feeding and migration patterns. In other words, climate change. But no matter—video of Morano’s boat protest [landed on Fox News](#) and spread like a ripple through the social media groups that have sprouted to oppose offshore wind.

Morano and company’s mission failed, as construction continued on the 12 turbines that now compose one of the largest offshore wind farms built to date in the United States. In December, New York flipped the switch on [South Fork Wind](#), which will deliver renewable power to some 70,000 homes in the state. But figures like Morano may be gaining ground in a larger mission: twisting public opinion

against renewable energy in other would-be host communities.

Morano works at the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow, part of a sprawling climate-denial machine [assembled with funding from fossil fuel interests like ExxonMobil](#) and the [Charles Koch Foundation](#) and dark-money groups like [DonorsTrust](#). Between 1998 and 2014, [ExxonMobil](#) and its foundation gave more than half a million dollars to the committee, which did not respond to a request for comment. DonorsTrust gave the group nearly \$8 million between 2008 and 2017, according to federal tax data. Today, as both the science and the tangible effects of a warming planet become irrefutable, it’s increasingly rare to encounter the kind of outright climate denial these groups pioneered. Instead, it’s being replaced by [what misinformation experts call “climate delayism”](#)—a coordinated campaign to undermine climate solutions.

For fossil fuel ideologues, sowing misinformation about wind and solar power is proving to be an effective stall tactic. Public opinion surveys show that renewable energy remains popular with a bipartisan majority of Americans; in [a poll from The Washington Post](#) and the University of Maryland, seven out of 10 people said they’d be comfortable with a wind farm in their own community. But in New Jersey—where Morano’s group has gone so far as to buy billboards reading “Save Whales Stop Windmills”—nearly half of all the state’s residents now believe that such a connection probably exists, [according to an August poll from Monmouth University](#).

\*\*\*\*\*

Read the entire article at  
<https://bit.ly/3TPrieE>

# The Joy of Tracking

By Teri Shore

Now that the rain is here and the ground is muddy, it is the best time of year for animal tracking in Sonoma Valley. While our local coyotes, bobcats, fox and other wild creatures live here year-round, finding their tracks is much harder when everything underfoot is hard and dry. Plus, most wildlife is naturally stealthy, leaving little trace moving across the land.



Often, we don't see the activities of our wild neighbors, but with track and sign we can begin to recognize what they might be up to. Observing a pawprint or the imprint of a deer hoof or the tri-toed scatterings of a quail flock tell me that the wild world is nearby. By following animal tracks, you can sometimes find and quietly observe them in real time.

Animal tracking is a hobby that I've taken up more seriously in recent years. Through classes at Santa Rosa Junior College, guidebooks, getting involved in a women's tracking circle and hours of "dirt-time," I've been learning how to identify tracks, such as whether it's canine or feline or turkey vulture versus wild turkey.

Canine and feline prints both show four toes and a heel pad. Canine prints are oblong showing toenails and two lobes in the heel pad. Feline tracks are overall rounder showing no toenails with a large heel pad with three lobes.

A wild turkey's track is considered a "game bird" track with three toes forward and a smaller one back, which registers on the ground as a simple dot. Turkey vultures have "classic" bird tracks with three forward and one back, which is longer and tends to drag leaving

marks.

A key sign of the secret lives of the wild is their scat. Coyotes, foxes and bobcats tend to leave clear signs of their transit right on the trail. Coyote remains tend to be twisty containing plant matter, fur and little bones compared to bobcat leavings, which are felty and hard from digested fur, bones and meat. Foxes love fruit and seeds and often target their piles on top of mounds, rocks or even picnic tables to claim their turf.

Yet identifying prints and scat is barely scratching the surface. Turns out that animal tracking gets more complex and intriguing the more you look and see. You ask more and more questions about the animal's behavior, gait, direction of travel, what they've eaten, why. Often, you can't figure it out, and that's OK. "Put it in your question box and let the mystery unfold," advises a sage animal tracker.

Animal tracking is an ancient human skill that our species relied on for thousands of years for survival. While the modern world has mostly forgotten about it, I've discovered a passionate community of animal trackers locally and around the world that are reviving this knowledge for both nature lovers

and professionals. Professional animal trackers get hired to help with studying endangered species, guiding photography and nature tours and sometimes to find bears or cougars in conflict with humans.

Today you can test your skills and get evaluated to be certified as an animal tracker for personal or professional interests through the CyberTracker North America network <https://trackercertification.com/>. Another fascinating resource is

Original Wisdom <https://www.originalwisdom.com/>, which is operated by the only woman certified Master Tracker in the world, American Kersey Lawrence. I'm taking her online course now.

The best place to start tracking is in your own backyard. Notice what you see. Deer prints? Rabbit pellets? Plants gnawed by a gopher? Scrub jays burying acorns? That is all part of tracking.

Then venture out to open space, along creeks or even roadside mud puddles. I've found all kinds of tracks on lesser used trails such as Calabazas Creek and the road to Wingo behind Larsen Family Winery. Going off trail can also be rewarding if you are careful.

What a wild Valley!

*Teri Shore is chair of the Redwood Chapter Conservation Committee.*



# Sierra Club Redwood Chapter Opposes Initiative for Massive Housing Development in Solano County

*This is the official ballot summary of an initiative currently being circulated for signature of Solano County voters.*

*The Redwood Chapter opposes the project, known as "California Forever" and circulated by the Flannery Group. Read more about the groups opposing the project at <https://www.solanotogether.org/>*

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## Initiative Measure to be Submitted Directly to the Voters

*The county counsel has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:*

**TITLE: REZONING OF 17,500 ACRES OF LAND IN EAST SOLANO COUNTY TO ALLOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW COMMUNITY**

### SUMMARY:

This proposed measure ("Measure") would result in various land use changes for ±25,200 acres (just over 39 square miles) of land under common ownership located in the eastern unincorporated area of Solano County, north of Highway 12, south of Creed Road, and west of the City of Rio Vista. It excludes five parcels under different ownership that are surrounded by the "New Community." In accordance with the County's current Orderly Growth Initiative, voter approval of the General Plan amendment and rezoning is required.

The Measure would change the County's long-term development strategy of directing growth into the existing seven cities by amending the Solano County General Plan to change the land

use of ±17,500 acres from "Agriculture" to "New Community" Special Purpose Area to allow development of a new community with capacity for 40,000 to 160,000 residential units, 100,000 to 400,000 resi-



Joe Feller and Dave Campbell

dents, and 25,000,000 to 90,000,000 square feet of nonresidential development east of Travis Air Force Base (TAFB). The Measure includes an additional ±7,000 acres to buffer TAFB and 712 acres to create an open space buffer between Rio Vista and the New Community; however, the full impacts to TAFB are not yet known.

This Measure would amend the County's Zoning Code to add Section 28.62- "New Community Specific Plan Zoning District" and modify applicable Zoning Maps. These proposed amendments are intended to satisfy state law requirements for a specific plan, though the exact phasing, standards, and criteria by which development would proceed are not included in the Measure. Once adopted, the Measure limits the scope of public review of individual development proposals.

The Measure envisions all municipal services would be provided within the New Community's boundaries.

The Measure applies only to Solano County and its Board of Supervisors. It does not apply to other public agencies with jurisdiction within the New Community boundaries. The New Community would require new utilities, services, and infrastructure including energy, water, sewer, schools, police and fire, and roads. Water supply would come from an unspecified source, and a Water Supply Assessment would be included as part of a required future environmental impact report (EIR).

The Measure identifies ten "voter guarantees", which include general financial and environmental commitments that the New Community proponents would be obligated to provide once residential and commercial development begins.

The environmental impacts and financial feasibility of the New Community have not yet been fully analyzed and would not be known until after the Measure has been approved by the voters. Rights to develop the New Community and obligations for voter guarantees would not vest until a Development Agreement is executed between the project applicant and the County. The long-term enforceability of the obligations to be established in any approved Development Agreement would be limited by state law if the New Community incorporates as a new city. Any substantive modification to the voter guarantees or the boundaries of the New Community would require voter approval.



# The annual election for Sierra Club's Board of Directors is now underway

Each year, five of the 15 members of the Sierra Club Board of Directors end their three-year term. A list of candidates is selected by a combination of a nominations process and a petition process. Sierra Club members have the opportunity to vote on five candidates to fill the empty seats.

A democratic Sierra Club demands grassroots participation. If you have been a Sierra Club member since January 31st 2023, you are eligible to vote. If you joined the Sierra Club since then, you will be eligible to vote next year.

## Ballots were sent to eligible voters on Monday, March 11th.

If you pre-registered to vote online, you'll receive an email from *sierraclub.org.electionservicescorp.com*. Paper ballots will arrive in the mail to all other voters. Please note: the paper ballots are sent out in batches from the East Coast, voting members will receive them at different times throughout the month.

Additional information about the election, this year's candidates, and how to vote can be found on the Sierra Club website ([www.sierraclub.org/board/election](http://www.sierraclub.org/board/election))

Your participation is critical for a Strong Sierra Club. Voting in the Board of Directors election is a privilege, and important responsibility of your membership.

Help us to get a record voter turnout this year. Typically, less than 10% of eligible members vote in the Board elections. A minimum of 5% is required for the elections to be valid. Our grassroots structure is strengthened when membership participation is high. That means your participation is needed in the voting process. Cast your vote early and encourage other members you know to do the same. Ballots must be received by 12:00 PM Eastern Time on April 24th.

## How can I learn about the candidates?

Resources to help you learn about the candidates are available online ([sierraclub.org/board/election](http://sierraclub.org/board/election)). You can read each candidate's bio and statement, as well as their answers to important forum questions selected by a Forum Questions Committee. Each candidate has also recorded a short video about their candidacy!

You can also learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know.

## Voting is Quick and Easy!

If you received a paper ballot but would like to vote online, you can use the registration numbers you received in the mail to login to the e-voting site ([vote.escvote.com/sierra](http://vote.escvote.com/sierra)). If you vote online, please do not also send in your paper ballot.

If you have not received your ballot by March 31st please contact Sierra Club's Member Care team at 415-977-5653 or [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org).

To request a replacement ballot, or receive assistance to vote online, contact Election Services customer service at [sierraclub@electionservicescorp.com](mailto:sierraclub@electionservicescorp.com) or phone 1-866-720-4357.

**Your ballot must be received by no later than 12:00 PM Eastern Time on April 24th.** If you're voting by mail, please drop off your ballot with enough time for it to reach the facility in New York.

**Questions?** All the details about the election, the candidates, and how to vote is available online ([sierraclub.org/board/election](http://sierraclub.org/board/election)). Additional questions can be directed to [member.care@sierraclub.org](mailto:member.care@sierraclub.org).

## Jackson Demonstration Forest

*Cont'd from page 3*

Despite that report, CAL FIRE has continued to conduct timber operations that threaten Northern Pomo and Coast Yuki cultural sites. CAL FIRE's lack of concern for archaeological site protection is reflected in the fact that the forest's [400 page Management Plan](#) dedicates a mere three pages to Native American cultural resource protection. Beyond specific sites, JDSF is a part of an essential Northern Pomo and Coast Yuki tribal [cultural landscape](#). For these reasons, co-management of JDSF with local tribes is a key solution in moving towards a stewardship approach to land management.

It is critical to recognize the importance of preserving JDSF, which faces the ongoing threat of over-logging by CAL FIRE. By prioritizing conservation efforts and embracing a collaborative approach to management, particularly through co-management with local tribes, we can safeguard this invaluable place for present and future generations.

*By Matt Simmons*

*Environmental Protection  
Information Center (EPIC)*



# Redwood Needles

## Sierra Club

### Redwood Chapter

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## Volunteer with Us!

### NEW MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE—COME JOIN US!

We're seeking committee members who want to help recruit new members and volunteers and invite them into the Chapter. Committee members will help current members, Theresa Ryan and Elayna Trucker, build the committee and put into place policies that will make all new members feel welcomed, informed, and ready to help with this important work.

As the committee grows, we hope members will help with tabling and other recruitment events, as well as host regular orientation and onboarding meetings. We're especially looking for members who have worked within the Sierra Club framework for some time, but all assistance is welcome! Please reach out to us at [redwoodmembership@gmail.com](mailto:redwoodmembership@gmail.com).

### OUTINGS LEADERS

Outings leaders are a key part of Sierra Club, as they help create a constituency for nature by encouraging people from all backgrounds to enjoy and explore Redwood Chapter's incredible landscape. Sierra Club provides the training, you provide the inspiration and leadership. Here's where you can learn more about becoming an outings leader

[\[https://www.sierraclub.org/redwood/outings-leaderappandresources\]](https://www.sierraclub.org/redwood/outings-leaderappandresources) *Estimated Time Commitment: 5 hours a month.*

### OUTINGS CHAIR

We're looking for a committed, well-organized person to provide direction and oversight to the chapter outings program -- it is NOT necessary to be an Outings Leader to fill this crucial role. Work to make outdoor activities an integrated and vital element of chapter efforts. Responsibilities include ensuring all chapter and group outings follow Club policies and procedures, officially approving all outings, taking responsibility for publicizing outings in the Redwood Needles and elsewhere, and ensuring that active leaders meet training and first-aid certification requirements. *Estimated Time Commitment: 5 hours a month and up.*

Interested? Contact Chapter Chair Dan Mayhew at [drmayhew356@gmail.com](mailto:drmayhew356@gmail.com) to find out more.