Redwood Needles

Fall 2026 **Sierra Club Redwood Chapter** **Volume 68, No. 4**



Photo by Jim Wylie
Pa Clean Air Sierra Club

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Chapter Director—September Briefing

By Alicia Bales, Redwood Chapter Executive Director

Happy Fall Equinox!

This week I returned from two weeks of vacation after a life-changing 8-day white-water rafting trip on the Wild Salmon and Snake Rivers in Idaho. I am home now reflecting on this unbelievable experience and getting my land legs back. I hope to be dreaming of rock canyons, big-horned sheep, and wily rapids for a long time to come—until I can get out on the river again!



On July 15th, Alicia Hamann of Friends of the Eel, Deb Sally and I attended Cal Wild's Upper Eel Visioning Meeting (L-R, Alicia Hamann, me and Deb Sally)

Please mark your calendars for these important upcoming events:

Saturday, October 10 @ 3pm-5pm, Caspar Community Center: Timber Harvest Plan Workshop at Caspar Community Center led by Rick Coates of Forests Unlimited and co-sponsored by the Mendocino Trail Stewards. Followed by a dinner and dancing to celebrate our work on AB2494, Assemblymember Rogers' bill to change the mandate of the Demonstration State Forest Program.

Saturday, October 31 @ 1:30-4:30pm, Napa: Napa Group's 3rd Annual Environmental Gathering at Skyline Clubhouse. Featured speakers include Congressman Mike Thompson, Sierra Club California Director Miguel Miguel, Sierra Club Redwood Chapter Executive Director Alicia Bales, former NASA scientist Drew Isaacs, environmental historian David Schmidt, local conservation leaders, and one of our outstanding student interns. More information and event link here.

Tuesday and Wednesday November 3 & 4 @ Time TBD, Sacramento: The Board of Forestry will vote on the Revised Jackson Forest Management Plan, with only 10 days of public comment and no CEQA Review. Members are encouraged to write to the Board and demand more time for public review, and also to prepare comments on the plan, more resources to come. A large in-person showing for the Management Plan vote will be essential, so please SAVE THE DATE.

Wednesday, November 4 @ 9am, San Francisco: The final public hearing and vote on the Rule 9-6 amendments by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District Bay Area Air District's (BAAD) proposed Rule 9-6, if adopted, will phase out the sale of nitric oxide-emitting water heaters, in favor of cleaner alternatives. Redwood Chapter has funds to charter a bus for members wishing to attend, thanks to Napa Group for coordinating!

THANK YOU!—Huge thank you to everyone for an incredible season of work at the Redwood Chapter. I want to highlight **Samantha Shearman**'s milestone achievements bringing our Chapter Outings Program back to life, and also give a huge howl and high-five to **Jim DeKloe, Duane Kromm**, and all of the Solano Group organizers who mobilized so brilliantly to pack the Solano Board of Supervisors this week! You are my heroes!

SIERRA CLUB
REDWOOD CHAPTER

Redwood Needles
A Quarterly Publication of
Sierra Club Redwood Chapter
Mailing Address
P.O. Box 466, Santa Rosa, CA 95402
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You can manage your Sierra Club account at *myaccount.sierraclub.org* or email *member.care@sierraclub.org*

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for a Just and Sustainable World

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

Chapter Chair: Shirley Johnson* • johnsons@sonoma.edu

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Sonoma Group Delegate to Chapter:
Shirley Johnson* johnsons@sonoma.edu

Chapter Webmaster: Suzanne Doyle

* Signifies voting member of the ExCom

Newsom declares state of emergency ahead of El Niño

Risk of damaging floods, slides, prolonged power outages amplifies winter concerns

This article is reprinted from the Press Democrat, https://bit.ly/4hjJoji

Gov. Gavin Newsom on Sept. 21 declared a statewide emergency for California, warning of damaging storms that could be generated this winter from a historically strong El Niño brewing in the Pacific Ocean.

The move is the latest sign that emergency officials are growing increasingly concerned about flooding, landslides, coastal damage and power outages as winter approaches. The declaration fast-tracks permits for flood protection projects and allows state agencies to obtain emergency supplies without the usual competitive bidding process.

"We are preparing for this El Niño early because every Californian deserves to be safe in their home, connected to their community and protected when severe weather comes," Newsom said.



Floodwaters near The Barlow in Sebastopol on Feb. 28, 2019. BETH SCHLANKER — The Press Democrat

Earlier this month, scientists at NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, said there is a greater than 90% chance of a "very strong" El Niño being present in October, November and December, and a 75% probability that it will rank as the strongest in history since modern records began in 1950.

El Niño events occur every two to seven years when ocean waters along the equator off Peru become warmer than normal, affecting weather patterns across the globe. They begin when the trade winds that normally blow from east to west weaken or reverse, preventing cold, deep-ocean water from rising to the surface. The warmer surface waters become, the stronger the El Niño is considered. The opposite — a cooling of the ocean waters off South America — is called "La Niña."

El Niño events last for months and can often change the movement of the jet stream, pumping heat and moisture into the atmosphere and creating conditions that allow more winter storms to come to California, particularly Southern California, but also sometimes soaking the Bay Area and Sierra Nevada.

Currently, the Pacific Ocean along the equator is warmer than it has ever been in recorded history, roughly 5.4 degrees warmer than average.

Although very strong El Niños do not guarantee wet winters — there was one in 2015-16 that saw mostly average rainfall across the state — some of the wettest winters in recorded California history, including 1982-83 and 1997-98, have occurred during very strong El Niños.

"There is a high potential for a significantly wetter-than-average winter this year," said Daniel Swain, a climate scientist with the University of California's California Institute for Water Resources. "This is the strongest El Niño event on record and it is expected to strengthen considerably. That is a big deal."

Swain said that current trends are shaping up to be similar to the winter of 1997-98. That year, San Francisco received 47 inches of rain, double its historical average of 23 inches. It was the second wettest year in recorded history

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Trump Did What?!?

It's hard to keep track of the Trump Administration's recent attacks on our environment and fit them into our tri-monthly Needles, but we'll try to hit the highlights.

Earth is soon going to exceed the safe temperature threshold agreed upon by the world in the 2015 Paris climate accord because of warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas.

In a strategic retreat in the fight against climate change, the United Nations has acknowledged that Earth has lost its chance to prevent some of the worst of global warming's harms. So now the world must figure out how to get temperatures below the danger zone and back to safety, officials say.

(Press Democrat, Sept. 2, read https://bit.ly/4xHzpKT)

Roadless Rule at Risk

More than 400 endangered or threatened animals and plants across our country will be pushed closer to extinction if the Roadless Rule that has kept bulldozers and logging roads out of wild lands and open spaces for decades is reversed. Creatures such as spotted owls, mysterious Humboldt martens, rare Pt. Arena mountain beavers and struggling Coho salmon rely on these unroaded forests and wild rivers to survive. The roadless areas also provide places to hike, birdwatch, fish and hunt—as well as clean water and air to all of us.

For 25 years, roadless publicly owned lands have remained safe from clearcutting, roadbuilding, mining, and oil-and-gas drilling. Now we must stop extractive industries from forcing their way back in.

About half of California's 4 million acres of roadless areas are found within the Redwood Empire and North Coast. In Mendocino National Forest, nearly 30,000 acres of roadless lands border the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument. Another 154,332 acres surround the remote Yuki, Yolla Bolly and Sanhedrin wilderness areas that serve as critical wildlife corridors.

Further North, more than 1 million acres of roadless habitat around Mt. Shasta and into the Trinity Alps allow bears, mountain lions, deer and other wildlife to thrive. The Klamath and Six Rivers National Forests hold tracts of redwoods and old growth along with free running rivers adding roughly another 1 million acres of roadless land.

Speak up for continued roadless protection by sending a letter to the US Forest Service before the Oct. 6 Roadless Rule comment deadline. Take Action here:

https://bit.ly/4rvf5ee

Explore the Roadless Areas on this public map

https://bit.ly/3TjkoRv

(Article by Teri Shore, Redwood Chapter Conservation Chair)

Endangered Species Act in peril

Trump aims to gut a core protection, internal memo shows

In what would be a seismic shift, the Trump administration is quietly moving to strip a core protection of the Endangered Species Act, according to an internal memo obtained by The New York Times.

Under a new interpretation of the law's language outlined in the memo, the accidental killing or injury of an animal would no longer be considered illegal; only actions specifically intending to target an animal would.

The change would be transformative because, in the United States, the killing of endangered animals almost always happens incidentally, in the course of economic activity. Until now, industries and individuals could be held accountable for those foreseeable deaths and, as a result, they have been incentivized to avoid them.

At the center of the change is what it means to "take" an endangered animal, something that has long been prohibited under the act.

"A vessel that inadvertently strikes a whale has not taken it, because the vessel's course was not set against the whale," states the memo, which was dated Sept. 14 and was distributed to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field offices. "Felling a tree is not a take of the bats roosting in it unless the tree is felled for the purpose of killing or capturing them."

Currently, enforcement of the Endangered Species Act relies on a permitting system that seeks to balance protecting imperiled animals with allowing business to operate.

For example, if developers wanted to build houses on a tract of land that is home to endangered salamanders, they would have to apply for a permit. In exchange for implementing some measures to protect the salamanders, and perhaps paying for salamander conservation elsewhere, the Fish and Wildlife Service would issue what's known as an incidental take permit, absolving them of killing a certain number of salamanders.

The memo, which was signed by Brian Nesvik, the director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, appears to upend that entire system.

***Read more at* (https://bit.ly/4y5O17j)**

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Newsom declares state of emergency

Continued from p. 3

since the Gold Rush in California, behind only 1861-62.

He called Newsom's "better safe than sorry" approach Monday a "reasonable and prudent" idea, even if storms end up fizzling.

"It's a decision I agree with," he said. "You will be glad if sandbags are available and swift water rescue teams are available and National Guard troops are prepared to help fix levees."

The emergency proclamation fast-tracks permitting for flood protection work and other projects. It requires state agencies to meet with local officials for emergency planning in the coming weeks and months, to expand public awareness campaigns, and to sign contracts to obtain emergency materials — from rocks used to strengthen levees to plastic sheeting and pumps — without the usual competitive bidding process.

Agencies such as the Coastal Commission, the Department of Water Resources, the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, Cal Fire and others are also required to speed permits for projects that could reduce storm damage, such as installing erosion control features on hillsides in areas that have burned recently in wildfires or removing sediment in flood channels to increase their capacity.

On Monday, state emergency officials said they are already holding planning meetings with cities and counties to identify places most at risk, and are beginning to clear drains on roads and preposition resources, such as sandbags, in locations across the state.

"This is not about fear, it is about readiness," said Caroline Thomas Jacobs, director of the California Office of Emergency Services. "It is about giving people more time, more support and more ways to stay safe. California has faced significant storms before and we have learned from them."

She urged people to get flashlights, chargers, radios and other emergency equipment ready, to clear gutters, and to be aware if they live near creeks or mudslide-prone hillsides. Jacobs also recommended that people go to ready.ca.gov to sign up for local alerts and learn other tips.

Tom Gibson, director of the state Department of Water Resources, said that his agency will be holding 12 workshops starting next week with cities and counties along the coast, the Central Valley and the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta area to discuss everything from inland flood risk to coastal flood risk. Coastal erosion and damage to piers, homes, and streets along the coast has increased in recent decades due to sea level rise from climate change and could be particularly severe this winter if a major atmospheric river storm arrives during a high tide or king tide.

Gibson said DWR will be pre-positioning 4.4 million sandbags, 400,000 tons of rock for emergency levee repairs, and other materials at 68 locations around the state in the coming weeks and months and inspecting more than 1,600 miles of levees in flood-prone areas.

He urged people to pay attention to weather forecasts during storms, to understand their flood and mudslide risks, and not to ignore evacuation orders when authorities give them during unfolding severe weather.

"We want to remind all Californians to remember this winter to be aware, be prepared and take action," Gibson said.

Trump Did What??

(*cont'd from p. 4)*

Trump, Zeldin Try to "Unleash" Dirty Energy with Repeal of Pollution Standards

The Trump administration has rolled back Biden-era carbon pollution standards and unveiled its plan to eliminate all controls on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from power plants. The announcement comes as the climate crisis—driven by these same emissions—continues to accelerate.

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a final rule on Sept. 14 repealing the 2024 greenhouse gas standards for power plants and also announced a proposal to rescind the endangerment finding for the power sector, which would wipe out all climate regulations for fossil-fueled electricity generation. The head of the EPA, Lee Zeldin, made the announcement during the G20 Energy Abundance Ministerial in Houston, Texas—a state that has more GHG emissions from coal and gas plants than any other in the country.

Read more at (https://bit.ly/4yYZHtc)

Trump Moves to Drop Protections for More Wetlands

The Trump administration on Sept. 4 took another step toward stripping federal protections from millions of acres of wetlands, which help filter drinking water for many communities and provide critical habitat for birds, fish and other wildlife.

The proposed rule from the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would significantly narrow the definition of "waters of the United States," or WOTUS, that are protected from harmful pollution under the Clean Water Act of 1972.

The new version is more sweeping than an initial proposal released last November, which would have removed federal protections from fewer wetlands nationwide. The plan would deliver a victory to farmers, ranchers and rural landowners who have chafed at the protections, calling them an infringement on their property rights.

https://bit.ly/47huGVw)

Sierra Club Group & Chapter Elections

Mailed and online ballots must be received by **November 20, 2026**

It's that time of year again. Sierra Club's elections for members of the Chapter and local Group Executive Committees (ExComs) are here!

In the following pages you will find candidate statements for many of those seeking open seats. As an alternative to our mail-in paper ballot located on the next-to-last page of this newsletter, we are offering an **online voting system** through the Sierra Club website. To vote online, please visit https://www.sierraclub.org/redwood/redwood-chapter-and-group-elections

Voting begins Oct. 9, and all votes must be in by Nov. 20. You must be a Sierra Club member to vote.

Chapter ExCom

Jeanne Chinn: I'm currently serving and also a candidate for our Chapter's ExCom. A 44-year SClub member, I bring decades of environmental activism and professional knowledge.

For years I supported SClub through writing campaigns. I'm chair of our Chapter's Forest Committee (6+yrs), working with landowners & agencies to create resilient forests, oak woodlands, and landscapes from past/current abuses, climate change, and wildfires. We're also pressing PG&E to stop destructive tree removals and comprehensively update antiquated infrastructure.

I'm a scientist, USF M.S. in Environmental Management. Retired from CDFW, I was a facilitator and working groups member: Statewide Phytophthora, Wood for Salmon, Marbled Murrelet Zone 6, and Strategic Planning. Program positions: Habitat Conservation-CESA, Natural Community Conservation Planning, liaison to the SFPUC, and Timber Conservation.

I created a wolf education program, lecturing at universities, land trusts, and Yosemite ranger campfires. At the Bay Area Wildlife Society Chapter (11 counties), I was Conservation Committee Chair and a Board member. I was a seasonal nesting bird docent on Alcatraz, and Marine Mammal Center Friday crew member.

I enjoy backpacking/hiking/camping, and whitewater rafting, including guiding for SClub SF Inner-City Outings for deaf, blind, and inner-city teens.

I'm founder/co-chair of Ukiah's Western Hills Firewise Community, and served as a Commissioner of Paths, Open Space, & Creeks.

At the Resource Renewal Institute under CA Secretary of Resources, Huey Johnson, I monitored global sustainability efforts, worked w/New Zealand's Resource Management Act creator, met with Environmental Ministers of Strategy in The Netherlands, and facilitated NYC UN Commission for Sustainability round table discussions.

Larry Glass: Hi, I'm Larry Glass and a long-time environmental advocate. My environmental activism started after the first earth day, expanding from civil rights and anti-war involvement. I've a wide knowledge of local environmental issues and experience as a community leader.

I'm currently the Executive Director of Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment (SAFE). I've been involved with that organization since 1980 in a leadership capacity. I am currently Board Secretary, Forest Policy Advisor, and Public Lands Director for the North Coast Environmental Center. I've served in various capacities in leadership with that organization since the late '70s. I also serve on our Redwood Chapters' North Group Board of Directors. I was elected to the Eureka City Council and served four years (2006-2010).

I am a resident of both Trinity and Humboldt Counties. My Trinity County property is surrounded by The Shasta-Trinity National Forest. I'm a founding member of the Trinity County Collaborative which has been meeting since 2013. I am deeply involved in forest issues and have a very good working knowledge of our northern forests and ecosystems. I'm an expert in forest practices on federally owned lands and well-informed on private lands.

My first jobs were working for radio stations, as a programmer and disk jockey. In 1971 I moved to Northern California for a job at a Eureka radio station. That same year I parlayed music knowledge and my previous experience in working for record stores to start my own successful business of 40 years, while defending the environment.

Lake Group

Eliot Hurwitz: I am seeking re-election to the Executive Committee of the Lake Group Sierra Club, having had the honor of serving our local environmental community in this role for the past three years.

My lifelong commitment to environmental policy, climate resilience, and sustainable development spans over three decades. Earlier in my career, I served in Washington, D.C., with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), working on coastal zone policy and contributing to national initiatives like the Clinton/Gore President's Council for Sustainable Development. Later, in the Bay Area and Napa County, I led strategic long-range planning focused on climate protection initiatives, regional sustainability coalitions, and comprehensive bicycle infrastructure.

Since moving to Lake County in 2015, my focus has been on local disaster resilience and community redevelopment. Following the devastating Valley Fire, my wife and I co-founded the Seigler Springs Community Redevelopment Association (SSCRA) to help rebuild our neighborhood with an emphasis on sustainability, land stewardship, tribal partnerships and long-term fire safety.

During my time on the Executive Committee, I have worked to bring this deep background in intergovernmental collaboration, strategic planning, and grassroots organizing to protect Lake County's unique natural resources. I look forward to continuing advocating for robust climate action, regional conservation, and resilient local infrastructure.

I hold a B.A. in Anthropology from Harvard University with studies in biology and botany. I respectfully ask for your vote to continue serving our community.

Cont'd on page 7

Candidate Statements *(cont'd from page 6)*

Mendocino Group

Rixanne Wehren: My main interest in working with the Mendocino group is to ensure that coastal public access, scenic resources, and environmental habitats are adequately protected. This involves following the MC Planning Local Coastal Plan and the CA Coastal Commission issues, commenting in writing and in person and following up with the developments as built. I've been involved in this effort for 30 years. I appreciate your vote for my candidacy.

Deb Sally: I am excited to help the Mendocino Group take on the challenges that have been going on for decades in this county and beyond. I currently serve as the vice-chair of the Redwood Chapter and sit on both the water and forest committees in the chapter. I have also served as the Chair of the Lake Group of the Sierra Club since 2022. I moved to Albion last year and have become active in the efforts to change the mandate of the Jackson and other Demonstration State Forests. I have been involved in various aspects of restoring the Eel River and removing the dams that are hindering the native fish populations from reaching important spawning grounds. I am interested in becoming more active along the Mendocino Coast especially pertaining to river and watershed health.

Napa Group

Emily Bit

Skylar Waite

Paulina Viera Zambrano

(No candidate statements submitted.)

North Group

Elaine Gorman: Elaine Gorman has returned to Humboldt County after a 40-year hiatus. She has been active with the Motherlode Chapter, Yokuts Group, as an outings leader and member of the Yokuts ExCom. She looks forward to hiking in Humboldt County.

Dana Utman: I would like to thank everyone who had the faith to elect me last time as chair of the North Group. It has been an honor to serve alongside other Sierra Club members on our mission to create a healthier planet. I am requesting your vote again to continue this task because we have much more work to do- building our volunteer base, establishing outdoor hikes on a permanent basis, being more politically active, and telling our story so that we can let others know the good work we have accomplished over the years.

For those who don't know me, I have a bachelor's degree in resource planning and interpretation from Cal Poly Humboldt. I was employed with California State Parks which included work as a park interpreter, and I am a member of the *National Association of Interpreters* and a certified interpretive guide. My careers also included being a United States letter carrier and serving as branch president, and district officer for the California Association of Letter Carriers. My passions are writing, landscape photography, and enjoying the great outdoors.

Why do I love the outdoors? John Muir said it better than I can: "Our spirit needs wilderness to breathe."

Solano Group

Jim DeKloe: I have served as the Chair of the Solano Group for the last year. Solano County faces multiple environmental challenges, but I have focused mainly on the greatest challenge: the Silicon Valley billionaire-backed California Forever sprawling proposal to build a city of 400,000 people on the best protected farmland in California. This illogical land speculation scheme, that we have nicknamed Oligarch City, generates many environmental threats. A component proposes the conversion of a currently unspoiled part of the Delta into the largest industrial shipyard in the Country. The land in path of this development contains half of the vernal pool and California native grassland in the County; this represents a significant portion of these sensitive and habitats remaining in California. And one of the main issues is "who gets to make the decision?" Under Solano County law, approval of this project must go to the voters of the County. After polling showed an overwhelming opposition, the billionaires shifted strategies to unethically pursue annexation through Suisun City. This undermines the direct democracy requirement of approval.

The 20,000 to 25,000 page Environmental Impact Report is about to be released. I would like to lead the Sierra Club's analysis of the potential impacts of this monster project and the formal written response.

Professionally my training is as a biologist, and recently retired after teaching biology and biotechnology at Solano Community College. As part of that program we have been working on reinventing industrial processes to promote a circular bioeconomy.

Bonnie Hamilton: I would be honored to continue to serve on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club Solano Group which I've served for the past 6 years. I've been a Sierra Club member for as long as I can remember, and I'm deeply engaged in climate action and environmental policy.

During my tenure on the Executive Committee, I've worked to help pass climate friendly state legislation and to preserve laws that protect our air, water, soil and sensitive habitats. I've worked on policy that limits new fossil fuel extraction and offshore drilling, that remediates low producing wells, and establishes health safety setbacks from oil and gas activity for sensitive locations such as homes, schools, daycares and hospitals, as well as taken other actions.

Cont'd on page 8

Candidate Statements *(cont'd from page 6)*

Bonnie Hamilton/Solano Group (cont'd)

I'm a pediatrician and practice in Solano County. I'm involved in organized medicine at the local, state and federal level and work with other healthcare professionals to bring the issue of the climate crisis to the forefront of the medical community.

I serve on the Board of SF Bay Physicians for Social Responsibility as well as on the Steering Committee of the Medical Society Consortium for Climate and Health. I'm a Climate Reality Leader, serve on the Leadership Team of the Bay Area Chapter and on the California Coalition. I also serve on the Board of Sustainable Solano.

I'm committed to serving the community, reversing the climate crisis, and to helping create a socially just human presence on our beautiful planet Earth. I respectfully ask for your vote.

Paul Theiss: I would be honored to continue to serve on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club Solano Group which I've served for the past 6 years. I've been a Sierra Club member for as long as I can remember, and I'm deeply engaged in climate action and environmental policy.

Paul Theiss has served on the Solano Group's Executive Committee for four years. He strengthened the Group's campaign against California Forever by gaining increased support from the Redwood ~~Chapter and the State organization of the~~ Sierra Club. He augments local efforts to prepare for sea level rise and Representative Garamendi's plan to increase the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. To prevent urban sprawl and increase the supply of affordable housing, he works to implement Vallejo's Housing Element and develop Mare Island as an affordable, walkable community with jobs close to housing. He also has worked to expand the Sierra Club's local membership and engage new volunteers in work that's meaningful to them. This election year he's served on the Solano Group's Interview Committee, selecting candidates for public office who will oppose California Forever. During the next two years the struggle may come to a head. He hopes to continue the campaign toward victory.

Joan Marquand-Willse: I am new to the Sierra Club, drawn to the Solano Group in 2025 in its work to prevent California Forever/Flannery Group's planned megacity on agricultural land. I am interested in serving on the Sierra Club Solano Group Executive Committee.

In 2021 I retired from a career in administrative support, having worked in private businesses and city government. With time now my own, I follow several of my passions by joining organizations: for nature and enjoying the outdoors through the Sierra Club, the Winged Migration Expo, and the Solano SPCA; for service, through the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties and church projects; for neighborhood positivity, through the Vacaville Neighborhood Associations. Also, since I expect government to be just and responsive in its care of people and places, I attend city meetings to be informed and then to speak up on issues.

I also have a passion for traveling. My husband and I take at least one road trip through part of the U.S. each year and include visiting National Parks and Historic Sites. Last June we covered 6300 miles between Vacaville, CA and Ohio/Kentucky/Tennessee. We have also enjoyed international travels in Europe, Japan and Australia. So much beauty and cultural elements to see, learn about and enjoy—and protect and preserve for everyone! There's lots we can do and I would be happy to join the Sierra Club Solano Group's Executive Committee to use my skills and experience in our work.

Sonoma Group

Neil Hancock: I became a lifetime Sierra Club member in 1993, and I have been active on the Redwood Chapter Ex-Comm. This year, I was appointed to fill a seat on the Sonoma Group Ex-Comm, and I ask for your vote to continue serving on the Sonoma Group Ex-Comm.

I've been active with local environmental issues since moving to Sonoma County in 1995. This has meant advocating for active transportation, such as more walkable and bikeable streets. Pedestrian, rolling, and cycling safety are often forgotten in the complexity of road building, yet incorporating safety features during the planning stage requires relatively little effort. Making it enjoyable to move around locally and access public transit helps reduce the pollution generated by gas-guzzling vehicles.

Professionally, as a software engineer, I have worked in telecommunications and, more recently, in remote stream monitoring—supporting efforts to track the health of our streams and rivers. This work has led me to advocate for the ecological integrity of our waterways, which serve as crucial indicators of environmental health. On a personal note, it was a joy to donate land behind our house along the upper Laguna de Santa Rosa to complete a walking and biking trail that is now widely used by the local community.

I have also volunteered as a member of the Cotati Planning Commission for over 14 years, striving to promote environmentally sensitive choices. While achieving this balance is often challenging and much work remains, I am committed to pushing for sustainable progress.

Shirley Johnson:

Sierra Club Member Since 2003

I wish to continue serving the Sonoma Group and Sierra Club as a whole.

My journey began with an internship for Friends of SMART in 2003 for college credit. I was starting my second career at college as an environmental undergrad.

While the workload over the last twenty years has been extensive, it is a privilege to stand alongside such tireless advocates. I am eager to continue our collective work to enjoy, protect, and advocate for our planet.



Vote as if Your Democracy Depends on It

Sierra Club Endorsements

The right to vote is the basis for democracy and is the foundation for our other rights as American citizens. When our fundamental rights are under threat, it is all the more important to exercise them and in that process to help preserve them.

PLEASE VOTE EARLY. The clearest message we can send to those who would undermine our right to vote is to use our voices to make our choice clear: We will not submit to fear and attacks on our way of life, but will exercise our democratic rights. **See the full list of Sierra Club endorsements in this issue of the Redwood Needles on p. 10.**

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Environmental Candidates Provide Hope

I've had the privilege of meeting several of our local Sierra Club endorsees during the Redwood Chapter's process of determining endorsements, and we are fortunate to have really excellent people running to represent us who consistently stand up for the environment. Hopefully, you are aware of the good work our endorsed incumbents have been doing on our behalf. We face increasing threats to our local environment - to our oceans (drilling and deep sea mining plans by the current federal administration); from climate change impacts (sea level rise, flooding, wildfires, extreme weather events); by those undermining CEQA and federal environmental protections; and in numerous other areas. We need elected officials who will tackle these hazards head on and be the leaders we need.

We have several Sierra Club endorsed candidates running in contested races without an incumbent. **Jackie Elward**, currently on the Rohnert Park City Council, is running for Assembly District 12 which includes the southern part of Sonoma County. Jackie has a solid environmental track record in Rohnert Park, including working to pass the local Urban Growth Boundary and Rohnert Park's Environmental Justice Element. Elward has also been endorsed by current Assemblymember Damon Connolly (he's designated as a 2025 Environmental Legislative Champion by Sierra Club California and is running for the State Senate Second District seat). Elward is well aligned with Sierra Club on environmental issues. Visit https://www.jackie4assembly.com/join to get involved and to help elect her.



Jackie Elward

Sonoma County has a real opportunity with the two Sierra Club endorsed Supervisor candidates in the Second District's **Joanna Paun** and the Fourth District's **Melanie Bagby**, who together with current Supervisor Chris Coursey will be able to create significant positive environmental change. Sonoma County's General Plan is being updated, which means crucial decisions will be made by the incoming Board members about growth and land use.

Joanna Paun has supported a variety of environmental projects while on the Petaluma City Schools Board of Trustees, including "greening" school facilities, improving carbon impacts with Safe Routes to Schools and purchasing electric school buses, and by prioritizing environmental education for students. Paun is strong on equity issues, and supports IOLERO and oversight of the Sheriff's department, as well as supporting protection of the environment. We look forward to her championing of environmental causes as a Supervisor. Visit https://www.electjoannapaun.com/issues to find out more about Paun's campaign and ways to help.

Melanie Bagby's past work on Cloverdale's City Council is impressive. She has a strong record of protecting agriculture and open space lands, and on water issues. Bagby's vision for county transit supports SMART but also east-west transit solutions for Sonoma County. Clean energy and equity are also key elements she continues to support. Visit https://www.melaniebagby.com/volunteer for opportunities to help elect Melanie Bagby, and to find out more about how she plans to protect the environment.

Solano County is facing the looming threat of *California Forever*, the group that intends to build a city the size of Oakland on agricultural land. **Dr. Michael Silva** is a candidate for Solano County's 4th District Board of Supervisors that Sierra Club has endorsed. Dr. Silva is committed to preserving Solano County's agricultural lands and water. Visit https://www.silvaforsolano.com/join_the_campaign to help.

Sierra Club strongly encourages you to support these candidates with your vote, and, if possible, to visit their websites listed above to find out more about them and to help their campaigns. There are a number of ways to help - donations, yard signs, spreading the word on social media, canvassing with candidates and more. See the full listing of endorsed candidates, propositions, and local measures in this issue of the Redwood Needles. Electing these endorsed candidates is a way to protect the environment right here at home.

– Mary Davison, RC Political Chair

Endorsements

U. S. Congress:
CD 01 Mike McGuire
CD 02 Jared Huffman
CD 04 Mike Thompson
CD 08 John Garamendi

Statewide Offices:
Secretary of State Shirley Weber
State Controller Malia Cohen
Treasurer Eleni Kounalakis
Attorney General Rob Bonta
Insurance Commissioner Ben Allen
Superintendent of Public Instruction Richard Barrera

State Legislature:
Senate District 2 Damon Connolly
Assembly District 2 Chris Rogers
Assembly District 12 Jackie Elward

Board of Equalization:
District 2 - Sally Lieber

Statewide Ballot Propositions:
Proposition 1: Authorizes Bonds for Housing Affordability Programs SUPPORT

Proposition 4: Repeals Prohibition Against Public Funding of Election Campaigns SUPPORT

Proposition 5: Changes Recall Election Process for Statewide Officers SUPPORT

Proposition 39: Prohibits Citizens from Voting Unless They Present Government-Issued Identification OPPOSE

Proposition 43: Limits Voters' Ability to Raise Revenues for Local Government Services OPPOSE

Proposition 45: Modifies Environmental Review for Certain Projects OPPOSE

Local Offices:

Solano County Board of Supervisors
District 4 Dr. Michael Silva
Solano County Benicia City Council — Kari Birdseye
Solano County Benicia City Council — Terry Scott
Solano County Rio Vista City Council —Rick Dolk
Solano County Suisun City Council — Katrina Garcia
Solano County Suisun City Council — Princess Washington
Solano County Vacaville Mayor — Sarah Chapman

Cont'd on back page



Wouldn't it be great if only projects with positive outcomes for all were ever built? But that's not the reality we face, and as we're all aware, corporations are designed to maximize profit and minimize costs - even if the costs to a community are high.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the state's bedrock environmental protection law since 1970. While some streamlining has occurred since then (such as for infill housing, transit, climate infrastructure, along with a few other elements) CEQA's fundamental goals remain the same. California's Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation website states:

"CEQA requires public agencies to "look before they leap" and consider the environmental consequences of their discretionary actions. CEQA is intended to inform government decision makers and the public about the potential environmental effects of proposed activities and to prevent significant, avoidable environmental damage."

CEQA protects the environment, public health and safety. Transparency and public participation are key aspects of this law. Given the current federal administration's attack on multiple national environmental protections, this is an especially horrible time to weaken CEQA.

Prop. 45 guts key CEQA's protections, including reducing environmental review, curtailing the public's input on projects, limiting a court's ability to intervene on damaging projects, and impeding impact and mitigation analysis. Prop. 45 includes nothing about lowering costs for consumers; indeed, there are potential long-term costs that could be significant.

The impartial analysis by the California state legislative analyst describes the potentially significant but uncertain future impacts of Prop. 45:

"***Negative Environmental Impacts.*** To the degree that Proposition 45's changes to project review and court challenge procedures lead to approval of projects with negative environmental impacts that would not have otherwise occurred, government agencies could face higher costs to respond to those impacts."

Among the top donors supporting Prop. 45 is "Building a Better California" which is backed by Google's Sergey Brin and venture capitalist L. John Doerr III. Other top donors for Prop. 45 include building industry and realtor associations, and utility companies.

Prop. 45 allows development near you without your current protections and ability to participate in the process. Environmentalists are united against Prop 45.

Please vote NO!

Mary Davison, Redwood Chapter Political Chair

Telling Our Stories

"The one that tells the story rules the world"- Native American Hopi proverb

By Dana Utman, North Group Chair

Climate change is nature's way of saying: "We need to talk." But is anyone listening?

If we are going to make people pay attention about extreme terrestrial heat, rising oceans, species die offs, glacial melts, wildfire rampages and more, then we need to keep talking about climate change and we need to get louder. We need to tell our stories. Why do they matter and what difference will it make?

The stories we tell can be a form of narrative activism. We all have personal stories. Storytelling is a powerful tool in the fight against climate change. Effective storytelling transforms what can seem like abstract science into relatable human experiences, and so it humanizes issues. By focusing on one's personal story rather than impersonal data, we can bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and the urgent need for behavioral change. We can *inspire action and foster a deeper understanding* of climate impacts and solutions.

When we tell our stories we touch the heart, more than the mind. Storytelling can elicit oxytocin, the love hormone, from listeners which promotes empathy. It creates the same feeling you get from hugging people and giving birth, so it can promote social bonding.



John Muir founded the Sierra Club in 1892. He created a new language to describe nature combining poetry with scientific observation. He used descriptive imagery, ecological insights, spiritual connection and nature as a source of wisdom. For example, instead of saying we need to preserve the wilderness, you can say what he did: "Our spirit needs wilderness to breathe."

His words in the books he wrote inspired many, including President Theodore Roosevelt. In 1903 Muir convinced Roosevelt to visit him in Yosemite. While camping they ended up having a three-day conversation about the park's beauty, that culminated near Bridalveil Falls in a meadow. Their shared joy led the president to seek federal protection for the park as well as for five others, including 18 national monuments, 55 national bird sanctuaries and wildlife refuges and 150 national forests.

I spent time as a state park interpreter, and I loved conducting campfire talks. Telling stories to an audience of campers in an outdoor amphitheater at night with the glow of a fire was lots of fun, but it was especially so because of the happy faces that I saw. I could tell that it was a magical experience for the listeners. Why do parks have interpreters? One reason is to help protect the parks. If park visitors fall in love with their surroundings they will want to preserve them forever.

I learned the art of interpretation at Cal Poly Humboldt and as a member of the Association of Interpreters. Yet I was unprepared for the pandemic when it struck in March of 2020. We had to conduct our park talks via our cell phones to a remote audience. I couldn't see their faces, and they had to text me to ask a question. It didn't feel the same because I couldn't tell my story from the heart, and I imagined that it was the same for them.

Nicholas Boothman, who has spent more than 35 years studying the ways in which all types of different people connect, communicate, and succeed said: "It's much easier to be convincing if you care about your topic. Figure out what's important to you about your message and speak from the heart."

So tell your personal story and never stop. Tell it over and over again until it's heard by the whole world.

Chapter ExCom (vote for 2)

- ☐ Jeanne Wetzel-Chinn
- ☐ Larry Glass

Lake ExCom (vote for 1)

- ☐ Eliot Hurwitz

Mendocino ExCom (vote for 3)

- ☐ Bruce Hilbach
- ☐ Deb Sally
- ☐ Rixanne Wheren

Napa ExCom (vote for 3

- ☐ Emily Bit
- ☐ Skylar Waite
- ☐ Paulina Viera Zambrano

North ExCom (vote for 2)

- ☐ Elaine Gorman
- ☐ Dana Utman

Solano ExCom (vote for 5)

- ☐ Jim DeKloe
- ☐ Bonnie Hamilton
- ☐ Elizabeth Patterson
- ☐ Paul Theiss
- ☐ Joan Marquand-Wilse

Sonoma ExCom (vote for 2)

- ☐ Neil Hancock
- ☐ Shirley Johnson

Redwood Needles

Sierra Club

Redwood Chapter

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August Ties the Record for Earth's Hottest Month on the Books

(from NYT https://bit.ly/4xS7qZ3

Last month tied July 2023 as the planet's hottest month on record, European scientists said on Thursday, as human-caused warming pushes the Northern Hemisphere's muggiest, most uncomfortable time of year into new realms of stickiness and discomfort.

Dangerous heat hammered Europe for the fifth time since May. Temperatures soared into the triple digits across the southern United States from California to Texas. South Korea recorded its highest temperature reading in modern history: 108.5 degrees Fahrenheit in the southern city of Yangsan on Aug. 2.

August tied the record for the oceans' hottest month in history as well, scientists said, as El Niño conditions caused warm water to accumulate at the surface of the tropical Pacific. This extra warmth will spread to the rest of the planet in the months ahead, making the globe's average temperatures likely to break more records through the end of the year and into 2027.

"These observations show how climate change is driving extremes across both the atmosphere and the oceans," said Samantha Burgess, a climate scientist at Copernicus, the European Union's climate monitoring service, which published the analysis of August temperatures. "The impacts of these conditions are increasingly being felt by communities, economies and ecosystems across the world." *(continue at NYT website https://bit.ly/4xS7qZ3)*

Endorsements (cont'd from p. 10)

Solano County Vacaville City Council District 6 —Jeanette Wylie

Solano County Vallejo City Council District 2 —Diosdado "J.R." Matulac

Solano County Vallejo City Council District 4 —Charles Palmares

Solano County Vallejo City Council District 5 —Rebekah Truemper

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors District 2 —Joanna Paun

Sonoma County Board of Supervisors District 4 —Melanie Bagby

Sonoma County Rohnert Park City Council District 5 —Susan Hollingsworth Adams

Local Ballot Measures:

Napa County Measure B:
Wildfire Preparedness, Watershed Protection and Open Space Preservation Act of 2026 —SUPPORT

Sonoma County Measure H:
Parks Improvement, Water Quality, and Fire Safety Measure Transactions and Use Tax Ordinance - Extension —SUPPORT