

Redwood Needles



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Volume 59 Number 1

Newsletter of the Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club

February/March 2018

Let's Stop Offshore Oil Drilling in its Tracks

BY VICTORIA BRANDON, REDWOOD CHAPTER CHAIR

Since assuming power nearly a year ago, the Trump administration has proposed one assault on the environment after another, with actions ranging from withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord to wholesale cancellation of protections for sensitive public lands.

Now, after months of threats, they have announced plans to accept bids for offshore oil leases everywhere along our coasts except for Florida. Six sites in California would be immediately included, two in the south, two in the center, and two here on the North Coast. Californians have already seen coastal drilling foul our pristine beaches, destroy fragile wildlife habitat, and undercut the visitor-based economy that so many coastal communities depend upon.

As detailed in a visit to the Chapter Executive Committee by Oceans Foundation Director Richard Charter on January 6, we've been lucky so far in this region. Thanks largely to the efforts of the Sierra Club, drilling proposals along the Sonoma and Mendocino coasts were defeated in the 1970's, and efforts by Reagan administration Secretary of the Interior James Watt to open coastal areas to drilling came to nothing when Congress refused to appropriate the necessary funding, and then imposed a moratorium that was renewed annually from 1981 to 2009.

Then in June 2015 coastal advocates breathed a massive sigh of relief when President Obama authorized the expansion of the Cordell Banks and Greater Farallones National Marine

Sanctuaries, more than doubling their size and establishing what was intended to be permanent protection for the most fragile parts of the Sonoma and Mendocino coasts to north of Point Arena. At the Gualala celebration of this decree Congressman Jared Huffman speculated about pushing the boundaries even farther north: "there's no logical stopping point short of the Arctic."

Enter Donald Trump. The "America First Energy Policy" (enacted April 28, 2017) incorporates direct threats to permanently protected lands, including a directive to Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to "review" five National Marine Sanctuary designations, including Cordell Banks and Greater Farallones. The Point Arena Basin, which is half in and half out of the Sanctuary, may be particularly at risk.

We can't let this potentially catastrophic travesty take place.

In a typically mean-spirited and cynical way, only one hearing is proposed in each coastal state—and they are all sited in state capitals, NOT in the coastal communities where massive attendance from an outraged public would be likely. California's one and only Bureau of Ocean Energy Management hearing will be held from 3-7PM on February 8, at the obscure Tsakopoulos Library Galleria, 828 I Street in Sacramento.

The Sierra Club and our partner organizations will fight this outrage in every possible way from the submission of expert comments to possible litigation, and we need your help.



Richard Charter addressing the Redwood Chapter ExCom in January.

What You Can Do:

- Send a message urging BOEM to hold additional meetings in California, including some in coastal areas <https://sierra.secure.force.com/actions/California?actionId=AR0099758&id=70131000001iOulAAU>

- Call or write your Congressional representative to let them know you oppose offshore drilling and to urge them to demand additional hearings

- Most important of all, plan to attend the February 8 meeting, and RSVP to BOEM to let them know you're coming. <https://www.boem.gov/National-Program-Participate/>

Besides the hearing itself, a massive protest is planned on the steps of the State Capitol. If you can attend the hearing or rally or both, please click the link to RSVP on the Chapter home page, www.sierraclub.org/redwood. The Chapter is also hoping to organize some carpools or to provide bus or van transport from Santa Rosa. If you'd like a ride, or if you could provide transportation to others, please send an email to vbrandon@lakelive.info.

Sierra Club Endorses 2018 Napa County Watershed and Oak Woodland Protection Initiative

BY CHRIS BENZ, NAPA GROUP CHAIR

Sierra Club has endorsed a ballot initiative to improve protections for Napa County's watershed and oak woodlands. The initiative faces voters in June, and, if passed, it will be a historic, precedent-setting measure that will set a limit on how many acres of oak woodlands can be permanently removed.

The Napa County Watershed and Oak Woodland Protection Initiative of 2018 focuses on land zoned for "Agriculture, Watershed, and Open Space," which makes up the hillsides to the east and west as well as the southern Carneros region of Napa County. The eastern hillsides are a critical watershed area, where the county's five domestic water reservoirs are located. The water flow from the hillsides is essential to feeding the streams and groundwater of the Napa Valley floor, supplying the needs of farms, residents and wildlife.

Napa residents and environmental groups have long been concerned about increasing

development in the hillsides (primarily for vineyards) resulting in the loss of native oak woodlands—which provide vital eco-services such as carbon storage, native habitat, and soil stabilization—and the diversion of groundwater from rural residents and native habitat. This concern intensified with the County's approval in December 2016 of the 209-acre Walt Ranch Vineyard Development, which will cut down 14,000 trees and sink new wells. (Sierra Club Napa Group is currently in litigation over the Walt Ranch Environmental Impact Report.)

In 2015, Napa residents led by Jim Wilson and Mike Hackett formed a committee to develop this initiative to protect the watersheds and woodlands. Though they collected enough signatures, an election code technicality kept it off the 2016 ballot. A partnership of leaders of the Napa Valley Vintners retooled the initiative for the 2018 ballot to include clearly defined protections and to align with

"Club Endorses Initiative" cont. on page 3

Just and Resilient Future Fund

Helping Vulnerable Communities, Building Future Resilience

BY TOM ROTH,

REDWOOD CHAPTER CONSERVATION CHAIR

In October 2017 disastrous wildfires roared through Sonoma, Napa, Lake and Mendocino Counties, burning over 200,000 acres, destroying more than 7,000 homes, displacing thousands of people and killing more than two dozen. It was the largest wildfire disaster ever to hit California.

In response to this massive catastrophe, the Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club joined with an alliance of community organizations, the Another World is Possible Coalition, to establish the Just and Resilient Future Fund (JRFF). The goals of the fund are twofold: First, provide funding for immediate recovery initiatives for the most vulnerable fire victims, and second, (perhaps uniquely) support longer term projects that build more healthy and resilient communities to better prepare us for future disasters.

Implementation of the first goal was kicked off with a \$50,000 grant to the Farmers'

Alliance – Community Alliance with Family Farmers' program to assist family farmers who suffered losses in the fire and \$25,000 to the Undocufund which provides assistance to undocumented workers who may not qualify or apply for traditional relief programs. Half of the funds that went to Undocufund helped pay for a much needed case worker to manage individual grants. JRFF does not provide for individual assistance grants, but it funds non-profits who do.

The Coalition is currently preparing guidelines for projects that achieve the fund's second goal, building community resilience. The Coalition has discussed possible grants for fire resistance and prevention education, innovative construction and landscaping projects, and improved warning systems among others.

The Redwood Chapter's coalition partners include: The Arlene Francis Center for Spirit,

"Building Resilience" cont. on page 3

For more Redwood Chapter information: <http://www.sierraclub.org/redwood>

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Outings

Fri. Feb. 9 - Mojave National Preserve Restoration Event.

Join the California/Nevada Desert Committee and the National Park Service for a restoration project in the Mojave National Preserve (MNP) on February 9, one day before the Desert Committee meeting on Saturday and Sunday. We will gather on Friday at 8:45 am, work through the afternoon, and adjourn in time to reach Shoshone for the dinner hour. Our primary task will be to remove "culturally planted species" (tamarisk, fan palm, sunflowers) at the Desert Studies Center, Zzyzx. Contact Sid Silliman for project details, directions, camping options, and to RSVP (gssilliman@cpp.edu). Don't miss this annual, pre-Shoshone service opportunity.

Tues. Feb. 13 - North Group Film Showing.

In lieu of its regular monthly ExCom meeting at the Adorni Center, North Group instead will show a free film at a larger venue. Join us between 7 and 9 p.m. in the West Wing of the Turf Club at Redwood Acres Fairground, 3750 Harris Street, Eureka, to view "Water and Power: A California Heist." This 80-minute documentary for National Geographic "reveals the story of how a handful of water barons

gained control of the state's most precious resource, while drought and a groundwater crisis left local homeowners with dry wells. From a 1990s backroom rewrite of the State Water Project through a breaking investigation into illicit transfers of groundwater, the film peels back the layers on a complex world most of us know nothing about and would never question unless our taps ran dry." A discussion will follow the film. For more information, contact Gregg at (707) 826-3740.

Sat. Feb. 24 - Solano Group. Benicia State Recreation Area.

This hike takes us along tidal marshlands to bluffs with great views of the Carquinez Straits. Part of the trail is on flat paved road, part on a dirt trail with a moderate elevation gain. Dogs on leash allowed. Bring appropriate clothing for the conditions, water, snacks. Trail can be windy at times. Class M- 4- B. Meet: 9AM Main park entrance off Columbus Parkway. There is a parking fee. By reservation only. Leader Doug 925-366-9612, Rain cancels.

Sat. Feb. 24 - North Group. Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park Ossagon to Carruthers Cove Hike.

Come and hike this trail from

south to north, a little over two miles of beach. We will drop off a car at the Carruthers end, and the present tide table shows an ebbing tide conducive to this late-winter coastal adventure. Bring lunch and water. Class M-4.5-A. Carpools: Meet 9 a.m. at Ray's shopping center in Valley West. Leader Ned, nedforsyth48@gmail.com, (707) 825-3652 message phone. Heavy rain cancels.

Sun. Feb. 25 - Sonoma Group. Shiloh Regional Park Hike.

We'll take a scenic and fairly slow tour around Shiloh Regional Park, via Creekside, Pond, Canyon and Big Leaf trails, to see how the park is recovering from the fires, about 4 miles with some steady uphill. Dress in layers for the weather. Trail may be slippery in places, so wear good hiking shoes. Poles are helpful. Bring water and lunch or snacks. There is a \$7 parking fee. On street parking is available. Class M-4-B. Meet at 10:30 am at Shiloh Regional Park parking lot, 5740 Fought Road, Windsor (at the end of Shiloh Road). Leader: Carl Inglin 707 538 8271 or chinglin@sonic.net Rain cancels. Heavy rain the day before the hike will also cancel, as the trails may be too muddy.

Mon.-Thur. Feb 26-March - 1 Death Valley Tour and Carcamp.

The trip will begin in Shoshone near Death Valley at noon for a tour of the historic community and then primitive camping in the area. The next day we will go to China Ranch and hike in Amargosa Canyon. The third day we will drive through the heart of Death Valley visiting scenic sites and hiking some of the beautiful canyons. We will camp that night in the Furnace Creek area. The last morning we will hike the dunes and then head home. Details will be available later. To sign-up contact Carol Wiley at desertlily1@verizon.net or call 760-245-8734. Mojave Group/CNRCC Desert Committee

Wed.-Sun. Feb. 28-Mar. 4 - Joshua Tree National Park - Late Winter Weekend.

We will visit Joshua Tree National

Park when temperatures are cooler and wild flowers may be blooming. During our stay, we may explore palm oases, boulder areas, and desert canyons or climb peaks within the Park. We have the campsites from 12pm Wednesday until 12pm on Sunday. Hikes may require walking over rocky trails and some areas of rock scrambling off trail. Maximum hiking distance is 10 miles with up to 2000 feet of elevation gain. Some vehicle travel on dirt roads may be required. Cost is \$30 per person and includes 4 nights of camping. \$20 deposit required to confirm participation. There is an additional Park entrance fee of \$25 per vehicle. We may also take a guided tour of the historic Keys Ranch (\$10 per person extra). Group size limited to 18 people. Email or call leader for reservation information. Leader: Rich Juricich, rich.sierraclub@pacbell.net, 916-492-2181. Sacramento Group/CNRCC Desert Committee

Sat. Mar. 3 - Solano Group. Newell Open Space to Lynch Canyon Hike.

Join us as we hike through open grasslands to a ridge in the Lynch Canyon Open Space that has fantastic views of Mt. Tam to Mt Diablo to Mt St. Helena on a clear day. Bring sturdy shoes, water, lunch, sunscreen, hat, and clothing for windy weather as the ridgeline is exposed. Trail is on fire roads but is rutted and rough in places. There is a 600 feet elevation gain and loss. Class M-6-A. Meet: 10AM Newell Open Space Preserve in American Canyon. By reservation only. Leader Doug 925-366-9612.

Tue.-Fri. Mar. 20-23 - Mojave National Preserve Tour and Carcamp.

The outing will begin on Tuesday at noon at Sunrise Rock campground on Cima Road. That afternoon we will hike Teutonia Peak for scenic views of the area. (3 miles rd. trip.) The next day we will drive to the Rock House and hike the loop trail (1 mile) and then go the Midhills to camp. Thursday we will hike in the area. Friday we will go to Mitchell's

Cavern for a tour of the famous caverns at 11:00 am. Details will be available later. To sign up contact Carol Wiley at desertlily1@verizon.net or call 760-245-8734. Mojave Group/CNRCC Desert Committee

Sun. Mar. 25 - North Group. Humboldt Redwoods State Park Avenue of the Giants Hike.

Two separate trails, about a mile apart, take us to a view of the Eel River from High Rock (an actual rock along the river), and to a grove of stately redwoods about 1,000 feet above. Bring lunch and water. Springtime in the redwoods! Class M-5-A. Carpools: Meet 9 a.m. at Herrick Avenue Park & Ride in Eureka. Leader Ned, nedforsyth48@gmail.com, (707) 825-3652 message phone. Heavy rain cancels.

Sat. April 7 - Sonoma Group. Chanate Historical Walk.

The firestorm flew by many buildings close to where we will be walking. Join us as we explore the property sold by Sonoma County off Chanate Rd. for building and demolition projects. See this historic site before development. We will 1st visit the Bird Rescue Center as today is Open House (it survived the fire), see the site of Santa Rosa's 1st hospital, "WPA 1941" rock walls, the former Sutter hospital with the colorful tiles, the historical cemetery, and many historical buildings. If time permits we will walk by the Paulin Creek Preserve. Jeremy Nichols local historian will be our narrator. Other speakers may join us to speak about the evacuation. We will walk along paths with uneven surfaces and dirt trails so wear appropriate footwear. There are some hills. (please no wheelchairs or walkers) Class: E-2-A. Bring water and snacks. Meet 11 am (off County Farm Drive) by Bird Rescue Center 3430 Chanate Rd. in parking lot. Follow the one way loop with the rock walls and park in the area to your left as you approach the top. Leader Carol Vellutini 546-6308 carolvsr@sonic.net. Rain cancels.

Instructions to hikers

Outings will start not later than 15 minutes after scheduled meeting time. The leader is in charge of the trip and is responsible for your welfare and the good name of the Club. He/she must have your cooperation to make the trip safe, pleasant and rewarding. Never charge ahead of the leader and keep within sight or shouting distance of the person ahead of you so you do not miss an intersecting trail. Do not lag behind rear leader: if you need help, the rear leader will remain to assist you. Do not leave the group without the leader's permission. Be adequately equipped and prepared. You should carry lunch and liquids. Wear footwear appropriate for the outing. In most cases that would be hiking boots.

Guard against fire. Do not smoke on Sierra Club outings. Build fires only with the leader's permission, and extinguish them completely. Guns, pets, or radios are not to be brought on hikes.

The Sierra Club does not have insurance for carpooling arrangements and assumes no liability for them. Participants assume the risks associated with travel. Reimburse the carpool driver. Carpools are not part of the outing but a means of conserving natural resources.

All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver please go to: <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

Visitors are welcome

All Sierra Club trips are open to the public unless otherwise announced. You are free to bring all members of your family and guests. Children are usually welcome, but please call the leader to make sure it is an appropriate hike.

DIFFICULTY	MILEAGE	ELEVATION GAIN
E - Easy	Actual	A - Less than 1,000
M - Moderate	Mileage	B - 1,000 to 2,000
H - Hard		C - 2,000 to 3,000
S - Strenuous		D - over 3,000
V - Very Strenuous		

The actual mileage will be listed for each trip. Elevation gain will reflect the gain from the start of the hike to the highest point. If you need to know the cumulative gain, please contact the leader.

To submit outings write-ups

Send all outings write-ups to: Carol Vellutini, Outings Chair, (carolvsr@sonic.net) by the 8th of the month. All leaders must coordinate their outings with their Group Outings Chair.

CST 2087766-40. Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California.

Ratings for Outings Leaders: How fast or slow do you go?

Wonder if an outing leader walks fast or slow? Keep in mind that the leader's speed is but one part of hiking. How high up a mountain the hike starts, the total mileage and elevation gain (up hill) and loss (down hill) greatly affect the difficulty of a hike, regardless of how fast or slow you walk. If you have any doubts about being able to do a hike or have other questions, please call the leader to discuss your concerns. These ratings only serve as a guide and are not a substitute for you being in appropriate physical condition before participating in an outing.

Leaders are grouped according to how fast they normally hike. Please keep in mind that this info is to help you decide if a hike is right for you. The outing rating instructions to hikers is also important for participants to read. Look at the difficulty of the hike. If the rating is moderate with few or more frequent stops a fast pace hiker must hike slower to accommodate that rating.

Varies, see hike description for details: Jim Gannon Phil Kohlmetz Doug Tracey

Fast-pace with few or no stops: Carol Magill

Moderate-pace with few stops: Lorrie Lagasse Julie Kreis Paul Farley David Oliver

Moderate-pace with more frequent stops: Melinda Groom Val Nordeman Carol Vellutini Yvonne Kramer Brian Collett Nanette DeDonato Jonah Freedman Steve Devoto Ned Forsyth Pete McGee

Slower-pace: Allison Bronkall Carl Inglin

Volunteer Opportunity in Yosemite National Park

The Yosemite Conservation Heritage Center (formerly known as LeConte Memorial Lodge) is a National Historic Landmark building that represents the rich heritage of the Sierra Club in Yosemite Valley. The building houses several interpretive displays, a children's nature corner, a wonderful library, art projects and evening programs.

Since 1904 a curator and Sierra Club volunteers have provided information to park visitors. Today the program welcomes over 15,000 visitors to the Sierra Club's spiritual home in Yosemite Valley. Volunteers are currently needed in July, August and September 2018.

Volunteers spend a week from Saturday to Saturday in the park assisting the club's curator Bonnie Gisel, PhD. by interacting with park visitors and carrying on the Sierra Club tradition of helping others appreciate and protect our natural environment.

The volunteer workweek consists of up to 25 hours for service in the YCHC with Monday and Tuesday free days to explore Yosemite. This opportunity includes free admission to Yosemite National Park and free camping in a group campsite; and, is restricted to volunteers only—no family members, friends or pets are permitted. Camping is limited to tents only. Volunteers bring their food and supplies.

Potential volunteers must:

- Be current Sierra Club members
 - Be outgoing and comfortable interacting with park visitors
 - Have visited Yosemite within the last two years and have current park knowledge
 - Be familiar with current Sierra Club programs and initiatives
 - Be able to stand for up to 3 hours per day
- To become a volunteer at YCHC, please contact Bonnie Gisel, curator at Bonnie.Gisel@sierraclub.org.

Outings Chair Report

So this is my introduction for the Outings Chair Position. Let me say first that yesterday's hike was truly awesome and the weather of course cooperated in our endeavor to summit Sonoma Mountain. If only we made it to the top, right? I have a love of the outdoors and especially hiking and backpacking which goes back to my participation in BSA Troop 121 in Rincon Valley in East SR. One of the parents, Bill, was really into this area. During my time there I grew up hiking to Mt. Hood, a twenty mile hike around Annadel to the Sonoma Valley, as well as backpacking trips to the Trinity Alps and the high Sierra Nevada. Getting fresh air and exercising became a habit on a weekly basis. I loved to immerse myself in the serene settings and think clearly about where I was headed in my life goals and aspirations.

As time went on I went to college at SSU and graduated with a BA Degree in Spanish in May, 1997 and then got my credential to teach Spanish in May, 2007. I have worked as a CSR at SBC Pacific Bell and EDS, have taught Spanish in the East Bay Area (Walnut Creek and Hayward) and have been a professional tutor for over 22 years now in the subjects of Math, Spanish, English Composition, and also GED (more recently). My girlfriend and I moved to Rohnert Park from Vallejo this last August.

The Outings Chair Position has seemed a bit daunting in some ways, but I think I'm



New Redwood Chapter Outings Chair Louis Vas.

qualified to handle it. I look forward to meeting many of you and finding hike leaders, coordinating with them to provide great day and overnight hikes in our area and beyond. We are blessed in Sonoma County and other counties as well to have affordable, beautiful terrains with sweeping views to hike in. We can only wonder until we're there gazing below at our cities what the summit views are really like on mountains nearby. I hope to go to these special mountaintops in the near future with you. Now that we're done with the holidays and the stressful times, I plan to coordinate these events.

On that note, I plan to utilize Facebook and/or meetup.com to utilize technology in the coordination process.

Thank You,

—LOUIS VAS, REDWOOD CHAPTER OUTINGS CHAIR

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park, 2018



April 8-10; May 6-8; June 10-12; July 15-17; August 19-21; September 23-25; October 21-23

Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard tour of the enchanting Channel Islands. Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines, marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds—and an occasional whale. Watch for the highly endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or, just relax at sea. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. The cost, \$675, includes an assigned bunk and all meals, snacks, and beverages. A ranger/naturalist assigned by the national park will travel with us to help lead hikes, point out items of interest and give evening programs. Kayaking will be overseen by our concessionaire; all hikes will be on trails, class 1 terrain. This trip is a fundraiser to support the Sierra Club political program in California. To reserve space send a \$100 deposit, written to **California Sierra Club PAC** to Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., El Monte, CA 91732. For more information contact leaders: Joan Jones Holtz: jholtzhn@aol.com; 626-443-0706. Wayne Vollaire: avollaire1@gmail.com; 909-327-6825

Non-Sierra Club Outings & Events

The following activities and events are not sponsored nor administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no information about the planning of these activities and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of such activities. They are published because they may be of interest to the readers of this publication.

Sonoma County Regional Parks trail work days.

On the day of the project you can call 707-548-4424 for an update or if you get lost coming to the park. Your support and dedication to our County's trails really makes a big difference. To RSVP for any of these projects please call John at 707-565-3356. ParksVolunteer@sonoma-county.org

Garden Volunteer Days: First Friday of the Month, 9am – noon. Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa. Enjoy our native plant garden! Volunteers are essential in beautifying our site. Share your expertise or

learn new skills by getting involved today! http://lagunafoundation.org/volunteer_garden.html

Laguna Stewardship Days: Once a month on a Saturday from 9am - noon.

Details of the site location announced 2 weeks in advance of the workday (various sites along the Laguna) Help care for the Laguna and restore critical wildlife habitat! Joining the Laguna Stewards is a fun and meaningful way to volunteer while enjoying the outdoors.

http://lagunafoundation.org/volunteer_lagunastewards.html



Sonoma Group Report

Flame and Fortune in the American West

To help us think more deeply and broadly about the devastating fires here and across California, Sierra Club Sonoma Group partnered with Greenbelt Alliance to invite author Gregory Simon to share the findings in his recent book, *Flame and Fortune in the American West*. We gave Simon a tour of some of the burn areas, then held a brown bag session with about 30 environmental leaders, city and county officials, architects, housing advocates and community leaders. He returns on 7 pm, Saturday, March 10, for a free public event at Copperfield's Books at Montgomery Village in Santa Rosa.

Climate and Energy

Co-chair Tom Conlon recently met with Sup. Gorin about how to move the county forward on implementing the Climate Action Plan. With the county's focus on recovery from the fires, it is important to go beyond general ideas on climate and rebuilding to provide decision makers with specific policy priorities, such as solar and energy efficiency increases in buildings and higher density zoning. The City of Santa Rosa is not meeting its adopted energy efficiency goals and they need to be pushed to do so.

Rebuilding

The county and the cities are passing urgency measures to provide temporary housing, but also to fast-track new building in the burned areas and beyond. Most of these policies are coming fast and furious with very little time for public review and comment. For example, the county recently waived design review of new and larger homes in scenic lands. The planning director can approve them directly if they meet general design criteria. This could lead to new mini-mansions on fire prone



Professor Gregory Simon and Teri Shore viewing burned homes in Fountaingrove.

Photo by Shoshana Hebshi.

hillsides. The city of Santa Rosa just approved a brand new senior care facility called Emerald Isle on a wooded hilltop in the heart of the burn area in Fountaingrove. The Planning Commission and Design Review Board approved it despite concerns about fire risk and the fact it is in an area already officially "over concentrated" with senior centers that were evacuated with difficulty and two burned down.

Next Steps in Post-fire Planning

The county of Sonoma is holding public meetings in February to discuss new policies for a new wave of development and rebuilding after the fires. It is unclear at this time whether the county General Plan update will get underway as planned, or put on the back burner in favor a more rapid rebuild. The city of Santa Rosa has announced it will update its General Plan beginning in 2018. The city is also developing new citywide Resilient City Code, drafting a new Housing and Economic Development ordinance and advancing its Housing Action Plan.

Leading the Way on Critical Issues

Sonoma Group is initiating a series of evening gatherings with local experts to help develop Group policy positions on fire recovery, housing, and climate. Sierra Club wants to focus on specific policies to forward with elected leaders and decision makers. The dates and times will be announced soon. It's a great way to plug in and make a difference!

-TERI SHORE, SONOMA GROUP CHAIR



About 30 people joined brown bag lunch with author Gregory Simon. Photo by Shoshana Hebshi.

Redwood Chapter and Group Election Results

Chapter ExCom

Keith Kaulum
Victoria Brandon

Sonoma Group

Suzanne Doyle
Teri Shore
Tom Conlon

Solano Group

Joe Green-Heffern
Amy Yockus Hartman
Greg Peterson
Joe Feller

Mendocino Group

Mary Walsh

North Group

Ned Forsyth
Felice Page
Gregg Gold

Lake Group

Tricia Evans
Debi Sally
Victoria Brandon
Denise Rushing

Napa Group

Chris Benz
Tony Norris
Diane Shepp

Napa Group Report

Watershed and Oak Woodland Protection Initiative Endorsed

Sierra Club has announced its endorsement of the Watershed and Oak Woodland Protection Initiative, which as of this writing was awaiting certification by the County for the June ballot. See Chris Benz's article on page one of this issue, which outlines the vital contribution this initiative can make to improving the protections of our woodlands and watersheds.

After an absence of many years, the Napa Executive Committee is fortunate to welcome back Tony Norris. Tony has served the Napa community in many distinguished positions, including as a founding Director of the Parks and Open Space District, as a technical expert for the Flood Control District, on the Board of Friends of the Napa River, and as a participant in the Napa Community Flood Control Coalition, which was the midwife to our environmentally superior Napa River Flood Control Project.

At long last the court hearing for the disputed Walt Ranch EIR was scheduled for February 13th. Sierra Club has partnered with the national environmental advocacy group, the Center for Biological Diversity, in this fight. We are challenging the project on a range of issues, including threats to groundwater, contamination of surface waters, greenhouse gas effects of massive tree destruction, impacts on habitats of threatened species, such as the California Red-legged Frog, and the potential for development of multiple wineries and ranchettes on the parcels. If we prevail in this suit, we may set precedent for environmental protections in Napa County and beyond for decades to come. Our team is coordinating with other litigants, who include the Circle Oaks Homes Association, Circle Oaks Water District, and the Living Rivers Council. Sierra Club's Redwood Chapter recently voted a \$5000 grant to the Circle Oaks team to assist with their legal expenses.

Keep Informed on Napa Environmental Activities!

Get our monthly e-newsletter, by contacting us at scnapapam@gmail.com, and follow Napa Group on Facebook.

-NANCY TAMARISK, NAPA GROUP VICE CHAIR



Solano Breeze Corner

Covering Benicia, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun, Vacaville and Vallejo

sierraclubsolanogroup@gmail.com 707-319-6398

Mark Your Calendars!

The 22nd Annual San Francisco Bay Flyway Festival is coming soon! It is scheduled for February 9-11 at Mare Island, Vallejo. It features a Birding and Wildlife Expo and Mare Island outings. Solano Group needs volunteers-call Jane at 707 319-6398.

For more information on the Festival, contact Sarah Cain, Festival Coordinator at sarahcainflywayfest@gmail.com. (707) 241-4285.

Earth Day

On April 21, 2018, there will be various Earth Day cleanup events in the county, and nationwide. Check out the Solano RCD website at <http://www.solanorcd.org/employment-and-volunteer-opportunities/solano-county-cleanups.html>

Solano Group Meetings

Please attend the Solano Group meetings, usually on the

first Monday of each month. Our next dates are:

February 5, 2018, March 5, 2018, April 2, 2018

To confirm location, call Jane at 707-319- 6398

VALCORE Recycling and Paper Shredding updates:

Solano Group helps out with paper shredding every 3rd Saturday each month at 38 Sheridan Street, Vallejo from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There is a charge of \$.50 per pound (CASH or CHECK ONLY) of paper shredded. (Maximum: 100 pounds)

WEEKDAY SHREDDING from 10 am to 4 pm, closed 1 pm to 2 pm for lunch (CREDIT OR DEBIT ONLY).

Sierra Club volunteers help tend the money and direct traffic. Once a year is all we ask, and you only need work an hour or so. Volunteers get FREE shredding!

CONTRIBUTOR: JANE BOGNER EDITOR: GREG PETERSON

Redwood Chapter and all local Groups have a variety of volunteer opportunities. Visit www.sierraclub.org/redwood/get-involved for details or contact vbrandon@lakelive.info

What Is A Living Wage for Sonoma County?

Last year, California became the first state to approve a \$15-an-hour minimum wage. This minimum wage phases in over seven years: on January 1st of 2018, it will rise to \$11.00 an hour for large employers and \$10.50 an hour for businesses with 25 or fewer employees.

In addition, nearly two-dozen California cities have approved \$15 an hour minimum wage laws that phase-in more quickly—San Francisco by 2018, San Jose by 2019, and Los Angeles by 2020.

Today the minimum wage is not a living or self-sufficiency wage, and the difference between the two is often misunderstood. California first enacted a minimum wage in 1916, along with 9 other states, and the federal government did so in 1938. The purpose of minimum wage laws was to create a wage floor that provides an adequate standard of living for all workers.

In 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt declared: “No business which depends for existence on paying less than living wages to its workers has any right to continue in this country. By living wages I mean more than a bare subsistence level—I mean the wages of decent living.”

But neither the state nor federal minimum wage included an annual cost-of-living adjustment nor accounted for regional cost differences. Increasing the minimum wage requires legislative action—hence the purchasing power of the minimum has incrementally eroded. For the first time, the California legislature has mandated that after full phase-in (by 2023), the minimum wage will be raised annually based upon inflation.

Coastal California cities have enacted \$15 citywide minimums that phase in faster, to address the disparity in housing and other costs compared to the Central Valley and northern counties.

A new California Budget and Policy Project report calculates a living wage and family self-sufficiency budgets, based on the actual costs of living for each county including food, housing, childcare, healthcare, transportation, taxes, and miscellaneous expenses.

A self-sufficiency family budget gives a family an income adequate to meet all basic needs. An expense such as food should not be sacrificed to afford another, such as housing. Self-sufficiency also means that a family is not reliant on any public assistance programs such as Food Stamps, Section 8 rental housing assistance, Medi-Cal, or federally subsidized Covered California.

In Sonoma County, according to the California Budget and Policy Project report, two parents working full-time (at least 35 hours a week) must each earn \$23 an hour, requiring an annual income of \$81,353 to support two children. The report calculates self-sufficiency costs for various family sizes—but \$23 an hour is the appropriate living wage level as two-thirds of working poor families in the county include two parents and two children.

If this living wage level is surprising, consider the following:

- The United States Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD), which annually calculates the Fair Market Rent (including utilities) for a given region, allows \$1572 per month for a two-bedroom apartment in Santa Rosa. HUD guidelines require one bedroom for every two occupants.

- The regional market-rate for child care is \$1,333 per month based upon the California

Department of Education estimates for less costly, in-home, licensed child care. It assumes that a family of four includes one child under six who requires full-time care and a second, older child who needs after-school care.

- The cost of medical insurance provided by private employers including co-pays, deductibles, and premiums is \$589 per month based upon U.S. Health and Human Services estimates for a two parent, two-child family.

- Transportation costs, including gas, insurance, and repairs for a private vehicle is \$454 a month according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The majority of workers in Sonoma County drive to work alone, and the cost of gasoline can dramatically impact the family budget.

- Food costs derived from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Low-Cost Food Plan are \$773 per month for a diet that provides only basic nutritional requirements and assumes that all food is prepared at home.

- Miscellaneous costs are \$787 per month for clothing, personal care, housekeeping, phone, and basic Internet services.

The California Budget and Policy Project self-sufficiency standards do not include the “extras” that many would consider necessities, such as dental coverage, life insurance, and savings for retirement and education. Moreover, its report was based upon pre-Tubbs fire data and does not incorporate the 36 percent increase of median rents since the fire.

Consequently, the living wage of \$23 an hour is a conservative estimate but should establish a benchmark that enables the community to engage in an ongoing discussion about how much is enough to make ends meet.

These new self-sufficiency standards should concern the environmental movement. According to the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education in California, since the late 1970s inflation-adjusted hourly wages for the bottom 60 percent fell while wages for the upper 10 percent soared by 35 percent. As a result, low-wage workers must commute longer distances to find affordable housing contributing to traffic congestion, air pollution and climate change. Second, UCB researchers found that California low-wage workers and their families receive \$14.3 billion annually in public assistance such as Food Stamps, Medicaid, Earned Income Tax Credit, and Section 8 housing vouchers. If more workers earned self-sufficiency wages, the state and federal government could increase expenditures for affordable housing and public infrastructure such as mass transit.

—MARTIN J. BENNETT,
SONOMA GROUP MEMBER

Martin J. Bennett is Instructor Emeritus of History at Santa Rosa Junior College and Co-Chair, North Bay Jobs with Justice



North Group Report

Coming this Spring: Grazing Monitoring in the Six Rivers National Forest

This Spring the North Group will join with the Project to Reform Public Land Grazing in Northern California (www.grazingreform.org) to begin monitoring how grazing is managed on national forest grazing allotments in the upper Mad River Basin. The Project, which I coordinate, is independent of the Sierra Club.

Project volunteers have been monitoring national forest grazing on-the-ground since the summer of 2010. They have monitored 18 different grazing allotments, including allotments within the Marble Mountain, Russian Peaks and Trinity Alps Wilderness Areas and along the Siskiyou Crest within the Klamath and Rogue-Siskiyou National Forests. Many allotments have been visited multiple-times; some volunteers “adopt” grazing allotments near their homes or on national forest lands they frequent. Those volunteers monitor adopted allotments throughout the grazing season.

While we sometimes monitor for the presence of species impacted by grazing, including the Willow flycatchers and Cascade frogs, most monitoring focuses on the impacts of cattle grazing on water quality, riparian areas and wetlands.

As Project Coordinator I’ve written and the Project has published 29 photo-illustrated Allotment Monitoring Report (<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/ab81gdt4vnx46os/AAD4CSAHMpFTh74OmIAGR-nZa?dl=0>) which document conditions on the allotments and the poor management practices which result in degradation of water quality, riparian areas and wetlands. As Chapter Grazing Chair, I’ve written numerous letters and email messages using documentation from the Project’s reports to advocate for better grazing management.

Project and Chapter pleas for better grazing management go to Forest Service District Rangers and Forest Supervisors who are responsible for assuring that private grazing is managed responsibly on public lands. I also ask officials with the North Coast Water Quality Control Board to require the regular herding and other modern grazing management techniques which are so often lacking on national forest grazing allotment. Modern grazing management cannot eliminate cattle grazing’s negative impacts entirely, but their

implementation can dramatically reduce those impacts.

The failure of Forest Service and Water Board officials to require that grazing permit holders implement modern grazing management technologies, including regular herding and rest-rotation grazing, is the #1 reason water quality standards are being violated and riparian areas are being degraded. Unherded cattle congregate in headwater basin wetlands; the constant trampling year after year damages the basins’ water holding capacity and that results in increased flood flows and decreased base (late summer and fall) streamflow. Diminished flows hurts salmon and other aquatic organisms in streams below and are one of the reasons salmon stocks are not recovering even in streams that emerge from wilderness.

The Project and Redwood Chapter also challenge the renewal of grazing permits, especially when the same practices that violated water quality standards and degrade riparian areas and wetlands are allowed to continue. We are currently preparing to challenge a Forest Service decision which may seek to extend grazing into the Grider Creek key watershed and roadless area. That area has not been grazed for several decades; riparian areas and wetlands have recovered and we do not want to see them newly degraded.

This spring will be the first time grazing is monitored on Six Rivers National Forest land. All on-the-ground monitoring by the Grazing Reform Project is 100% volunteer and all volunteer training is hands-on and in the field. Small grants allow us to pay mileage and provide trail food to volunteer monitors.

If you would like to join in documenting the impacts of grazing within national forest lands in the Mad River Basin or anywhere in Northern California send a message with your contact information to Unofelice@gmail.com and I will contact you. The more pressure we can bring on Forest Service and Water Board officials to reform grazing the better. As a direct result of our monitoring and advocacy, we are finally seeing modest improvements in grazing management on the Klamath National Forest. You can help the Project and the Redwood Chapter bring that process to the Six Rivers National Forest as well.

—FELICE PACE,
REDWOOD CHAPTER GRAZING CHAIR



With your help we can protect the wolf

Wolves are vitally important to maintaining nature’s balance, culling out weak and sick animals to keep populations of elk and deer healthy and in check. The Sierra Club is working to defend wolf populations from continued threats from politicians. Lead the pack & JOIN Sierra Club.

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Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
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Redwood Chapter Notes

New Year Transitions

Two Redwood Chapter Sierra Club leaders have recently stepped down from long-term roles with the Sierra Club. Carol Vellutini has been the first and sole Chapter Outings Chair for over 30 years. An article celebrating her tenure appears below on this page. Tom Davis was the longtime Napa Group and Redwood Chapter Treasurer. He retired and moved to the Sierra foothills in 2016, continuing as Chapter Treasurer until this past December. Sierra Club thanks these two veteran leaders for their service to the Club and the environment and offers best wishes on their future endeavors. Read about new Redwood Chapter Outings Chair Louis Vas on page five.

SMART Train for Everyone

My 99-year-old father surprised me recently. He revealed during a visit that he had ridden the SMART train from Santa Rosa to San Rafael with friends to have breakfast earlier that day. He enjoyed the smooth ride, saying it was much better than the

clanking, rattling train rides of his previous experience.

Check it Out

Along with our regular features like Group reports, Outings and Meetings in this issue of the *Redwood Needles*, also included is an update on the Just and Resilient Future Fund (page one), and an article and a book review addressing rebuilding after the catastrophic October wildfires with fire-resilience as a key focus (page 3). Information about Napa's Watershed and Oak Woodland Protection Initiative, which Sierra Club has endorsed, appears on page one. Also on page one is an article discussing the reemergence of the threat of oil drilling off of our coastline, and what you can do to help prevent it. In these days of disgust with much that happens in national politics, we have the opportunity to directly fight back and have our voices heard on this issue which impacts all of us.

—MARY DAVISON,
REDWOOD NEEDLES EDITOR

Carol Vellutini (1st row, sitting, far right) at the Kortum Trail sign installation in the 1990s. Bill Kortum is in the middle of the back row.



**SIERRA
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Meetings

Send all Meeting events by the 8th of the month to Carl Inglin: chinglin@sonic.net Sierra Club meetings are open to all members. You are welcome to participate or observe as often as you wish. Visitors should call the committee chair to verify time and place. The Sonoma County Environmental Center is located at 55A Ridgway Avenue in Santa Rosa (West of Hwy 101, two blocks North of College and 1 1/2 blocks West off of Cleveland Ave, South of Coddington).

Mon. Feb. 5 - Solano Group ExCom.

Come join us for our monthly meetings which rotate between Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville. We are making a positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information. (707)319-6398.

Mon. Feb. 5 - Sonoma Group.

Conservation Committee 5:30 pm - 6:30 pm. Info: Suzanne Doyle carsort@gmail.com

Sonoma Group Executive Committee at 6:30 p.m. Info: Suzanne Doyle carsort@gmail.com

Tues. Feb. 13 - North Group Film Showing.

In lieu of its regular monthly ExCom meeting at the Adorni Center, North Group instead will show a free film at a larger venue. Join us between 7 and 9 p.m. in the West Wing of the Turf Club at Redwood Acres Fairground, 3750 Harris Street, Eureka, to view "Water and Power: A California Heist." This 80-minute documentary for National Geographic "reveals the story of how a handful of water barons gained control of the state's most precious resource, while drought and a groundwater

crisis left local homeowners with dry wells. From a 1990s backroom rewrite of the State Water Project through a breaking investigation into illicit transfers of groundwater, the film peels back the layers on a complex world most of us know nothing about and would never question unless our taps ran dry." A discussion will follow the film. For more information, contact Gregg at (707) 826-3740.

Mon. Mar. 5 - Sonoma Group.

Conservation Committee at 5:30 pm - 6:30 p.m. Info: Suzanne Doyle carsort@gmail.com

Sonoma Group Executive Committee at 6:30 p.m. Info: Suzanne Doyle carsort@gmail.com

Mon. Mar. 5 - Solano Group ExCom.

Come join us for our monthly meetings which rotate between Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville. We are making a positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information. (707)319-6398.

Sat., Mar. 10 - Redwood Chapter ExCom. And ConsCom.

Location: Super 8 hotel meeting room in Willits. Conservation Committee

meets at 10 a.m., ExCom meets 1-3 p.m. at the Environmental Center in Santa Rosa, 55A Ridgway. Info: Victoria vbrandon@lakerlive.info

Tues. Mar. 13 - North Group.

Monthly Executive Committee meeting. All are welcome to discuss local conservation issues between 7:45 and 8:45 p.m. or come for the business meeting starting at 6:45 p.m. Meet at the Adorni Center Conference Room on the Eureka Waterfront. For more information, contact Gregg at (707) 826-3740.

Thurs. Mar. 15 - Solano Group ExCom.

Come join us for our monthly meetings which rotate between Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville. We are making a positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information. (707)319-6398.

Tues. Mar. 20 - Napa Group ExCom.

7 p.m. Our location varies; it is generally at a member's home. Anyone wishing to attend the meeting should contact the chair, Nancy Tamarisk at napaquail@gmail.com

Longtime Outings Chair Steps Down

Carol Vellutini created the Redwood Chapter Outings Chair position at the behest of Clark Nattkemper in 1985, and held the position from then until the end of 2017. Over the past 32 years, she has organized a variety of committees, groups and events within the Chapter and Sonoma Group. Vellutini has won a variety of awards for her environmental work, including Sierra Club's Oliver Kehrlein Award (which honors service to the Sierra Club's Outings program) in 2000; was named by Assembly member Pat Wiggins as Woman of the Year in 2001; received the Conservationist of the Year award from Sonoma Group Sierra Club; and the Environmentalist of the Year award from COAAST (Californians Organized to Acquire Access to State Tidelands).

Vellutini has worked on trails, led hikes, and created trainings and workdays, including coordinating the annual Sonoma County beach clean-up from 1982 -1998, where she started an after the clean-up sand castle contest, BBQ and award ceremony with prizes. She had already initiated a year-around Adopt-A-Beach program in the county. Vellutini was Sonoma Group Outings Chair for twenty years. She worked to reopen Hood Mountain Regional Park in 1986 (which had been closed for four years previously), helped build the Nattkemper Trail, was a coordinator on building the Kortum trail along Sonoma County's coast, joined the local effort to eradicate the noxious weed arundo donax, and integrated that work as well as other environmental efforts

in many of the hikes she led.

Vellutini relates that she relished "organizing events and meeting like-minded people" as the Outings Chair. She enjoyed "meeting people and showing them our beautiful parks and also areas of concern. I was able to meet the leaders from all our groups when I planned the Jughandle retreats." Leading hikes also created a commitment that kept her hiking despite her busy life.

Veteran Outings Leader Jim Gannon recounted: "I first met Carol on a Benson Hut workpart shortly after moving to Sonoma County from Los Angeles in 2000. She overheard my conversation regarding being part of the Angeles Chapter and had completed some of the leadership training. Within a year I somehow found myself leading winter trips for the Redwood Chapter but also took over the Benson Hut work parties. She needed someone to step in for the season so she could attend to some family needs. I have been leading the Benson Hut work parties since then! Carol was always looking for ways to bring folks into the process. I admire that about her. There aren't many who will stick with it as long as she has."

Outings Leader Jonah Freedman

shared: "As a new leader, I appreciated her direction and suggestions as I somewhat nervously began to lead trips. What I found to be an especially nice event that she organized was a sort of retreat for leaders out on the Mendocino coast where we shared our experiences as leaders and listened to

talks from senior leadership. I believe she cares a great deal about the program and the environment that our hikes take us to."

Pete McGee, another seasoned Leader, reported: "I have managed an old ranch for 21 years. Carol always knew of this old ranch and used to lead hikes over the high country here. It was always fun to

hear about her memories of the hikes back in the 70's and 80's. There will never be another Carol. Wishing her all the very best."

The Redwood Chapter agrees, and expresses its deep appreciation for the work and dedication volunteer Carol Vellutini has invested in the environment and the Sierra Club during her long tenure as Outings Chair. Vellutini will still lead hikes and remains the Sonoma Group Parks & Trail Chair and the Backpacking Chair.

See you on the trail, Carol.

—MARY DAVISON,
REDWOOD NEEDLES EDITOR



Carol Vellutini at Paulin Creek Open Space Preserve, May 2017.