



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Volume 61 Number 3

Newsletter of the Redwood Chapter of the Sierra Club

June/July 2019

Vallejo Cement Plant Takes a Nosedive

The City of Vallejo held a hearing and vote May 30 on the status of the VMT/Orcem cement factory and deep water port project. As of press time for the *Needles*, the outcome of the vote was not known.

An update to this story outlining the vote and its implications will be posted on Redwood Chapter's blog: www.sierraclub.org/redwood/chapter-updates

According to published reports, the company has failed to complete paperwork and deal with monetary issues to the city's satisfaction. City staff maintains that VMT has abandoned the project.

Interestingly, Vallejo Marine Terminal (VMT), the deep water port proposal, is the organization that has standing with the city. The Orcem cement factory is a tenant of VMT and only needs to provide adequate information about its project to ensure the project

is in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). There is no legal relationship with the city.

The Vallejo Planning Commission rejected the Orcem/VMT project in 2017, and the company appealed to the City Council. Residents have been vocal in their opposition to the project, saying it will add terrible noise and air pollution to the area, which includes an elementary school and a residential neighborhood. Sierra Club has actively opposed the project, agreeing that it will increase pollution and also that the marine terminal would open the door for shipping and processing coal.

City staff intends to dismiss the project due to the applicant's erratic responses. Sierra Club endorses the city staff's efforts to hold the applicant responsible for its poor faith and lack of action on this project.

Join the Climate Conversation

The Redwood Chapter Climate and Energy Forum is seeking motivated members to discuss climate change and what we can do about it. The Forum is an e-mail listserv focused on bringing about real climate solutions in the Chapter's nine-county region. We use this forum to share information, ideas, projects and announcements with Club members in the region and others who want to work with us to address the climate crisis.

Earlier this year, our Chapter and Sierra Club California approved resolutions declaring a climate emergency. Climate change is happening faster—and its impacts are more severe—than had been projected. Greenhouse gas emissions levels currently exceed the worst-case scenarios of the world's leading climate scientists. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change reported last October, humanity has just a dozen years remaining in which to act so we can keep global temperatures within a healthy range and avoid severe threats to the livability of our planet.

Our next step is to make partnerships to enact prompt and feasible actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase sustainable carbon storage and protect critical habitat. We are also expanding the exciting Climate Protectors program developed by the Sonoma Group, and we can use your help!

Learn more or sign up for the Forum at: sierraclub.org/redwood/climate

—Randal MacDonald, climate chair

Petaluma City Council enacts moratorium on all new gas stations proposals

Following a disappointing vote in April to approve a contested Safeway gas station, the Petaluma City Council responded with a moratorium on any new gas station proposals for the city. The council voted unanimously on the moratorium during its May 6 meeting, and residents, including Sierra Club Sonoma Group executive committee member Richard Sachen, were pleased with that vote.

"The City Council bought enough time to create legislation. We probably need to convince the council to ban new gas stations completely," he said.

Sachen helped Sonoma Group join forces with the grassroots residents group No Gas Here, which formed after the Safeway proposal flew through the planning process and landed in front of the city council without any environmental review. No Gas Here implored the council to require Safeway to conduct an Environmental Impact Report to comply with California environmental law, and Safeway responded with threatening to sue the city if that happened.

No Gas Here has filed a Petition for Writ of Mandate with the Superior Court of California to force the city council to comply with the state environmental law. For more information on this issue, see <https://www.opposepetalumasafewaygas.com/>



It would be a prudent move to improve EV charging stations rather than invest in fossil fuel infrastructure.

Activists set stage for battle over proposed gas station in rural outskirts of Cotati

Activists in southern Sonoma County are gearing up for a battle against a proposed gas station outside of Cotati on the corner of Highway 116 and Stony Point Road.

The proposal includes a 16-pump gas station with a drive-thru car wash and a 24-hour convenience store. It is currently in the design review process, and local activists, including Sierra Club Sonoma Group members, are keeping a close

eye on its progress.

As with the opposition to the Safeway gas station in Petaluma, residents see this project as unnecessary in its location and scope for the following reasons:

- There are already five gas stations within a five-mile radius of the proposed site and the project's scale is will increase traffic, air and noise pollution and detract from the area's rural setting.
- There is critical habitat for endangered species adjacent to the site, as well as a high likelihood toxins will leak into the groundwater and the Laguna de Santa Rosa watershed.
- We, in the face of climate change should be putting energy into EV charging stations, public transit and safe bicycle and pedestrian routes.

For more information or to get involved with this effort, contact jeff.morris@sierraclub.org

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Chapter delegates attend statewide conservation committee meeting in SLO

Redwood Chapter members converged at the biannual California Conservation Committee meeting in April in San Luis Obispo. The meeting brings together activists from all over the state to exchange views, recommend state policy positions to the California executive committee and hold a wide variety of subcommittee meetings.

Chapter Chair Victoria Brandon presided over the Political Committee meeting, which recruited quite a few volunteers to attend upcoming presidential primary town hall meetings and pose targeted questions with the idea of increasing the visibility of our issues on that platform.

Steve Birdlebough, state transportation chair and Sonoma Group member, held a meeting of that committee, and Joe Feller, chair of Solano Group, gave a brief presentation on what now looks like a successful battle to keep the Orcem cement plant and deep water port out of a disadvantaged Vallejo neighborhood.



CCC attendees from left to right: David McCoard (Bay Chapter), Joe Feller (Solano Group), Victoria Brandon (Lake Group), Sally Davis and Steve Birdlebough (Sonoma Group).

Local Climate Events Lifts Spirits Amid Dismal Global Outlook

In April, Greta Thurberg, a 16-year-old Swedish girl, faced members of Parliament in London, demanding they act on climate change. In her address, she said she spoke for future generations and was not looking for a pat on the head or more of the same skirting around the issue.

“You lied to us,” she said. “You gave us false hope. You told us that the future was something to look forward to. And the saddest thing is that most children are not even aware of the fate that awaits us. We will not understand it until it’s too late.”

Thurberg is a lighting bolt, a catalyst representing a movement from our young people that hopefully will alter the status quo. As climate change takes effect, causing worsening drought, severe weather, wildfires, migration and species extinction and more harmful events, can all seem overwhelming.

But in Redwood Chapter, residents are linking arms and taking matters into their own hands. The Chapter’s climate committee, headed by Randal MacDonald of Mendocino Group, is gaining momentum and volunteers to urge local municipalities to commit to climate goals and actions. Committee leaders produced a webinar that delves into important international, national and statewide initiatives underway that could help advance efforts toward climate stability. That webinar is available to view on the Chapter’s website: sierraclub.org/redwood/climate-action.



The City of Petaluma enthusiastically endorsed a climate emergency resolution during its May 6 meeting that outlines the urgency of taking action and signals that the city will do “everything in its power” to work toward zero net emissions and make climate action a top priority. The city also created a climate committee to get to work on the issue.

Also in mid-May, Santa Rosa hosted two important climate-related events. The first, a town hall on the Green New Deal, was held May 15 at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds and brought together activists, students and others interested in learning how to tackle income inequality and climate change in tandem.

The framework of the Green New Deal was introduced by Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Sen. Ed Markey and calls for reducing emissions to net zero, expanding public transit and creating good, high-wage jobs.

The forum included a panel of local leaders speaking about ways

Sonoma County can attain these goals.

The Youth for Climate Action Panel held May 13 at Santa Rosa Junior College offered a panel of specialists and leaders, including Rep. Jared Huffman, to address the state of the crisis and what people can do about it.

A panel featuring Rep. Jared Huffman (second from left) and climate activists from nonprofits takes a question from an audience member during the Youth for Climate Action Panel held May 13 at Santa Rosa Junior College. The event was one of many climate-related events and actions occurring across the Redwood Chapter region this spring. Photo/Theresa Ryan.

Redwood Chapter will continue to support and create opportunities to take on climate change.

To get involved, please contact Randal MacDonald at randal@whatcanbedone.com



OUTINGS

Sat. June 15 - Solano Group.

Family -Friendly Mare Island Hike:

Enjoy a moderate 3.0 mile walk past a historic cemetery and some abandoned bunkers, up to the top of Mare Island. We'll take in great views of the Carquinez Strait, San Pablo Bay, Mt. Tam and Mt. Diablo. Vallejo never looked so good. Bring sturdy shoes, water, a hat, sunscreen, and a snack. \$5 suggested

donation for the Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve's conservation efforts. Friendly, well-behaved dogs on leash are welcome. All ages.

Total trip time is estimated to be 2 hours. Rain cancels.

Class M-3-A. Meet: 10:00am at Trailhead at Mare Island Shoreline Heritage Preserve Parking at the end of Railroad Ave. Vallejo. Take Azure Dr. south

through the roundabout. Left on 14th, right on Railroad Ave. Follow Railroad Ave. through the South Gate to the Park kiosk and park in the lot on the right.

Leader Phil Kohlmetz: 925-366-9612 or register online at www.meetup.com/Redwood-Chapter-Sierra-Club-Outings-Group/events/260258627/ Register early as participation limited.



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 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: Louis Vas, Outings Chair, lvas75@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.

Non-Sierra Club Outings & Events

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 two 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

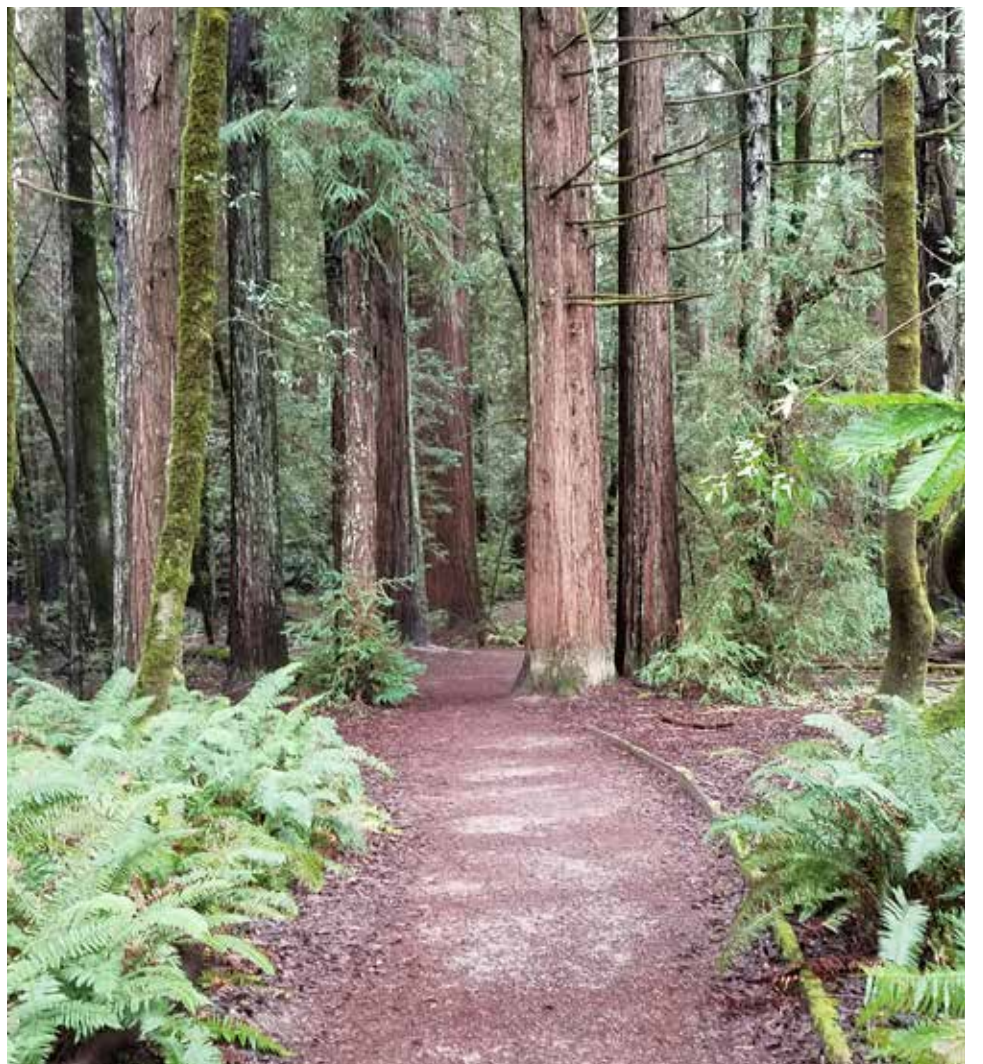
Hendy Woods Guided Forest Ecology Walk: First Saturdays through September 10:30 a.m.

Join us for a free docent-lead forest ecology walk at Hendy Woods State Park. Botanist Jade Paget Sekins leads the walk on the first Saturday of the month. Meet at the Day Use Area. Learn about redwood forest ecology, plants, animals and much more on this easy walk. Day Use Fee (\$8) is waived for those considering volunteering.

The Hendy Woods Community (<http://www.hendywoods.org>) is always looking for motivated Volunteers to staff the Hendy Woods Visitor Center, remove invasive plant species and lead forest walks! Interested? Contact: NancyLippolito@gmail.com

Free Entry to Hendy Woods State Park for local residents on Second Sundays

On the Second Sunday of every month in 2019, the Hendy Woods Community is covering the Hendy Woods State Park's Day Use fee (\$8) for local residents from the following communities: Yorkville, Boonville, Philo, Navarro, Comptche and Elk - Know your zip code. Enjoy a free visit to the park on us and stroll the old growth redwood groves and beautiful meadows, hike the trails, and unwind along the river!



HENDY WOODS STATE PARK, MENDOCINO COUNTY

**Do You Love the Outdoors?
Do You Enjoy Introducing People
to Your Favorite Spots?**

**Redwood Chapter is Looking for Enthusiastic
Hike and Outings Leaders!**

**Sierra Club will train you and provide outreach for hikes,
paddles, historical walks, camping and more.
Get in touch with us at lvas@sonic.net**

Jonathan Franzen Urges Us to Choose Love Over Fear to Fight Climate Change

BOOK REVIEW

By Suzanne Doyle

Sonoma Group Conservation Chair

The title to novelist Jonathan Franzen's new collection of essays "The End of the End of the Earth" sounds at first like one of the recent seriously depressing crop of books about climate change and eco-catastrophe. It is and it isn't. The essays cover a variety of topics stitched together by Franzen's passion for birds and birdwatching, and his feeling of urgency about climate change.

Franzen confronts the scary inevitability of climate change. He expresses his anger at the way the big environmental organizations seem to be abandoning traditional conservation programs in favor of raising large amounts of money "to combat climate change." Both government and big NGOs frame climate change as a problem for humanity rather than nature (seen as elitist), while avoiding discussing aid for impacted countries like Bangladesh and talking vaguely about collective world action as the solution. The left promises, as the years tick by, that we still have a decade in which to make major emission reductions

and prevent drastic change even when it's clear that change is already upon us.

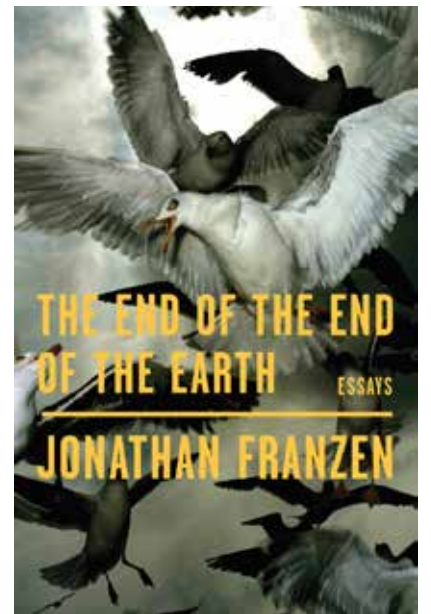
While government is passive, the market is active in pushing through large-scale commercial projects sold as climate solutions. Often these do damage, like solar farms in the desert or wind farms placed on the route of migratory birds, and Franzen suspects that they will morph into profitable geo-engineering solutions. In a way, he sees these industrial-commercial solutions as the evil twin of the modern economy, efficient, unstoppable and destructive of nature.

To paraphrase Franzen: if we make the huge effort to stop emitting too much CO₂ but global habitat is destroyed and species are gone forever, what was the point? He offers a solution: habitat conservation/climate adaptation projects that are suited and scaled to place, people and political reality. He gives two examples. One is a national park project in Costa Rica for which a small NGO has painstakingly combined political lobbying, land acquisition, local job creation, habitat restoration and economic planning over more than three decades to restore and try to protect a large piece of degraded

land. The park is threatened by loss of water to irrigation, poaching, and conversion to globalized logging, agriculture or mining, so its future is uncertain. In contrast, a climate adaptation program involving reforestation and changes to agriculture practices is absorbed without too much disruption into a traditional Amazonian village.

Another theme of the book is the need for buy-in from everyone to achieve lasting solutions. This means developing an understanding and compassion for all: climate deniers, people who throw trash on the ground or carelessly kill birds, and the great mass of the clueless. Franzen, a liberal from New York, tries to connect with Trump voters and Egyptian oriole trappers without great success, but he makes it clear that he believes that nobody can be excluded.

Franzen knows all about the fragmentation, distractedness and difficulty of modern life that makes it so hard for humans to look farther ahead than "the front of hood" and to take climate action. He seems to have fallen victim to it himself, spending his time brooding and writing about climate change, but without making too much of an effort to reduce his carbon footprint



or stop traveling around the world. After all, there are more birds to be seen before they're gone.

The solution he offers is difficult and fragile, but it is a choice of love over fear, tree-planting instead of wall building, and this makes the book very worth reading. He may be a self-described "depressive pessimist," but his interactions with an unexpected Emperor Penguin in Antarctica or sighting of a happy couple of Hunter's Cisticolas in Africa are infused with joy, empathy and optimism.

"The End of the End of the Earth: Essays" by Jonathan Franzen. 2018. 240 pages.

Michael Brune Brings Optimistic Tone to Sonoma Talk

Michael Brune, executive director of the national Sierra Club, came to Sonoma Valley on April 23 to deliver an important message to climate activists throughout the Redwood Chapter: "This is Our Moment - The Time for Ambitious Climate Solutions is Now!"

Brune told his personal story of how he and his family are living with climate change. He grew up near the Jersey Shore and in high school worked on the same beach where Hurricane Sandy tossed that iconic roller coaster into the ocean.

He asked, by a show of hands, how many in the room were feeling relatively "optimistic" or "pessimistic" about our species' ability to deal with the climate crisis. Though the optimists were slightly outnumbered, Brune named off several exciting recent policy developments, including coal plant shutdowns and new commitments to carbon-free electricity that would have been inconceivable only a few years ago.

Though he validated the concerns of the pessimists in the room he rallied everyone to not give up and recommended reading or re-reading Rebecca Solnit's recently updated classic, "Hope in the Darkness."



David Leland (left), Sonoma Valley Climate Coalition GHG Inventory Analyst, speaks with Pete Gang from the Petaluma Climate Coalition during the Brune event April 23, while Redwood Chapter's Randal MacDonald (center) works the Sierra Club table and chats with Nancy Kirwan from the Sonoma Valley Democratic Club Environment Committee.

The event, organized by Praxis Peace Institute, was hosted at the Vintage House in Sonoma, and included a private reception for locals already engaged in local climate action. — Tom Conlon

SMART to Offer Free Train Rides for Kids This Summer

Beginning Memorial Day and running through Labor Day, youth ages 18 and under, will ride for free on weekends and holidays. The summer pilot program lets youth ride free, when accompanied by a paying adult. There is no limit to the number of youth riders each adult can bring. Weekend and holiday parking at SMART lots will also be free during this summer promotion.

SMART operates along a 43-mile route in Sonoma and Marin counties, with stations in Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati, Petaluma, Novato and San Rafael.

Trinity County Stands for More than Handshake Agreements on Caltrans' Herbicide Use

By Larry Glass
*President, Safe Alternatives
for our Forest Environment*

For more than 35 years, what amounts to handshake agreements with local, state and federal agencies have kept poisonous herbicide use at a minimum in the watersheds and communities of rural Trinity County, one of four counties in the Redwood Chapter's North Group.

This spring, however, a resurgence of activism has sprouted around the issue as Caltrans—the state agency assigned to maintaining the roads throughout California—announced it will start applying herbicides to the weeds along medians and roadways in Trinity County. Caltrans' unfounded argument is that herbicide use is a safe and effective way to control the weeds and therefore prevent wildfires, rather than traditional manual treatments. Yet, activists know the herbicides provide a long-term hazard to the health and safety of the environment and area residents. Thanks to the ongoing pressure on Caltrans from concerned citizens, county supervisors and State Sen. Mike McGuire and Assemblymember Jim Wood, Caltrans announced it would forgo use of herbicides “this season.”

Caltrans' action and rationale have received much backlash from community members, many of whom have been active in the issue since the 1970s. Back then, U.S. Forest Service helicopters sprayed Agent Orange (2,4,5-T) and other chemicals on clearcuts in and near remote small communities. Local volunteers with the group SAFE (Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment) banded together and prompted the County of Trinity to pass a local ordinance regulating, and effectively disallowing, phenoxy herbicide use and regulating others. These volunteers were made up of long-time Sierra Club members, local tribal members, and other regional activists and organizations.

Because of this bold stance, the State of California sued Trinity County in the mid-1980s, arguing that local governments should not set these types of policies. The case went all the way to the California Supreme Court, where Trinity County prevailed. However, the state legislature ultimately bowed to pressure from big, corporate agriculture, claiming the ordinance created an “unmanageable” regulatory environment, and passed a law depriving counties and cities the right to regulate pesticides..

In the early 1990s, the issue returned when SAFE, as part of California Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides (CCAP), challenged a statewide Environmental Impact Report by Caltrans, which allowed widespread roadside and rest stop herbicide spraying to continue. At that time, Caltrans applied the most herbicide in the state. Then, Caltrans agreed to reduce its herbicide use by 50 percent within five years and 80 percent within 10 years. At that time, CCAP withdrew its legal challenge and met with Caltrans to study and promote alternatives. These findings were outlined in its 1997 report, “California Roadsides: A New Perspective,” and those alternatives have sporadically been applied by Caltrans in Trinity County, while elsewhere it continued using

herbicides.

At the behest of the California Dept. of Agriculture, the county ag commissioner set up a county Weeds Management Area Committee. This still-active committee includes local, state and federal agencies and county residents from differing persuasions that participate in invasive species and weed management discussions and strategy implementation. Committee members agreed to the use of integrated pesticide management but with no allowance of herbicides.

In 2004, the Trinity County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution that declared herbicides a pub-



Caltrans has been spraying herbicide along medians and roadways throughout California, and has a turbulent history with Trinity County residents and leaders who oppose the practice for health and safety concerns.

lic nuisance and Trinity County an Herbicide Free Zone.

Early this year, Caltrans warned it would be reinstating the use of herbicides to treat a four-foot strip along the roadsides in Trinity County, in addition to invasives in the state right of way. Initially, SAFE members met with Caltrans to point out incorrect assertions (plenty of fires have started alongside roads that Caltrans is spraying heavily in other counties).

The discussions between SAFE and Caltrans were unsuccessful, so SAFE rallied the local community and reached out to members of the county Board of Supervisors, specifically Supervisor Judy Morris. She and Sup. Jeremy Brown, met with Caltrans representatives to discuss alternatives.

Simultaneously, a petition circulated on Change.org garnered more than 2,000 signatures from a county of 14,000 people, showing residents remain committed to keeping herbicides out of the ecosystem.

These actions and the strong history of activism on the issue shows a county united against herbicide use no matter how many arguments Caltrans makes in its favor. Although Caltrans' announcement of its scope to curb herbicide use “this season” sounds vague, this certainly counts as a temporary win for all us and is a great example of the power of grassroots activism making a difference in our local communities.

Moving forward, SAFE and its partners are considering how to reinstate some sort of legal authority for counties to regulate herbicide use, rather than handshake agreements, which unfortunately do not seem sufficient for Caltrans to honor.

North Group Report

Humboldt Science Fair Winners Wow Judges

By Sue Leskiw
North Group Science Fair Judge

For the 13th year, North Group sponsored an award for the best project relating to environmental issues at the annual Humboldt County Science Fair held in mid-March.

The first-place award went to John Gerving, an 8th grader at Jacoby Creek School, for his project: “Predicting Wildfires with Neural Networks: An Approach to Preventing California Fires.”

He investigated whether it is possible to train a neural network—a machine learning algorithm that can perform some tasks better than humans—to predict whether a wildfire will occur in a given area within a given month, using temperature, amount of vegetation, and evapotranspiration value retrieved from the MODIS satellite. His project was among the fewer than 20 selected to represent Humboldt County in the state science fair held in late April.

A second-place prize was awarded to Meadow Pinto, a 6th grader at Northern United Charter School. Her project, entitled “HAY! What's the Scoop on Oil Spills?” examined three types of hay—alfalfa straw, rice straw, and alfalfa grass mix—to determine which would be best to use in an oil spill. Meadow, who lives near the Trinity River, predicted that alfalfa grass mix would work best, but in fact it only absorbed 97 percent of the oil from water, vs. 98 percent for alfalfa and 99 percent for rice straw. She demonstrated that any of the three hay types represents a reliable, sustainable, and available resource to clean oil spills near a river.

A third-place prize was awarded to Josiah Rojo, a 7th grader at Redwood Prep. His experiment, “Now That's What I Call High Quality H₂O,” tested a homemade water filter made with common materials to purify undrinkable river water from a creek in Fortuna and the Eel River. He measured pH, alkalinity, chlorine, hardness, iron, copper, two forms of nitrate, and harmful bacteria in the control samples and filtered ones. Filtering changed the pH of the creek and the river water to 6.5, decreased alkalinity, removed nitrate, and allowed the samples to pass a harmful bacteria test.

Napa Group Report

It was a beautiful Earth Day in Napa, and there were many families wanting to learn how they could be part of the movement towards better stewardship. Our booth was bilingual this year: “Parks for All, Parques para todos; Trails for All, Caminos para todos.”

We also featured The Vine Trail, a planned 47-mile walking and biking trail system. The Sierra Club has a representative on the Vine Trail Board of Directors, and we had fun playing Vine Trail Trivia with the families at the festival.

Water Quality and Tree Protection Ordinance: While the new ordinance does not provide the strong protections advocated for by the Sierra Club or contained in Measure C, it does the following:

- Requires retention of a minimum of 70 percent tree canopy cover in all of the Agricultural Watershed Zone
- Requires a 35-foot setback for Class 3 stream
- Increases the tree mitigation ratios from 2:1

to 3:1 (with certain exceptions)

- Increases the buffer zone around Kimbel and Bell Canyon reservoirs from 200 ft. to 500 ft.

We understand the pressures placed upon our supervisors, but our priorities center on the environmental health of our county, the consequences of over-development, and combating global warming. We consider this new ordinance as only a step in the right direction.

American Canyon Solar, an MCE project in Napa County, is scheduled to come online this July. It will generate enough clean energy to power 900 homes, and the developer is partnering with the Workforce Alliance of the North Bay to create local green-collar jobs.

Watershed Symposium: This year’s program, A Legacy of Stewardship, had a climate change focus and covered forest conservation, groundwater concerns, and river restoration. Napa Climate NOW! presented on the Climate Emergency Resolution process during the Whirl-

wind Tour segment of the symposium. The symposium took place Thursday, May 16.

Napa County Climate Action Plan: The County expects to have the EIR and the revised CAP available in June for public comment. In the meantime, the county and cities of Napa are starting to develop a format for county-wide climate action planning. The Napa Group is following this closely, has commented on its progress, and will be involved in gaining community support for this process.

Get to know Napa Group: You are most welcome to join us at our group meetings. The next one is at 6:30 pm, May 21, 2019 at a committee member’s home. The remaining 2019 meetings will be on July 16, Sept. 17, and Nov. 19. Please contact us at napavalleyssierraclub@gmail.com for details.

–Annette Krammer, Napa Group ExCom

Lake Group Report

CLERC brings a hi-tech approach to the Clear Lake Hitch

As this edition of the *Redwood Needles* was going to press, Lake Group was looking forward to our next community meeting on May, 23 in Lower Lake and featuring a presentation by Clear Lake Environmental Research Center (CLERC) president Will Evans.

Besides providing an update on CLERC’S vision and activities, Will intended to focus on an interactive report form and map the organization created to assist Chi Council volunteer observers report sightings of the Clear Lake hitch (an endemic fish listed as “threatened” under the California Endangered Species Act, and under consideration for federal listing) during the spawning migration. A Chi Council representative will also be on hand to talk about this year’s spawning run and other hitch-related subjects.

A different approach to the box store dilemma

As mentioned repeatedly over the past several years, Dollar General has constructed outlets in Nice, Clearlake Oaks and Lakeport, and it has had applications denied in Kelseyville and the

Riviera. A site in Middletown was also rejected, though the developers have begun the preliminary stages of applying for a somewhat smaller store there; an Upper Lake store has also been proposed and several others rumored.

The negative cumulative impacts of blanketing the county with unsightly formula retail outlets could be severe, but the system is set up in a way that makes it impossible to evaluate the consequences of the project as a whole: instead, they have to be considered one store at a time.

Now Upper Lake Town Hall chair Gene Palleno wants to try a different approach. He wants the Board of Supervisors to devise a plan for a moratorium on formula retail outlets while the planning department revises the Minor and Major Use Building Permit Ordinance to prevent non-conforming box, chain and formula stores from imposing a design and format that is not in the best interests of the community. Lake Group Excom member Ed Robey spoke in favor of this idea when Palleno proposed it in April. We are encouraging members to weigh in.

Big Changes in Guenoc Valley

For the past several years Lake

Group has been eagerly awaiting specific information about a proposed resort development on the Langtry Estate in Guenoc Valley. The property—the largest single landholding in Lake County—was purchased by an overseas investor in 2016, who reputedly intends to develop it as a series of very high end “boutique” hotels. Langtry Farms continues to operate the vineyards and winery under a long-term lease.

A concrete proposal is now finally ready for environmental review: as currently conceived the project would include five hotels, resort residential units, single-family homes, commercial space, and associated infrastructure, to be developed in multiple phases over many years.

Obviously immense benefits and immense negative impacts are both possible. In hopes of maximizing the former and minimizing the latter, Lake Group intends to take advantage of all opportunities for engagement, starting with May 15 scoping meetings intended to gather community input on the subjects to be considered in the Environmental Impact Report.

–Victoria Brandon,
Lake Group
Conservation Chair

Solano Breeze Corner

Covering Benicia, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun, Vacaville and Vallejo
sierraclubsolanogroup@gmail.com
707-319-6398

Please attend the Solano Group meetings, usually on the first Monday of each month. Our next dates are June 3 and July 1 at 6.30 p.m.

To confirm location, call/text Jane at 707-319- 6398.

VALCORE Recycling and Paper Shredding updates:

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

WEEKDAY SHREDDING from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., closed 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. 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!

– Greg Peterson, Editor

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).

Monday, June 3 - Solano Group

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.

Monday, June 3 - 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

Tuesday, June 11 - North Group

Sierra Club is holding its 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.

Monday, July 1 - 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

Monday, July 1 - Solano Group

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., July 13 - Redwood Chapter ExCom. And ConsCom.

Location: TBD. 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@lakelive.info

Tuesday, July 9 - North Group

Sierra Club is holding its 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.

Tuesday, July 16 - Napa Group

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

Thursday, July 18 - Solano Group

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.

Looking to Volunteer?

Redwood Chapter Needs You!

Editorial Assistant

3-5 Hours/Month

Working on Newsletter and Mailing lists

Membership Outreach/Coordinator

5-10 Hours/Month

Welcoming New Members and Volunteers

INTERESTED? Contact: jeff.morris@sierraclub.org

Klamath River Spring Chinook are a CESA Candidate Species but Fishing Them Continues

By Felice Pace

Grazing Committee Chair

On Feb. 6 the California Fish and Game Commission declared Upper Klamath-Trinity River Spring Chinook Salmon a candidate species for listing under provisions of the California Endangered Species Act. Subsequently, the commission closed the Klamath and Trinity rivers to sport salmon fishing from Feb. 28 to Aug. 14 to protect Spring Chinook salmon returning to the those rivers.

On May 6, however, the commission voted to allow sport fishing for salmon in the Pacific Ocean from Horse Mountain north to the Oregon border, the area known as the "Klamath Management Zone" (KMZ). From May 25 through Sept. 2, sport fishermen can keep two salmon per day in the KMZ. Commercial salmon fishing is also allowed in the KMZ from June 1 to 30 with a limit of 2,500 Chinook and from July 1 to 30 with a 2,500 Chinook quota.

Meanwhile, the Yurok Tribe has modified its fishing regulations to only allow gill net fishing on weekends during the Spring Chinook migration period. Tribal members can, however, continue to take Spring Chinook via dip net or hook-and-line throughout the Springer migration period.

The Hoopa Tribe also allows fishing for Spring Chinook. However, as confirmed by DFW data, most of the Spring Chinook returning to the Trinity River are hatchery origin fish. According to DFW's Klamath-Trinity Spring Chinook Megatable, 6,438 Spring Chinook returned to the Klamath and Trinity Rivers in 2017 (the last year for which data have been published). Of that number, almost 4,000 returned to the Trinity River with the vast majority being hatchery origin fish. Hoopa Tribal Harvest



in 2017 was 420 Spring Chinook while Yurok Tribal harvest was reported as 889 Springers; in-river sport fishermen took 557 Spring Chinook in 2017.

It is unknown whether the amount of Klamath River Spring Chinook take authorized by the California Fish and Game Commission for 2019 together with take by Yurok and Hoopa fishermen will take Klamath River Spring Chinook closer to extinction. In my view a better approach would be to close the Klamath Management Zone to all salmon fishing during the Spring Migration period and to only allow subsistence tribal fishing in-river before Aug. 15. Another proposal would mark all hatchery fish with a fin clip and only allow take of hatchery-origin Spring Chinook. With so many native, sport and commercial fishermen eager to take Klamath Springers and a Fish and Game Commission eager to accommodate them, however, the path to recovery for Klamath-Trinity Spring Chinook appears uncertain.

Resources:

- <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=166741&inline>
- <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=165311>
- http://www.yuroktribe.nsn.us/documents/2019_Spring_Inseason_Adjustment.pdf
- <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=166742&inline>

Redwood Needles

Sierra Club

Redwood Chapter
P.O. Box 466, Santa Rosa, CA 95402



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