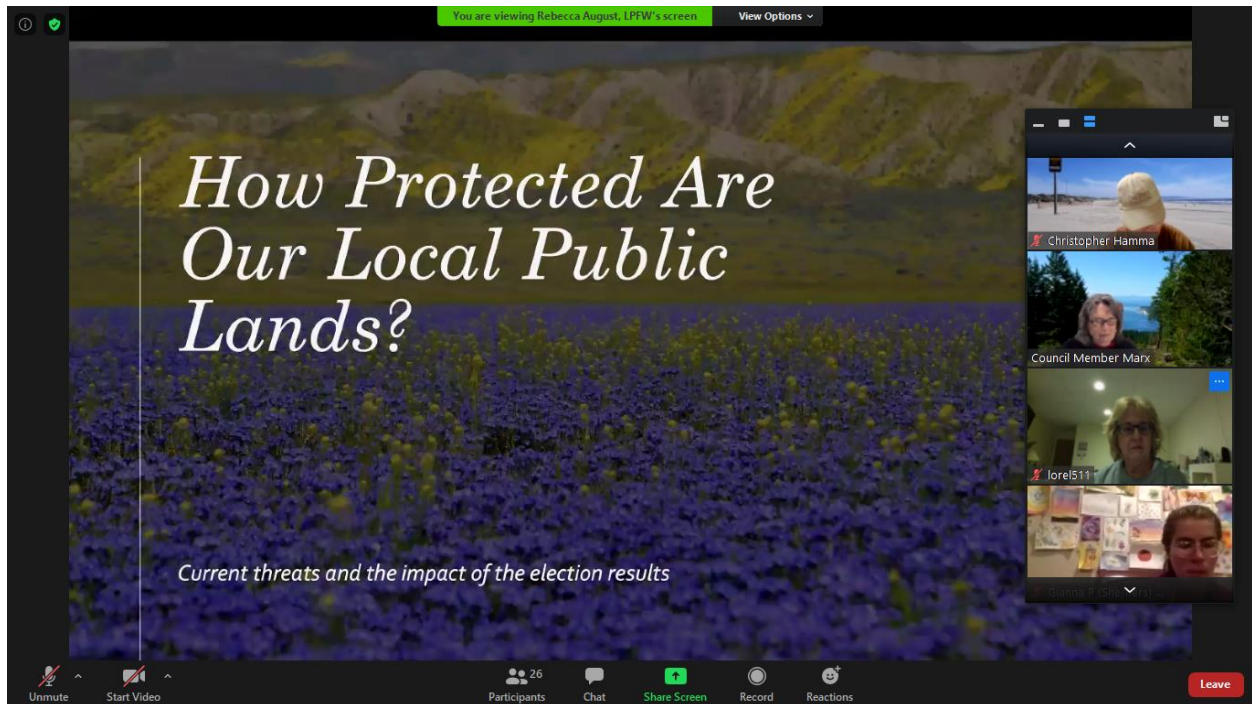


Let's Hope Elections Have Consequences



For the Nov. 18 general meeting of the Santa Lucia Chapter (conducted via Zoom until further notice), members logged on to hear Rebecca August of Los Padres Forest Watch review the threats to public lands that the Trump administration has been racing to put in place since the election.

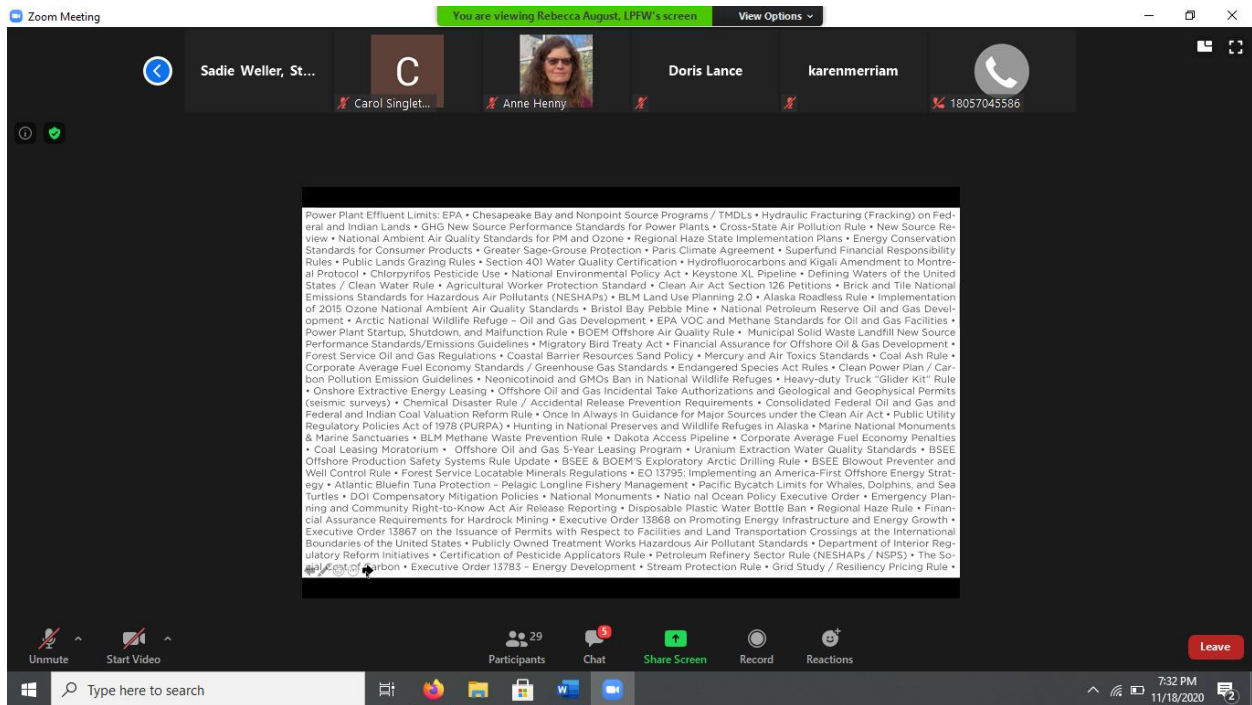
They fall primarily under the headings of expanded oil drilling and commercial logging. The Bureau of Land Management has opened 1.2 million acres to oil leasing across the Central Coast and Central California, announcing -- after two lawsuits and 90,000 comments in opposition -- that oil drilling and fracking pose no threat to the environment or human health. (Another suit challenging that decision has been filed by the state of California, Sierra Club Los Padres Forest Watch, Patagonia, et al.)

A proposed oil well and pipeline on the Carrizo Plain is in the mix, as well as logging on Pine Mountain in the Sespe Wilderness. Six new exemptions to National Environmental Policy Act review, primarily for logging, went into effect on Nov. 19. Trump's ordered increase on logging on public lands included orders to "get creative" in finding ways to exclude the Forest Service from NEPA.

One of Rebecca’s most arresting visuals was a slide listing Trump’s rollbacks of federal rules – see below. (And this is just in the category of environmental regulations.)

The good news: Rep. Carbajal’s and Sen. Harris’s Central Coast Heritage Protection Act got attached to the must-pass defense spending bill (although that’s still in limbo between a Trump veto and a Senate veto override vote as we go to press), and California has moved to protect bobcats and mountain lions and has set a state goal of permanent protection for 30 percent of our wilderness lands and wildlife habitat by 2030, mirroring the “30x30” federal initiative.

President-elect Biden has promised to protect “areas impacted by President Trump’s attack on federal land and waters.”



What Trump did. Be glad you can’t read it. Included in the list of all the Trump administrations environmental rollbacks is the gutting of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Endangered Species Act by allowing for inclusion of consideration of economic impacts and the ability to pick and choose curtailed protections for species.