Protecting Our Monuments and Sanctuaries:
The View from Here

BY VICTORIA BRANDON, REDWOOD CHAPTER CHAIR

The comment period on the Department of the Interior’s “review” of 22 national monuments and five marine sanctuaries closed on July 10, ironically enough two years to the day from the designation of our own Berryessa Snow Mountain national monument. The public spoke out loud and clear: 2.77 million comments were received, with 98 percent supporting the continued protection of these very special places. Some 49,000 comments were specific to Berryessa Snow Mountain.

If the administration were sincere in its declared intention to gauge the pulse of public opinion Secretary Ryan Zinke’s next action should be to issue a declaration that none of the threatened monuments will be eliminated or reduced in size, but unfortunately there is no good reason to believe that sincerity has played any part in this whole exercise, which was founded in duplicity and fueled by greed.

A few days later DOI recommended that Creators of the Monumental Montage, a regional movement to protect heritage sites along the California coast, added: “Washington has no idea how bad the decision was going to be.” The DOI recommendation to protect only five national monuments nationwide failed to even consider the economic impact of any such decision specifically for Northern California.

As the Redwood Needles was going to press, the comment period had not yet closed on a parallel “review” of the protected status of five marine sanctuaries, including Cordell Bank and Greater Farallones here on the coast of northern California. This nutrient-rich water supports an extraordinarily diverse ecosystem, including at least 25 endangered or threatened species and 36 marine mammal species, and an abundance of sea life.

“The View from Here” cont. on page 3

Community Separators Put to Test

By Teri Shore, Sonoma Group Chair

Just months after 81 percent of Sonoma County voters passed Measure K to protect community separators for the next 20 years, a luxury resort and large scale special event center is being proposed on the north edge of Santa Rosa in the Windsor-Larkfield-Santa Rosa Community Separator.

The location is 20 acres at 3890 Old Redwood Highway, Santa Rosa, which currently has two homes and was formerly the Bazzard’s Gulch youth camp that has not been in operation for years. The public’s first look at the luxury resort project occurred at the County Design Review Committee meeting on June 21.

If allowed as proposed, the weddings, dinners, and other special events alone would attract about 16,000 to 30,000 new visitors per year, larger than the population of any one of these cities: Cotati, Sonoma, Sebastapol, Healdsburg or Windsor. Adding to the effect of a new community in a separator, the developers want to construct a massive new event hall, a large new office, two dozen cabins, a large new pool and cabanas, pave over most of a meadow to construct a massive new event hall, a large new office, two dozen cabins, a large new pool and cabanas, pave over most of a meadow for parking, construct a loop road and convert two residences to vacation rental.

Also worrisome is that the project site is right next door to the historic and still operating 160-acre Cloverleaf Ranch, where children come every summer to ride horses, go on hay rides and enjoy low-key outdoor fun. The owners of Cloverleaf Ranch attended the design review meeting and said they were upset about the luxury lodging with its wine and food events and how an influx of visitors right on their property line could impact the camp.

Sierra Club and other Measure K supporters are concerned that the size and scale of the luxury resort and event center is inconsistent with community separator policies, zoning and Measure K. It is also in the wrong place because the Windsor-Larkfield-Santa Rosa Community Separator is already compromised by commercial development and sprawl all around it.

Community separators do not stop all development, but allows farmers to build a barn or even a winery in some cases and landowners to keep existing land use rights. But Measure K was clearly intended to stop housing tracts, shopping malls and commercial development including luxury resorts like this one from being built in the green buffers between the nine towns and cities in Sonoma County.

The luxury lodging is more in line with commercial and recreational and visitor serving uses than existing resource and rural development zoning. Either the zoning needs to be changed with a countywide vote per Measure K, or the project needs to be scaled way back to be in line with existing zoning and the intentions of community separators.

The Design Review Committee provided extensive design comments on conceptual plans but veered away from any comments about the size or scale of the project, saying that will be up to the Board of Zoning Adjustments. That entity will review the luxury hotel and hold a public hearing in four or five months, according to a county planner.

City Council Overrules Community Opposition to Vallejo Cement Plant

Despite months of organized and very vocal opposition to a proposed cement plant and deep water marine terminal in south Vallejo, the city council approved an appeal from developers that keeps the project afloat.

The final vote was 4-3 to finalize the draft Environmental Impact Report, which city staff and the planning commission had rejected due to many flaws.

Sierra Club’s Sonoma Group actively mobilized members and Vallejo residents alongside grassroots organization Fresh Air Vallejo to stand up against the project, saying it would bring an onslaught of noise, air and water pollution into a vulnerable area near an elementary school in a low-income neighborhood.

Solano Group Chair Joe Feller said after holding two hearings May 30 and June 1, the city council directed staff to return to the environmental review process to allow the applicant to “correct and complete” the EIR.

The council set a date to revisit the project in January. “It wasn’t pretty,” he said.

The three council members who voted to uphold the planning commission’s decision were Robert McConnell, Bob Sampayan and Katy Miessner. The four who countered public opinion and voted to move forward were Robert McConnel, Bob Sampayan and Katy Miessner. The four who countered public opinion and voted to move forward were Sunga and Pippin Dew-Costa.

Feller said the community activists have not yet identified next steps. If you would like to get involved, please contact Joe Feller at joe56feller@gmail.com.

Solano Jumps the Gun on Highway 37 Plan

The State Route 37 improvement saga continues this month, as Solano County vies for “lead agency” status to oversee the B and C segments of the project. Sierra Club members are involved in a study group created to assess the project and provide recommendations to the State Route 37 Policy Committee.

The highway, which runs east-west from Vallejo to Novato along the north shore of San Pablo Bay, was closed near its junction with US-101 due to flooding earlier this year. Sea-level rise and predicted heavy storms caused by climate change will continue to inundate the road unless measures such as sea walls and raised roadways are implemented.

The four-county policy committee commissioned a study of cost-effective ways to avoid similar incidents in the future and to address traffic congestion in the corridor. Portions of the study may be available this September, and the full results should be available in early 2018.

Redwood Chapter’s Steve Buddlethwaite, Chris Benz and Joe Feller, plus San Francisco Bay Chapter’s Doug Karpa, form Sierra Club’s study group. Birdlethwaite, who chairs Redwood Chapter’s transportation committee, said tolls may be enacted to help fund a solution.

In the meantime, the Solano Transportation Authority has taken the unusual step of offering to be the “lead agency” for an environmental study of a causeway along the nine-mile, two-lane portion of the highway (Segments B and C).

Because an understanding of all funding and construction options in the study will influence environmental decisions, the Sierra Club has advised members of the policy committee that it does not favor separating consideration of the causeway and toll-lane part of the road east of Sears Point from the four-lane part between Sears Point and US-101 (Section A).

In a letter sent June 23 to David Rabbitt, the chair of the policy committee, Sierra Club Chapter Chair Victoria Brandon (Redwood) and Igor Tregub (San Francisco Bay), outlined concern for installing a “lead agency” prior to approval of the study.

“It seems to us that this request is premature,” they wrote. “It would make it likely that differing funding and policy decisions would affect various parts of the corridor, to the detriment of the environment and users as well.”

The Bay Area党委 is planning a Saturday seminar on Planning for the Future of Hwy 37, on August 19th, 9:30-1:00 p.m. at the Novato City Council Chambers. Tickets: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hwy-37-planning-for-the-future-tickets-35383020567
Redwood Needles Newsletter of the Redwood Chapter, Sierra Club of California

Executive Committee Members

* Executive Committee members
Sierra Club Statement on Breakaway of Massive Antarctic Ice Shelf, Larsen C

WASHINGTON, DC - As reported by the New York Times, "A chunk of floating ice that weighs more than a trillion metric tons broke away from the Antarctic Peninsula, producing one of the largest icebergs ever recorded and providing a glimpse of how the Antarctic ice sheet might ultimately start to fail apart."

In Response, Sierra Club Global Climate Policy Director John Coequyt Released the Following Statement:

"This stunning wake-up call serves as a profound warning in the wake of Donald Trump’s irresponsible and historically misguided decision to withdraw from the Paris agreement, as well as his regular attacks on domestic climate and clean energy policies. If we do not transition off of fossil fuels and tackle the climate crisis as quickly as possible, there is an overwhelming consensus that events like this - which risk the collapse of the entire West Antarctic ice sheet - will increase in frequency and could raise seas by more than 12 feet in the long term.

"Progress must be made in tackling the climate crisis and, despite Donald Trump’s worst efforts, states and cities across the United States are leading the way forward on climate action and are committed to advancing our progress alongside the nations of the world. It’s clear that we need American leadership from people across the country now more than ever, and we will work alongside states, cities, and corporations to ramp up to 100% clean, renewable energy as quickly as possible."

From Sierra Club's website

Redwood Chapter Spring Photo Contest Winners

Thank you to all who entered our spring photo contest. Our executive committee voted, and chose three winners that best captured our theme: Northern California's spring super bloom.

First Place
Neil Simmons, Santa Cruz
The photo is one of the photographer's favorite local beaches, Shark Fin Cove. Says Simmons: "I used a flash light for about 3 seconds to light up the flowers and the overall exposure was 25 seconds @ISO 3200 F2.8 with the Nikon 14-24 and D800e. The light on the horizon is a fishing boat about to float around the corner of the cove at 4 a.m. I'm always inspired to try and get the most interesting foreground exploration, study and stewardship of the environment prevailed. Our most challenging issue in the Santa Cruz coastal area is getting a clear night to photograph the milky way. I literally had one night in the month of May that was clear enough for me to capture this image."

Second Place
Joe Roberts, Santa Rosa
We go to Bodega Head on a regular basis to walk. We love the changing scenes. This particular day, the spring flowers were at one of their best. The sun and ocean cooperated. We have lived in Sonoma County for the past two years and think of it as paradise."

Third Place
Gini Newell, Santa Rosa
"I photograph lots of nature happenings because I have perpetual appreciation for the abundant and beautiful biodiversity in my backyard and beyond. I was enrolled in a California Naturalist Program at the time and further discovery, exploration, study and stewardship of the environment prevailed. My photo of the bee is titled "Be Kind" because I knew of Colony Collapse Disorder and decrease of other native pollinator populations."

Editor's Note: To view the original color photos, visit www.sierraclub.org/redwood and click on the August newsletter.

“Climate Activists on Point” continued from page 8

better lifestyle throughout the county.
"We can have it all, better mobility, better living outcomes and less carbon pollution," Conlon said.
Sonoma County activists are not alone in their quest to combat climate change. One county over, members of Sierra Club Napa Group are working in tandem with Napa Climate NOW!, an organization dedicated to educating the public and elected officials on the latest climate science.
Napa Group Chair Chris Benz, also a member of Napa Climate NOW!, said the group has met with county supervisors, planning commissioners and state legislators’ staff to discuss goals on emissions reduction in the next 10 years. Members also have presented on climate change to high school and middle school students throughout the county, as well as offered a training for community members on how to talk about climate change.
Napa County reviewed its Climate Action Plan on July 5, and Sierra Club members were there to speak up.
Sierra Club members will also participate in a Climate Summit held in Santa Rosa July 31. The Summit, organized by Occupy Sonoma County and 350Sonoma, will be a roundtable discussion of what initiatives groups are engaged in and how to band together as a unified voice for climate action.
In the meantime, every one of us can participate in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Every day choices can make a difference. Here are three things you can do today, tomorrow and the next day to take action.
• Drive less
• Eat less meat
• Check your carbon footprint at CoolCalifornia.org
If you are interested in doing more, volunteer with Sierra Club Sonoma Group’s climate action team http://facebook.us15.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=420fa35f92458b876f914bd50&id=9dd67d474f
Instructions to hikers

Outings will start no 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 of the group. Hikers who do not cooperate with your leader may be dropped from trips if they are not willing to abide by the rules of the group. An uncooperative attitude can affect the enjoyment of the whole group.

Participants assume all risk associated with travel. Reimburse the carpool driver. Carpoolers are not part of the outing but are 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. An outing requires at least 10 members and hikers. Children are usually welcome, but please call the leader to make sure it is an appropriate hike.

D I F F I C U L T Y  M A R K I N G

E - Easy  Actual A - Less than 1,000 M - Moderate B - 1,000 to 2,000 C - Difficult C - 3,000 to 4,000 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 call the leader.

Submit to outings write-ups

Send all outings write-ups to: Carol Vellutini, Outings Chair, (carolvsr@sonic.net, 661-944-4056). All leaders must coordinate their outings with their Group Outings Chair.

Sat. Sept. 2 - Solano Group. Skyline Wilderness Park Hike. Enjoy an invigorating hike through woodlands and open ridges with views of the Napa Valley. On this 5 mile hike we will be taking the Ruckeye and Skyline trails to Lake Marie, return to the parking lot on Marie Street. Hike is moderately strenuous with good 500 foot elevation gain, mainly at the beginning of the trail. Be prepared with clothing layers, hat, sunscreen, snacks and water. Class: M-S-A. 9 am Skyline Wilderness Park, 5 km hike to the right of the kiosk. Located at 2201 Imola Avenue off I-80/Hwy 221. Parking for .25. Parking lot opens at 2 am. Leader Doug Tracy 396-566-9212 dbtracey@gmail.com

Wed. Sept. 6 - North Group. Reservoir National Park Emerald Ridge Loop Hike. We descend by the Ossagon Trail to Creek. We proceed by gravel bars, with several creek crossings, to the Tall Trees area. Back on trail, we stroll the tall Trees Loop before returning by the main trail (a climb of 700 ft) to our cars. Bring food for lunch and water. Footwear for trail, loose rock, and water. Class: M-A-B. 9 am. Meet at Hwy 101/West or 10:30 am. Tall Trees trailhead ( Obtain pass at Kuchar Visitor Center, Park 101 miles of Chick) by reserve only. Leader Melinda 767-6647-4275 or mgroostrom@gmail.com

Sat. Sept. 9 - 10 - Second Outing Chapter Bunker Hunt Wapiti Hike. Bunker Hunt wapiti has 3 adjoining projects that require perfecting the hut maintenance Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, then hiking the Wapiti Trail which involves stocking the hut with wood, repairs, and cleaning up. Good for more than the occasional fan of hiking, fun. Friday night stay at Clay Tappan Homestead (private property)/ Dinner Saturday night and breakfast Saturday morning. Contact leader Jim Gunn (707-575-7695) or mGroostrom@sierraclub.org for signing or questions.

Sat. Sept. 16 - North Group. Lacks Creek/Pine Ridge Prairie Hike. Join us for a hike to the scenic Lacks Creek/Pine Ridge Prairie. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Nattkemper Trailhead (the Sierra Club Trailhead). Bring water, snacks / lunch, wind repairs, staining and cleanup. Good for an as yet undetermined volunteer project in the Black Rock Desert about 100 miles northwest of Reno. Current plans are for a project at Soldier Meadows Hot Springs. Most food provided but you will have to bring your own lunch, water, and snacks. Class: S-7-H.  Leader Ned, nedforsyth48@gmail.com, 707-825-3652 message phone. Heavy rain cancels.

Fri. Sept. 29 - Oct. 1 - National Public Lands Day. Join various Nevada outdoor groups for an as yet undeclared volunteer project in the Black Rock Desert about 100 miles northwest of Reno. Current plans are for a project at Soldier Meadows Hot Springs. Most food provided but you will have to bring your own lunch, water, and snacks. Class: S-7-H.  Leader Ned, nedforsyth48@gmail.com, 707-825-3652 message phone. Heavy rain cancels.

Fri. Oct. 6-5 - Lake Group. Full Moon Hike Over Clear Lake. Always a favorite! Spectacular views of the sunset as the full moon rises over Clear Lake. We will hike a two mile loop of the eastern edge of Clear Lake with breathtaking views of Clear Lake from above the north shore and across Lucerne and Glen Haven. The first two thirds is a up a Cone Tovye subdivision street. We will meet in the early evening. Bring food for dinner and drinks. Class: M-A. Call the leader Steve Devoto 278-8308 or devotose1@msn.com to find out the time and place of meeting. Limit 15.

Sat. Oct. 8 - Sonoma Group, Gun Sight Rock Hike. Experienced hikers only: this trail is steep with loose footing in some sections. Starting out at Sugarloaf State Park Goodspeed Trailhead we’ll see the fall colors from Gun Sight Rock. Bring snacks, lunches, wind, lunch packs, and hat/sturdy hiking boots. The Hattemper Trail is our Sierra Club Trail, constructed in 1982-1985 Meet: 9:15 AM. Goodspeed trailhead Sugarloaf State Park first parking area on the left on Adobe Canyon Road (2.1 miles from Hwy 12). Parking is $8, exact change only. Contact leader 577-2182; Leader Dave 849-1111 Rain Cancels.


Join us as we continue the clean up of a great outdoors in this beautiful National Park. We will hike about 3 miles up a rugged canyon to gather and carry out the trash left behind in an illegal national grow site. Participants should bring an old backpack if they have one. Sturdy trash bags will be supplied to pack out. Details on meeting time and camping location have not been finalized. Potluck Saturday night. Leader: Kate Allen, kajalen96@gmail.com, 661-944-4056.
Outings Chair Report

New Solano Group leader Doug Tracy, living in Benicia, is starting out in August with short hikes because of the (sometimes unpredictable) hot weather. New Sonoma group leader David Oliver will lead his 1st hike in October.

Thank you to Sierra Club members who helped with halting the Dogwood THP by the Gualala River. Judge Rene Chouteau awarded $162,000 in attorney's fees to the successful parties in environmental litigation. This was a very long ordeal.

On page 4 is a photo of Benson Hut covered completely in snow. Jim Gannon had to re-schedule his summer work party due to snow still on the ground in July.

The book “The Boys of Winter” by Charles Kindred is about the U.S. Ski Troops during the Second World War. Sierra Club's Benson Hut is named after Lieutenant John Benson. This photo of John from the book was taken days prior to the Mt. Belvedere attack. John was killed by friendly fire February 1945. The end of that campaign and official Nazi surrender in Italy was May 2nd and the 10th had sustained nearly 1000 fatalities.

April 19th 1945 Adolf Hitler had taken his life in Berlin and the war ended Sept. 2 1945. David Brower served in the 10th Mountain Division as did many Sierra Club members. In 1945 Sierra Club Bulletin Brower states “I hope they will remember not with sackcloth, not with tears—but just by contemplating a little, what these men gave, willingly or not, has contributed toward an opportunity still to travel the trails.” The 10th Division men lucky enough to return home from the mountains of northern Italy literally founded the US ski industry, and contributed mightily to the growth of the American ecological movement. We are fortunate to have Benson Hut in the Sierra. Clair Tappan was a center for skiing back in the day. Please visit Clair Tappan, spend the night and hike into Benson hut the next day. Join Jim Gannon on his work party. Think about what I have written about Lieutenant Benson and how fortunate that Sierra Club has built this hut in his honor.

Jeanette Spiegel and Val Rios at the annual 10th Mountain Division picnic.

Special Screening & Discussion

“An Inconvenient Sequel”
Saturday, July 29, 7 p.m.
Summerfield Theater, Santa Rosa

We are excited to bring an early screening of “An Inconvenient Sequel” to our region Saturday, July 29, and we hope you will join us for this event. Follows former Vice President Al Gore as he travels the world working on clean energy initiatives and climate action.

Inconvenient Truth” (2006), which catapulted the uncomfortable discussion to our region Saturday, July 29, and we hope you will join us for this event.

 DNC, women of color and those in the LGBTQ demographics of women, the effects of environmental injustice are amplified for women of color and those in the LGBTQ community. Lesbian, bisexual, transgender women, and those who identify outside of the gender spectrum face disproportionate levels of violence at the hands of both strangers and intimate partners. This is only exacerbated by climate disruption. As Nellie Kennedy-Howard noted when interviewed by the Huffington Post at the Washington, D.C., Women’s March, Native women and other women of color face elevated rates of sexual assault.

No matter one’s gender, everyone has the right to live in a safe and clean environment, free of gender-based violence and discrimination, and with access to clean air, water, and energy. For the Sierra Club, this milestone in female leadership can serve as a stepping stone for our work on equity, inclusion and justice. We’ll keep working to transform ourselves and our organization, because everyone deserves a seat at the table.

Excerpted from Sierra Club’s online blog

Jeanette Spiegel and Val Rios at the annual 10th Mountain Division picnic.

With your help we can protect the wolf

Redwood Needles August 1, 2017 5
Sierra Club Transportation Chair Steve Birdlebough enjoys a SMART train preview ride.

It is the time to speak climate action after immersion in the three-day intensive Climate Reality Leadership Corps training and work with former US Vice President Al Gore. She said it was intense and inspiring and also a bit frightening to know what could lie ahead if we don’t act now.

Our Committee is hard at work motivating our cities to move forward on their commitments under the Sonoma County Climate Action Plan. Christina Meyer has signed up as the Volunteer Chair for the Climate and Energy Committee. We still need climate representatives from Cotati, Windsor or Cloverdale. Please contact Chris if you want to make a difference. Leave a message with Tom Devin in our Santa Rosa office 707-544-7651.

Join the Climate & Energy Committee on the first Monday of every month at 5-30 pm at the Environmental Center before the EsCon meeting.

Recycling and Waste

The challenges facing Sonoma County and our communities continue. Sierra Club has recently begun work with partners to help craft a zero waste ordinance. If you are interested in learning more about the zone, please join us for an informational meeting.

Smart Train Running

Who doesn’t like a free ride? This summer we can hop on the SMART train for a free ride. Sierra Club Sonoma Group was key to getting voters to pass the funding measure for the train back in 2008. For more information about the preview ride, visit www.SonomaMarinTrain.org.

--Teri Shore, Sonoma Group Chair

Non-Sierra Club Outings & Events

The following activities are not sponsored nor administered by the Sierra Club. The Sierra Club has no responsibility for the information about these 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 got 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.ca.gov

Birdlebough enjoys a SMART train preview ride.

Well done to FROG and allies.

We wish everyone a happy summertime. We are glad for the favorable decision for attorney fees in the Dogwood thp in Gualala. In January the plan was returned to CalFire with the charge that a proper cumulative impacts assessment be conducted. The litigators will appear again in court in August. Well done to FROG and allies.

The Albion River Bridge has achieved landmark status with the National Register of Historic Places. This designation, however, does not diminish Caltrans resolve to build a new bridge. There will be a meeting on July 27 with Caltrans and interested parties as part of the Community Impact Assessment. The Mendocino Group will continue to keep an eye on the situation.

Yvonne Kramer has become active with the CourageCampaign in Ukiah. She made us aware of the Glyphosate hearings in Sacramento. Through her and others’ and our efforts of getting the word out, Glyphosate has been declared a cancer risk and will be on the Prop 65 list. Yvonne also writes that the CourageCampaign has been working with the Ukiah City Council regarding toxic free parks in Ukiah as part of a Adopt-a-Park program.

The Central Coast Solid Waste Transfer Station is still in Limbo. During the winter EsCon member Sue Booker went out and took pictures of the flooding out there. The photos were eerily beautiful, evocative of the Everglades, graphic evidence of the unsuitability of the site as a Waste Transfer Station.

--Mary Walon, Mendocino Group Chair

Mendocino Group Report

October 2017 Deadline: Due Sept. 8th

Submit Articles/Reports/Ad Copy via e-mail to: odavison@sonic.net

Send Outings to Carol Vellutini via email: carolv@sonic.net

Send Meetings to Carl Inglin: chinglin@sonic.net

Redwood Needles

Create a Lasting Legacy

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Redwood Needles
Climate Effects on Ocean Ecology

John Muir’s oft-quoted observation, “When we try to pick anything out of the universe, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe,” was his interpretation of the “unity of nature” argument of Muir’s mentor, naturalist Alexander von Humboldt. We should not be surprised, then, to discover that abrupt climate change affects more than weather patterns and sea level height.

Rapid warming of the earth from human-caused (fossil-fuel use, agricultural practices, etc.) about which one climate scientist quipped that there is now higher certainty than that smoking causes cancer, is having profound effects on ocean ecology. Jefferys are droguing cooling-water intakes to nuclear power plants. Other animals and plants that make up the planktonic soup that is at the base of most food chains are struggling to survive in increasingly acidic oceans. Algal blooms in the Baltic Sea are severely affected by these conditions and the water temperature’s rise.

In a brief and uneventful special meeting on May 28, the supervisors approved findings that the project “does not meet the spirit and intent of the Middletown Area Plan . . . does not possess a sizable village scale and character. . . . does not reinforce Middletown’s small town character . . . and detracts from the area as a whole,” which is what we had been saying all along. That makes three consecutive rejections: maybe Dollar General will finally start to feel unwelcome.

On October 28 Lake Group is sponsoring a Wild and Scenic Film Festival at the Caper Bee community theater in Lakeport. Besides a series of prize-winning films from last January’s acclaimed Wild and Scenic Film Festival in Nevada City, the event will feature some local films, wine, beer and other refreshments, informational tabling from local groups and at least one live performance—hours, co-sponsors, ticket prices and other details coming soon.

In the last issue, North Group was going to press Lake Group was busy with last minute plans for our annual Midsummer BBQ, which for the first time this year will be held at the Highland Springs Equestrian Center. As usual, the Club will provide a main dish and guests are asked to bring beverages, and a side dish or dessert to share, along with their own plates, napkins, and eating utensils.

Climate effects on ocean ecology are not without their costs. This period of grace is not without its costs. We should not be surprised, then, to discover that abrupt climate change affects more than weather patterns and sea level height.

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Mon. Aug. 7 - Solano Group ExCom.  
Come join us for our monthly meetings which rotate between Vacaville and Fairfield. We are making positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information. (707)319-6398.

Mon. Aug. 7 - Sonoma Group.  
Conservation Committee Meeting at 5:30 p.m. Info: Suzanne Doyle carson@sierraneeds.org

Sonoma Group Executive Committee at 6:30 p.m. Info: Suzanne Doyle carson@sierraneeds.org

Tues. Aug. 8 - North Group.  
The public is invited to attend the monthly meeting of our governing committee. Join us for a discussion of local conservation issues between 7:45 and 8:45 p.m., following the ExCom business meeting from 6:45-7:45 p.m. Meet at Adorni Center Conference Room on Eureka Waterfront. For more info, call Greg at 707-826-3740.

Mon. Sept. 4 - Solano Group ExCom.  
Come join us for our monthly meetings which rotate between Vacaville and Fairfield. We are making positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information. (707)319-6398.

Sat., Sept. 9 - Redwood Chapter ExCom.  
Meetings at 10 a.m., ExCom meets 1-3 p.m. at the Environmental Center in Santa Rosa, 55A Ridgway Way. Info Victoria vbrandon@lakelive.info

The public is invited to attend the monthly meeting of our governing committee. Join us for a discussion of local conservation issues between 7:45 and 8:45 p.m., following the ExCom business meeting from 6:45-7:45 p.m. Meet at Adorni Center Conference Room on Eureka Waterfront. For more info, call Greg at 707-826-3740.

7 p.m. Our location varies; it is generally a member's home. If you are wishing to attend the meeting should contact the chair; Nancy Tamark at nancy.tamark@lakelive.info.

Mon. Oct. 2 - Solano Group ExCom.  
Come join us for our monthly meetings which rotate between Vacaville and Fairfield. We are making positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information. (707)319-6398.

Climate Activists Keep Sonoma County on Point

Bi: SHOHAMA MERSIT

REDWOOD CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

When President Trump announced he would pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement May 31, it felt like a national day of mourning to many concerned about the future of our planet. But the conversation quickly shifted to efforts by state, county and city governments, businesses, individuals and organizations to step up and go beyond Paris’ carbon-limiting recommendations.

“For every terrible decision Trump makes, grassroots activists, frontline communities, local governments, and concerned people across the country are fighting to make sure clean energy continues to grow by leaps and bounds,” Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune said in a statement following Trump’s announcement.

Sonoma County is no exception. Seven years ago, environmentalists in Sonoma Valley began an initiative to shift their focus from the local to the national level in addressing the growing challenges of climate change, resource depletion and economic instability.

Sonoma resident Tom Conlon joined a handful of other concerned citizens to form Transition Sonoma Valley, a certified local “initiative” of the international grassroots Transition Movement to organize and prepare local communities for climate change and economic threats ahead.

“TSV was founded on Oct. 10, 2010, and Conlon said it seemed to hit a nerve, growing rapidly by word of mouth, partnership events with existing nonprofits and local pressure groups.

“If we try to do stuff by ourselves as individuals, we won’t accomplish enough to solve the really big problems, and if we wait for governments to act for us we’ll be waiting for Godot. But if we come together and act for our communities we just might be able to do what needs to be done, just in time,” Conlon said. “That’s what brought us together, and we began hosting films and speakers to teach us about the challenges and the needs for local community building.”

Once the TSV team began examining the efforts of its local government to act on climate change, it discovered some surprising gaps in how local policy was matching up with scientific data. For example, just before the passage of the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, the City of Sonoma had set for itself greenhouse gas reduction goals that were even more ambitious. That law required California to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. But like other county jurisdictions, the city had passed a resolution to go even further and faster: 25 percent below 1990 by 2015.

Conlon said the resolution sounded great and attracted worldwide attention to Sonoma, including grants and a climate leadership award from the Obama administration, but by the 2015 deadline, emissions had not declined to the City of Sonoma. In fact, the city’s rising affluence and a growth in Wine Country tourism, emissions had increased by 21 percent, missing the goal by a whopping 20 percent.

The TSV team saw this failure as an urgent call for new democratic engagement and advocacy. TSV met with Sonoma County Supervisor Susan Gorin and started attending Sonoma County Council meetings to express concerns about this lack of meaningful action on climate, offer constructive recommendations and ask for staff time to work together on it.

“They said that the City of Sonoma took our advice and switched to 100 percent clean energy for all municipal electricity accounts...we realized this informed, face-to-face approach can be useful around the country,” Conlon said.

On early in 2017, TSV established a collaborative of local leaders in Sonoma Valley and reached out to other groups, including Sierra Club Sonoma Group. Conlon helped establish and co-leads a climate action committee for Sonoma Group, which is focused on implementing the TSV strategy in every city in the county.

“The number-one thing we need to do is understand the scope of the challenge we are facing. When you start to look at the world this way, we are all part of the problem. That means we are all part of the solution if we decide to take up the challenge.”

Sonoma Group’s climate action committee has been nudging city leadership in Rohnert Park, Sebastopol, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Cotati, Santa Rosa and Windsor to move on their climate action plans and reduce emissions. Vehicle emissions and existing residential buildings are the major contributors of greenhouse gases in Sonoma County, yet recent emissions reduction claims are based on lower output of methane from a decline in county-raised livestock and from trucking garbage to other counties.

Yet, while there’s across-the-board agreement on the need to take action, understanding the complex problem and moving toward viable solutions can be challenging.

“Step one is having (municipal governments) follow through on the commitments they have already made,” Conlon said. “For example, the City of Sonoma has done it, Healdsburg is moving forward too. That city just implemented the county’s first bike-share program this summer.

“Originally these local actions were presented as a package, alongside a new streamlined environmental review option for developers to use on new projects. A court case is delaying this programmatic EIR process from going into effect, but, as the City of Sonoma has made clear, that lawsuit doesn’t need to halt climate action. Sonoma upgraded old street lights to LED and saved $70,000 a year. This windfall allowed the city to spend an extra $20,000 per year on 100 percent clean power. The Sierra Club climate committee has designed a fact sheet for each city listing the measures that city has agreed to take and a list of recommendations it should adopt. One of these recommended actions is signing on to Sierra Club’s “Mayors for 100 Percent Clean Energy” campaign, which received a surge of signatures following Trump’s Paris announcement.

Another is for cities to regularly conduct energy audits of their own facilities and fleets to gauge emission levels and find new ways to reduce consumption by buying the best practices and methods implemented successfully elsewhere.

“Volunteers are having conversations with elected leaders all over the country,” said Conlon. “Eventually we hope to see whole teams of people engaging in each community to raise everyone’s climate literacy. We all need to be working together as a community.”

The ultimate goal will be to meet the annual 5 percent greenhouse gas reduction goals required by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 while creating a robust economy in sync with those goals and building a

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