New Poll: Sonoma County
Voters Want More Greenbelts

By Teri Shore, Sonoma Group EXCOM

A new survey of Sonoma County voters commissioned by Greenbelt Alliance found that 75 percent would definitely or most likely vote “yes” on a potential county ballot measure to renew and expand protections from sprawl for greenbelt lands designated as community separators between Sonoma County’s towns and cities. By the end of the poll that rose to 78 percent.

We need to renew and add to community separators or risk losing more agricultural lands and open space to housing tracts, malls and big box stores. The existing protections for community separators that voters approved of 70 percent nearly two decades ago expire at the end of 2016.

Sierra Club, Greenbelt Alliance and its allies are now calling on the Board of Supervisors to go beyond a renewal to strengthen protections and add priority greenbelts to community separators. Priority additions should also include lands around Penngrove

MOUNTAINS & RIVERS UPDATE

By Victoria Brandon

When Redwood Chapter leaders met with Congressman Jared Huffman in October, the cordial and productive conversation ranged from efforts to protect the Wild and Scenic Smith River from nickel mining and remove dams from the Klamath to preventing right-wing extremists from disrupting the state of California and the goals of the upcoming United Nations climate conference in Paris. We also touched briefly on an exciting proposal to designate substantial new federal Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers in the northern part of the Chapter.

As discussed earlier this year, a broadly based stakeholder group under the leadership of the Wilderness Society and California Wilderness Coalition has been working behind the scenes to define boundaries, identify outstanding natural features, and hold quiet discussions with neighboring private landowners, federal agencies and local “Mountains & Rivers Update” cont. on page 3

KEEPING IT CALIFORNIA: TRINITY COUNTY SAYS NO TO “JEFFERSON”

On September 15 the Trinity Board of Supervisors gave a sharp backhand blow to the ruinous “State of Jefferson” secession idea. Instead of supporting the proposal as proponents had requested, putting it on the ballot, or declining to take action, they voted to adopt a declaration, “declining to join the State of Jefferson and advocating improved representation of rural California counties.” The full text of the declaration, which is based on a comprehensive fiscal evaluation prepared by county staff and includes an incisive set of Whereases, is available at keepitcalifornia.org/opinion.html.

Congratualtions to the Trinity BOS for this display of prudence and courage. Their action may have been the reason El Dorado County SOJ proponents withdrew a support motion agendized for September 29. With El Dorado leaders unenthusiastic about becoming a cash cow to a bankrupt new state, the motion never did have much chance of success, but the possibility of its turning into a positive rejection along the Trinity model was apparently too much for the Jeffersonians to risk.

Then on October 20 the Plumas County supervisors resisted demands to endorse the secession movement and instead voted to put the issue on the June 2016 ballot. Although it would have been preferable to require proponents to gather signatures for an initiative before imposing a financial obligation on the taxpayers, this action nonetheless required considerable courage on the part of the board. Plumas voters will now join those in Lake and Lassen in having an opportunity to reject this very bad idea at the polls: in the meantime, any attempt to portray these counties as separatist supporters is purely fictional.

For more Redwood Chapter information: http://www.sierraclub.org/redwood
Redwood Chapter
The Redwood Chapter is governed by an executive committee, with one (1) member delegated by each of six (6) geographic groups and six (6) members elected at large. Each group elects its own executive committee.

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eight areas are designated as community separators around Sonoma County. They serve as green buffers and hold back sprawl, complementing urban growth boundaries around cities. Community separators also protect agricultural lands, waterways, woodlands and wildlife habitat from development.

Together, UGBs and community separator policies protect the places in Sonoma County most likely to be targeted by sprawl developers and encourage growth to occur within urban boundaries.

With the expiration approaching, Sierra Club is working to gather support and to safeguard these policies now. We are also helping to improve the policies so that they better protect Sonoma County’s landscape for years to come.

**Take Action**
Please write or call your supervisor to support community separator renewal and expansion now, not later.

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Efren.Carrillo@sonoma-county.org
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An action alert with sample letter is posted on Greenbelt Alliance’s website, greenbelt.org. To join the campaign, contact Teri shore at tshore@greenbelt.org or 707 575 3661.

**Sierra & Tierra: The Heroic Resistance of a Latino Community Besieged by Fracking**

If I were a presidential candidate (fat chance!) and someone asked me whom I admire the most, I would answer any of the hundreds of heroes who defend their communities against a daily toxic bombardment.

This siege takes place in hundreds of Latino communities across the country, and one of these heroes is Juan Flores, an organizer with the Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment, in Kern County, California. Flores’s fight is nothing short of heroic.

Kern County generates over 75 percent of California’s oil output, including 95 percent of the fracking that occurs in the state, more than any other county in the nation. And the price the overwhelmingly Latino population pay for this is heartbreaking.

“We have one of the highest asthma rates in the country, especially among our children,” says Flores. “It is sad for a kid to live with the reality of having an asthma attack every other day. They cannot catch a break. That’s why we are putting up a fight.”

According to a 2014 National Resources Defense Council study, close to 2 million Californians, who already put up with very high levels of other kinds of pollution, are living within a mile of an oil and gas development. Of them, a breathtaking 92 percent are communities of color.

The report also found that in Kern County, 64 percent of people living within one mile of an oil or gas well and in areas facing the worst environmental health threats are Latino.

“We are not organizing against this injustice because we hate the oil industry,” says Flores. “We do it because we love our community.”

Flores will need every last drop of devotion for his neighbors because the situation may well get worse for the already punished Kern County residents. At the oil industry’s request, the County has proposed an ordinance to fast track oil and gas drilling permits for the next 20 years that would shield new operations from environmental review and public notice.

This virtual blank check for the fracking industry would worsen the already dire air pollution situation in the area but also threaten the irrigation water supply in a county that, along with the rest of the Central Valley, produces 35 percent of the nation’s fruit and vegetables.

“If there is some sort of fracking pollution in the water supply, the whole country would be affected by this crisis,” warns Flores. “We want to send a clear message to the Kern County officials: It’s time to start protecting the community and not the oil industry.”

On Nov. 9th, the Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing to discuss the proposed ordinance, and Flores and his colleagues await “with open arms all Kerns County, of California and of the entire country to testify against this injustice,” he says.

This mad race to extract every last drop of oil coincides with both our extraordinary clean energy boom and the stern warning from the world’s scientists that to avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis, we must leave at least 2/3 of the fossil fuel reserves in the ground.

It also coincides with the scandalous revelations that Exxon, the world’s largest oil corporation, has known since the 1970’s about the potentially catastrophic consequences for the planet’s atmosphere of the uncontrolled burning of fossil fuels.

“If it is true that they knew about all this 40 years ago, then it’s true that they don’t care about their children or grandchildren,” laments Flores. “All they’d care about is how much money they can put in their pockets right now.”

Flores’s heroic resistance pursues a different kind of riches: the good health and wellbeing of his community.

- Javier Sierra, Sierra Club COLUMNIST

Follow Javier Sierra on Twitter @javier_JS

This article originally appeared on the Sierra Club’s website: http://www.sierraclub.org/planet

**Non-Sierra Club Outings**

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.

**Saturday Saunters for Santa Rosa Area.**

Every Saturday. Meets 9 am and usually ends around 11:30. These walks are moderate. Fun way to exercise with friends. For info call Bob Martin 707-539-6300 bmphoto@comcast.net.

**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

Volunteer Days Riverkeeper Stewardship Park in Guerneville, Every Wednesday. 9 a.m. - Noon, for all or part of the time. Park is located on the north bank of Russian River directly upstream Guerneville pedestrian bridge. Access entrance from the driveway in front of Sonoma Nesting Co. (16132 Main Street, just east of Armstrong Woods Rd.) At bottom of driveway look for blue & white “Russian Riverkeeper Stewardship Park” sign. Bring drinking water & wear sturdy footwear. Light refreshments provided. Info Victoria Wikle 865-2474 Victoria.Wikle@usa.net.
**O u t i n g s**

**Sat. Dec. 5 - North Group**

Arcata Community Forest-Redwood Park Hike.

Join us for a cool, and perhaps a walk through the woods. Dogs. Bring water and lunch. Se habla poco Espanol. Class E-5-A. Carpools: Meet 9 am Arcata Safeway parking lot, or 9:15 Redwood Park Fourteenth Street parking area. Leader Ned nedforsyth48@gmail.com 825-3652.

Sat. Dec. 5 - Lake Group

Glen Eden Trail to Ridge Trail.

Fairly steep trail rewarded with great views including Clear Lake, Snow Mountain, Hill Mountain, Goat Rock area. Bring water and lunch. Class H-8-B. Meet: 9:30 am trailhead on Scott’s Valley Rd. (approx. 2 miles from Hwy 20 at Blue Lakes and 8 miles from Hwv 20/Scotts Valley Road intersection in Lakeport). By reservation only. Leader Paul Farley 263-9320. Heavy rain cancels (call).


Snowshoe/Ski 3 miles (800’) to Peter Grubb Hut for a Saturday overnight and avoid the shopping crowd. $28 ($33 Non Sierra Club members) by Dec 1st to Jim Gannon; PO Box 1038, Rohnert Park, CA 94927. Non-refundable reservations. Please include email address /phone #. Optional stay at Clair Tappaan Lodge Fri 18th. Make reservations early to avoid disappointment. Lodging reservations 530-426-3632. Indicate you are with Peter Grubb trip-Redwood Chapter. Sno-Park pass necessary for parking at Sno-Park trailhead. Central commissary is planned. Meetingtime/location/provided with trip sign up. Contact Jim Gannonjgnannon99@sbcglobal.net (707)-525-1052. Leaders Jim Gannon and Don Anderson donslucklive.com.

Sat. Jan. 2 - North Group Ma-le’l Dunes Hike.

Getaway from it all, close to the town of Manila on Humboldt Bay. Expansive sand dunes, lush coastal forest, tidelands, the beach. No dogs. Bring lunch and water. Class: E-5-A. Call if you want to carpool as carpools are by prior arrangement. Meet 9 am BLM trailhead off SR 255 and Young Lane. Leader Ned nefdorsyth48@gmail.com, 825-3652.


Gunsight Rock via Johnson Trail Hike.

We’ll take Johnson Ridge trail up Hoo Mountain to Summit trail, over the top of Hoo to our lunch spot at Gunsight Rock and return. Gunsight has some of the best views of Sonoma Valley and Santa Rosa. Bring water, lunch, good hiking boots, layered clothing for winter hiking. Parts of the trail are steep, hiking poles may be helpful. Class: MS-7-B. Moderately strenuous to strenuous, 7 miles round trip. There is a $7 parking fee at the lot. Meet: Trailhead 10:15 am upper Regional Park parking lot at end of Pythian Road. Leader: Carl Inglin 538-8271 or chinglin@sonic.net. Rain cancels.

Sat.-Mon. Jan. 2-4 - Napa Group.

Snowshoe/Cross-country skiing at Loon Lake Chalet.

This is a 2 nights, 3 days trip. (Notice that we are going up on Sat. and coming back on Mon. to avoid traffic.) Do you know snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, sledding, all snow activities in the company of others? This remote chalet by a Sierra lake offers access to the calm beauty of winter. The cost is $25 for two nights. In the Sierra Club’s spirit of doing things together, we will share the cooking and purchasing of food. Space is limited–reserve in Dec.. A $25 check per person will reserve your spot. (Make it to “NapaOutings SC” and mail it to Isabelle Saint-Guilly 1020A Easum Dr. Napa CA 94558). Leader: Isabelle Saint-Guilly scnapaisabelle@gmail.com.


Snowshoe/Ski 5 miles (1500’) to Bradley Hut for MLK weekend Sat./Sun. overnight and back on Mon. midday. $48 ($58 Non Sierra Club members) by Dec 16th to Jim Gannon; PO Box 1038, Rohnert Park, CA 94927. Non-refundable reservations. Please include email address/phone #. Optional stay at Clair Tappaan lodge Fri 15th. Make reservations early to avoid disappointment. Lodging reservations 530-426-3632 indicate you are with Bradley trip-Redwood Chapter. Central commissary is planned. Meeting time/locations provided with trip sign up. Contact leader Jim Gannon (707)-525-1052 jgannon99@sbcglobal.net or Don Anderson donslucklive.com.

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**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 the Sierra Club’s spirit of doing things together, we will share the cooking and purchasing of food. Space is limited–reserve in Dec.. A $25 check per person will reserve your spot. (Make it to “NapaOutings SC” and mail it to Isabelle Saint-Guilly 1020A Easum Dr. Napa CA 94558). Leader: Isabelle Saint-Guilly scnapaisabelle@gmail.com.

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**Ratings for Outings Leaders**

**How fast or slow do you go?**

Wander 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 how (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: Isabelle Saint-Guilly Jim Gannon Phil Kohlmetz.

Fast-pace with few or no stops: Paul Bozzo Carol Magill Paul Farley

Moderate-pace with few stops:

Don Anderson Lorrie Lagaas Julie Kreis

Moderate-pace with more frequent stops:

Pete McGee Tim Bartice Melinda Groom Val Norderman Carol Vellutini Yvonne Kramer Martin Farber Brian Collett Carl Inglin Tom McFarling Nanette DeDonato Jonah Freedman Steve Devoto Ned Forsyth Nick Canton

Slower-paced: Allison Bronkall

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**Lacks Creek hike, leader Ned Forsyth.**
Outings

Chair Report

The Valley Fire in Lake County affected many people. Sierra Club members had relatives living there. Luckily most Lake Group outings leaders did not lose their homes. Some had to evacuate and had smoke damage but at least their personal belongings were not lost. One former outings leader, Boone Lodge, was not as lucky. He and his partner had only minutes to evacuate. Their entire house burnt down. Generations of memories, art, furniture, all melted into ashes. My last email from Boone indicated he was staying in Marin with a friend, does not plan to re-build and did not want to see his property. I can't imagine losing your life photos, your records, your car, your “stuff.” Former Sonoma Group leader Tim Bartice, taking a leave from hiking due to a serious leg injury, had moved up to Hidden Valley on the same street where my son lives. His house was saved. Tim is still recovering from his leg injury but I am hoping he will lead again next year for the Lake Group.

Redwood Chapter Outings are very limited the next two months. Let’s hope that the New Year will bring new leaders, outings chairs for all groups, and energy to recruit new members. I am hoping that Solano Group leader Brian Collett will return from Kuwait in 2016.

Last report was that the Sierra had 8’ of snow in many places. The ski season is open. Sign up for a winter trip to our huts. Jim Gannon is a great leader and would love to train new winter leaders.

The rains this winter will bring many challenges to our drought stricken forests, our remote roads, and our burnt forests. Check for flooding of creeks before leading hikes, and for closed trails. Many burnt trees have fallen down on trails and these are closed to hiking. Some will fall in high winds so check your weather before heading out.

–CAROL VELLUTINI, REDWOOD CHAPTER OUTINGS CHAIR

Sierra Club
Volunteer/Activist Opportunities

“Even if you’re on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

–Will Rogers

Group Hike Leaders: Many Redwood Chapter Groups need Outings Chairs. This volunteer position is working with leaders, coordinating with the Chapter Outings Chair, training leaders, keeping records, encouraging new leaders and community outreach. There is Outings Chair training available. Contact Carol 546-6308 or carolvsr@sonic.net for information.

Work with the Sonoma Group Water Committee! NOTICE: The Water Committee is now meeting at 5:00 PM on the first Mondays of most months in conjunction with the Conservation and Energy Committee meetings. The Water Committee develops and promotes measures to conserve, save, and reuse our water resources. Our goal is to preserve and improve the natural water environment, by promoting the responsible use of water and the safe reuse or disposal of our wastewaters. Help protect the quality of our water for people, wildlife, fish and other aquatic life. Check for our meeting dates in the Redwood Needles. To get on our Water Committee e-mail list, e-mail Len Holt at lholt@sonic.net. If you are not able to attend our meetings, you may e-mail Len Holt with your concerns and ideas. There will not be a meeting in December.

Get CHARGED by attending the Climate & Energy Committee. Join us on the 1st of the month at 5:00-5:30 p.m. at the Environmental Center in Santa Rosa, learn about what is going on in our community to fight climate change through renewable energy programs. Contact Chair Shirley Johnson-Foell: Email: Shirlgirl707@yahoo.com, home 206-1138, or call office 544-7651.

Benson Hut work party. Leader Jim Gannon.

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.

Camper Project Coordinator Sought

The North Group Sierra Club is looking for a volunteer to co-ordinate our long-standing program that sends deserving children to summer camp. This is a terrific opportunity for you to help enhance the lives of local children and help the Sierra Club give back to the community. Specific tasks include overseeing the printing and mailing of announcements to schools and past donors, receiving and helping to rate camper applications, thanking donors, and serving as the liaison between the camp and camper families. The project begins in late March and ends in August. For more information, please contact Gregg Gold at e-mail greggigold@aol.com (note that a J in the middle of all those g’s) or call him at 707-826-3740. Last year, North Group did not sponsor its usual four children to attend camp because we didn’t have a project coordinator. We are looking forward to hearing from you!
Lake Group Report

Return of the Zombie Project

As many Lake Group members will recall, back in 2010 the county approved a massive residential/golf course/resort development just outside the Community Growth Boundaries northwest of Lakeport. Called “Cristallago,” this project was notable for flawed environmental review and General Plan conflicts so severe that the Sierra Club brought suit, culminating in a mutually agreeable settlement. Economic upheaval and a series of bankruptcies and foreclosures followed, and it was generally assumed that the project was dead—not the first on this particular site to have met that fate.

But it turns out that Cristallago’s obituary may have been premature. The original developers are now trying to resurrect it, eliminating the golf course and substituting a 300-acre residential and resort development just outside the Community Growth Boundaries.

So pleased that locals taking action on climate issues in general. On Nov 18 in Lower Lake. We’re really excited to be able to feature a repeat screening of the award-winning documentary “A Walk Through Time, the Story of Anderson Marsh,” with archeologist Dr. John Parker, Koi Nation Chair Dino Beltran, and representatives of the Anderson Marsh Interpretive Association on hand to talk about the Marsh, the native people who have lived there for thousands of years, and the events leading to its protection as a State Park. Next on the agenda: our annual holiday potluck party, coming up on December 11.

—VICTORIA BRANDON, LAKE GROUP CONSERVATION CHAIR

Napa Group Report

Climate Change

The Napa group expects to be intensely involved with the Napa County Climate Action Plan, and with climate issues in general. On Nov 5th, Chris Benz and Linda Brown led a climate-change lobbying workshop for about 40 interested citizens. We are so pleased that locals taking action on this, the worst environmental crisis in human history.

Reverie Winery: A Small Victory for Rule of Law

In a partial reversal of a Planning Commission (PC) decision, the Napa County Board of Supervisors voted to increase Reverie Winery’s annual total of allowed visitors to only 5,640 people, where the PC had voted to allow 10,200 visitors. You may recall that this winery had committed multiple violations of its use permit, including exceeding visitation and production quotas, allowing visitors into a cave permitted for production only, and dumping spoils from construction near a creek.

George Calyonidis, the private citizen who had filed the self-financed appeal, was unhappy with this result. He would have liked to see the winery forced back to the terms of its use permit for three years. This small victory came about as the result of intensive public pressure, in a revolt against a prevailing county policy of “forgive and forget” for the dozens (hundreds?) of wineries which annually abuse the terms of their permits.

Thanks to all who submitted comments or attended the hearing! We must keep the pressure on if we are to change the tide against unregulated, illegal and un punished over-development of Napa County!

Whatever Happened to... the Walt Ranch?

Walt Ranch is the proposal to establish a 300+ acre vineyard on Atlas Peak, resulting in the destruction of over 28,000 trees, mainly oaks. This huge project raised many environmental concerns, including habitat, groundwater, greenhouse gas generation, and so forth.

Last fall, the Sierra Club along with several interested community groups mounted a vigorous challenge to the Walt Ranch proposal by disputing the adequacy of the draft Environmental Impact Report. A response to our comments was expected last summer.

The County Planning Department now informs us not to expect a response before next spring. We are cautiously optimistic that the reason for this unusual delay, is that collectively we raised so many valid concerns regarding the draft EID that the developer is having difficulty crafting an adequate response. This could spell problems for the proposed project. Required studies and mitigation measures might be a bigger expense than he had anticipated.

Stay tuned, and thanks to all who contributed money, expertise, and time to this important effort to protect our precious Napa wildlands!

—Nancy Tamarski, NAPA GROUP CHAIR

North Group Report

Essential reading: What is really going on with western wildfires and how can humans adapt?

There’s a new book out that westerners who value wildlife and wildland will want to read. The Ecological Importance of Mixed-Severity Fires: Nature’s Phoenix marshals science from around the West and globe to challenge what one of the authors calls the fire suppression paradigm. Heavily promoted by the Forest Service and firefighting establishment, the fire suppression paradigm holds that fire suppression has been effective across the American West, therefore, we can not allow fires to burn naturally in any forests or brushlands and must aggressively “manage” vegetation, including “thinning” public forests to protect them from unnaturally intense and destructive fires.

The fire suppression paradigm makes sense on its face and many westerners, the vast majority of media and some environmental groups have bought it completely. But, as Nature’s Phoenix points out in detail, science does not support the paradigm. In fact, the preponderance of relevant studies find that western fires are not getting larger or more intense; mixed-severity fire, including occasional large areas of high intensity fire, are not only natural but an essential western habitat.

Most vegetation in the West evolved with fire and certain plants and animals require intense burns or a diverse fire mosaic that includes all burn intensities.

In Northwest California some locals have long known that large fires do not conform to Forest Service one-size-fits-all simplifications. Since 1987, activists with the Klamath Forest Alliance have walked and studied most large fires that burned in the region. Time and again KFA activists documented the ineffectiveness of fire suppression in backcountry as well as the unnecessary watershed damage firefighting often causes. KFA’s fire reports, the latest of which are available on the organization’s web page, document the waste and folly of attempting to control large fires in rugged western landscapes, particularly in backcountry.

While most of Nature’s Phoenix focuses on science, editors Dominick DellaSala and Chad Hanson do not hesitate to highlight the policy implications the science suggests. The book’s final section makes the case against post-fire logging and suggests that astronomically escalating fire suppression costs can be substantially reduced by improved community protection coupled with ecological fire use, that is, allowing natural wildfires to burn when communities and essential infrastructure are not threatened.

Those who want to learn about the “ecological and biodiversity benefits” of everything from megafires to low-intensity underburns, and from chapparral fires to fires in old forests will want to read The Ecological Importance of Mixed-Severity Fires: Nature’s Phoenix. Along the way you will get analysis of the social and political dimensions of western wildfires as well.

—JEFF PACE, NORTH GROUP EXCOM MEMBER, NG WATER CHAIR, REDWOOD CHAPTER GRAZING CHAIR

Classified Ads

LIVE CHRISTMAS TREES—Get your live, potted Doug Fir or Coast Redwood holiday tree at the M&M Ranch, 880 Austin Creek Road, Cazadero. Open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. from Nov. 28 to Dec. 24. We are just one mile north of Highway 116 between Monte Rio and Jenner. (707) 632-5602. Enjoy your tree, then plant it, or return it!
The past six years of my life have been marked by movement. I have been around the world and experienced many different life adventures from playing trumpet in China to conducting seismic research in the glacial valleys of British Columbia. The most memorable and fulfilling times have always been attached to outdoor experiences; backpacking from rim to rim in the Grand Canyon, sleeping in the Mesquite Flat sand dunes of Death Valley, exploring the ancient Permain Reef in the Guadalupe Mountains, and many others.

Yearning for a profession in the geosciences, I landed in California a little over a year ago when my husband won an audition to work as a musician for the USAF band. Due to scholastic policy at UC Davis and Sacramento State, my only option as a nontraditional student is to petition to apply as an engineering student at UC Davis, where I hope to double major in geology. Solano Community College has thankfully allowed me to begin lower division coursework. I see it as an opportunity to attain a degree that will mix my passion for earth science with a degree that will make me a diversified and productive citizen. Geotechnical engineers are responsible for managing the earth and how we interact with it: upon completion of my degree, I will be a viable candidate to design bridge bases, highways, earthquake damage prevention systems, as well as to conduct studies on geo-environmental problems while hopefully helping to develop solutions.

I am excited to apply all of my ambition and skill to becoming a professional engineer and geologist. I hope this scholarship opportunity will help set me apart from the average student, while also easing financial burden and reducing student debt, so I can be an ever more informed scientist and hopeful professional.

—ERIN (CARRICK) NEBEL

Mendocino Group Report

The EIR for the Mendocino Coast Transfer Station (CCTS FEIR) has been withdrawn indefinitely. Officially there has been no reason given. Mendocino Group knows that the California Department of Parks and Recreation has withdrawn its participation in the land swap. With that change in the conditions and elements new “enabling legislation” will have to be written and passed by the California legislature. At the meeting in July to unveil the FEIR before a joint meeting of the Mendocino Board of Supervisors and the Fort Bragg City Council, Mike Sweeney, Executive Director of Mendocino Solid Waste Authority (MSWA), reported that eleven hour letters from CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife and CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation necessitated a postponement. At which point the members of the Board of Supes and the City Council, to an individual, excoriated local activists and those who worked “behind the scenes” to manipulate agency members to write these last minute letters. Unsaid was the fact that the Agencies had commented many, many times and their remarks were ignored. The acreage proposed to be swapped by Parks containing second growth redwood which is Marbled Murrelet habitat, was not discussed. It is under the protection of Parks and would be available to be logged if it passes into the purview of Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF). A unique area known as Mushroom Corners that has been visited by scholars and investigators and mushroom enthusiasts for decades is part of the proposed swap from Parks to JDSF. These areas were not referenced in the EIR. Fish and Wildlife pointed out the mis-categorization of the Pygmy site; that “the Pygmy Forest or Mendocino Pygmy Cypress Woodlands (MPCW) is recognized as a Sensitive Natural Community with global and State conservation rankings of G2 and S2 respectively”. Fish and Wildlife said, among other things, there was an inadequate analysis of feasible Project alternatives that would substantially reduce or eliminate most of the significant environmental impacts of the Project.

At our most recent Mendo ExCom meeting a former member of the Sierra Club made a plea in opposition to the Group’s position and in favor of the Project. This individual stated that he is no longer a member of the Sierra Club because the timber wars are over. In Albion a group of local citizens has sued Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC) re an 800+ acre Timber Harvest Plan. MRC has filed plans to log extensively, over 9000 acres, of their local coastal holdings. Along with the increase in TTH acreage under the axe, there is the issue of Hack and Squirt. There have been 90,000 acres poisoned with Imazapyr. That’s 90,000 acres of standing dead tanoak. Tanoak is considered a weed tree, a tragic perversion of the importance of this member of the forest ecosystem which fed the original people for centuries and which is so important to forest creatures. (See THE TANOAK TREE by Frederika Bowcutt, a worthy read full of information on the tanoak).

—MARY WALSH, MENDOCINO GROUP CHAIR

Sonoma Group Report

Take a Bus to the November 21st climate rally in Oakland!

The December climate talks in Paris are crucial for stopping climate change. Bay Area environmental groups are rallying at a big event in Oakland to urge effective action in Paris. Take a bus to the march from downtown Santa Rosa or SSU. For more details see http://www.norcalclimatemob.net/busses.

December 2 Holiday Networking Party

Meet old friends and new - the Sierra Club Sonoma Group and Sonoma County Conservation Council will be having a joint Holiday Party on:

Wednesday, December 2 from 5:00–8:00pm,
food, wine, music and hot cider
Sebastopol Grange, 6000 Sebastopol Ave., on Hwy 12, just east of Sebastopol

$25 suggested donation includes dinner and one drink, volunteers needed for more info: Wendy Krupnick, wlk@sonic.net, 544–4582

THIS is the Year to put Solar Panels on Your House

There is still a 30% federal tax credit for solar panels, but it’s due to expire next year. Solar panels are the cheapest they have ever been and the consequences of adding more CO2 to the atmosphere are becoming depressingly clear. Act now!

Support the Sierra Club

If you wish your bequest to be used locally, be sure to specify “Sierra Club Redwood Chapter” or the name of your local Group in your bequest.

Keep the SMART Train Station at Corona Road

SMART staff are considering moving the location of the proposed north-east Petaluma train station from Corona Road near Hwy 101 to a site near McDowell and Old Redwood Hwy. This change would move the station from a centrally located residential area to an industrial site at the north edge of Petaluma, next to a community separator and the commuter traffic snarl of Penngrove.

Our concerns are that this will create development pressure in the rural area between Petaluma and Penngrove and into the community separator to the east, as well as adding to serious traffic problems. The Petaluma City Council is in favor of keeping the station at Corona Road. Please email the chair of the SMART board, Judy Arnold, at jarnold@marincounty.org and ask that any change of the station site require a full environmental review (EIR).

Next Sonoma Group Meetings

Location: Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway in Santa Rosa
December 7: Conservation issues from 5:00 to 6:30pm, Executive Committee meeting from 6:30pm 8:00pm.
January 4, 2016: Conservation issues from 5:00 to 6:30pm, Executive Committee meeting from 6:30pm 8:00pm.

—SUZANNE DOYLE, SIERRA CLUB REDWOOD GROUP VICE CHAIR

Solano Group Annual Scholarship Award

The December climate talks in Paris are crucial for stopping climate change. Bay Area environmental groups are rallying at a big event in Oakland to urge effective action in Paris. Take a bus to the march from downtown Santa Rosa or SSU. For more details see http://www.norcalclimatemob.net/busses.

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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. Meetings are located in Sonoma County unless otherwise noted. 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 Coddingtown).

Thurs. Dec. 3 - 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. Dec. 7 - Sonoma Group.
Santa Rosa Environmental Center
55A Ridgway is the site of related meetings:

Water Committee – No December meeting. Contact Len Holt: 707-527-7516 or lholt@sonic.net
Climate & Energy Committee at 5:30 p.m., Contact Shirley, shrigirl707@yahoo.com, 707-206-1138.
Conservation Committee at 6:00 p.m. Info: Suzanne Doyle carsort@gmail.com
Sonoma Group ExCom at 6:30 p.m. Info: Suzanne Doylecarsort@gmail.com

Coming Clean – November 6, 2015

The Pipeline Stops Here

The Keystone XL tar sands pipeline was supposed to reach from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. Today, it ended in the Oval Office.

President Obama’s decision to deny a permit for the pipeline is a tremendous victory for the millions of people who for years have been raising their voices, organizing their communities, and demonstrating in the streets to stop this polluting project that would have signaled “full-speed ahead” for tar sands oil. In 2008, when alarms were first raised about Keystone XL, we were up against incredible odds. Every expert on energy policy believed that approval of the full route to the Gulf was a done deal, and with good reason. Big energy projects like Keystone XL had almost never been rejected—and certainly not on the basis of climate disruption.

What set Keystone XL apart, though, was how it dramatized the disconnect between reducing carbon emissions and opening up vast new sources of fossil fuels. And in the case of tar sands, we are talking about a source that is not only enormous but also carbon intense. The UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made it clear: For us to have at least a 50 percent chance of limiting global temperature rise to a survivable level, fossil fuel corporations must leave three-quarters of their known reserves in the ground.

Faced with the sudden realization that the fight to save our climate could be lost on the tar sands fields of Alberta, a seemingly quixotic opposition movement began to spread the message that we could instead say “no” to dirty fuels like tar sands and “yes” to clean energy alternatives. It was a message the ultimately reached all the way to the White House.

But although President Obama took decisive action today, the real heroes are the ordinary people who refused to give in, give up, or give way. They came together from an incredible array of backgrounds and communities—united by a determination not to let Big Oil have its way. From climate activists marching in the streets of Manhattan to farmers, ranchers, and Tribal leaders in Nebraska who stood up for their land and water, this was a broad, deep, and powerful coalition. And in that sense, it’s a vital model for the greater clean energy and climate-action movement that can move our country—and the world—from the dirty fossil fuels of the past to a 100 percent clean energy future.

But let’s not forget the man who got the people’s message. For Barack Obama, this was a principled decision in the tradition of our greatest presidents. By saying “no” to Keystone XL, he has established an Obama Climate Test: All energy projects are not created equal, and it can never be a test of the best interests of the United States—or any nation—to steer from our children’s future for the sake of reckless profits today. As the President said today, approving this project would have undercut American leadership on climate, and that’s not something we can afford. The President noted that we will have to leave some fossil fuels in the ground, unburned, if we hope to protect the future of our planet. That message needs to resound here at the White House.

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So let’s thank the president for doing what is right for both America and the planet. But let’s also remember that this will surely not be the final test of his resolve, as the fossil fuel industry uses all its enormous financial resources to maintain its grip on our society. President Obama has proven that he knows how make the right decision. Our job is to help him keep doing it.