Wildfires Spark Attention on Housing and Climate

BY SHOSHANA HEBSHI, REDWOOD CHAPTER COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Since the fires struck, the dominant story has been one of resilience and community support throughout the North Bay. As days passed, deeper stories of causality, urban growth, housing stock and climate change have surfaced, including a few appearing on the Sierra Club’s website.

In an Oct. 13 article (http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/california-s-wildfires-point-new-normal), writer Jonathan Hahn directs us back to the devastating fires that consumed the Oakland Hills in 1991. That event was catastrophic, destroying more than 2,500 homes. Our fires stretched across four counties and claimed more than 200,000 acres and destroyed nearly 8,000 structures and killed at least 42 people, according to the Press Democrat. This one is for the record books, yet is the “new normal,” Hahn writes.

Sonoma County took the hardest hit, losing about 3,500 homes, while Napa County lost more than 500. The Redwood Valley fire in Mendocino County destroyed 313 homes, and the Tubbs fire in Lake County razed 136 residences. It’s estimated that Sonoma and rural Napa Counties each lost at least 5 percent of its housing stock, including entire neighborhoods in Santa Rosa.

Hahn goes on to state, “The breadth and intensity of the disaster caught many people by surprise. But to fire ecologists, conservationists, and policy experts, there’s nothing surprising about this. It’s the New Normal, it’s been here for years, and we’re badly in need of leadership and a national dialogue on what to do about it.”

Is this new normal something we can attribute to climate change? It’s not as simple an answer as expected. This fire event, which was massive, had all the perfect ingredients: a hot, dry summer (normal for the area, but hotter than normal), increased dried-out vegetation from excessive winter and spring rains (too normal), incredible gusts of hot, dry winds that were clocked up to 96 miles per hour (normal enough to be dubbed El Diablo winds but still not ordinary).

This new normal, writes Heather Smith on Oct. 11 (http://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/california-flames-again), is the instability of our changing climate. We shouldn’t be surprised about anything burning anymore, especially with the National Climate Assessment predicting that by 2080, wildfires will consume four times as much of the Northwest each year as what has burned over the last decade.

The calamitous Tubbs Fire, which started on the night of Oct. 8 in Calistoga, spread so fast it had first responders dumbfounded. Part of its severe devastation came from the fact that it destroyed so many homes and businesses in Santa Rosa and threatened two hospitals. Yet, this fire followed nearly the same path as the 1964 Hailey fire, which only destroyed about 100 homes.

Santa Rosa’s population has grown to about 175,000 from about 30,000 in 1960, and that means more people living in areas once unsubsidized, like in the path of the Tubbs fire.

“What makes this fire different is the scope of it and the fact that the smoldering-half-century has placed so much development in its path,” wrote local columnist Gaye LeBaron on Oct. 18 in the Washington Post. “In 1964, there were very few houses in the area that burned. In its heyday it extended and the population increased by 135,000, the open land in that earlier fire corridor became a destination for developers.”

Sierra Club has long been an advocate for smart, sustainable growth, protecting open space, promoting “Wildfires Spark Attention” cont. on page 6

Napa Wildfire Experience: Rising to the Challenge

BY NANCY TAMARISK, NAPA GROUP VICE CHAIR

When we were evacuated out of Circle Oaks after midnight on the morning of October 9th, we were unaware that just over our ridge the fast-moving Atlas Peak fire had already killed 6 people and destroyed hundreds of homes. Escaping north and west to our friend’s house in Yountville we were transected by the eerie vision of orange flame serpents snaking up the hillsides.

Within hours of the breakout of the fire, Napa Valley College, my employer, opened up an evacuation shelter. That first night we hosted 80 evacuees. When the city of Calistoga was evacuated, the number quickly surged to almost 800, housed in 3 separate buildings. Perhaps a dozen organizations including the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Napa Health and Human Services supported shelter operations.

As a nurse, and head of College Student Health, I donned a bright yellow vest and threw myself into the operation, helping to coordinate round-the-clock medical teams. Over the next 8 days, this challenge evolved into an intense and inspiring experience.

That first day we scrambled to assemble medical supplies and to meet the health needs of the residents. In the early evening, the medical teams left, and finding myself the only remaining health professional, I settled in for the night.

The generosity of the community, the ingenuity and selflessness of workers and volunteers, and the spirit of the evacuees were overwhelming. A Kaiser medical team appeared each morning, and, after that first night, volunteer Emergency Medical Response teams from other counties, as well as individual volunteer nurse and EMT’s showed up for each graveyard shift. Counselors from various agencies were posted to the shelter. We tended to acute illnesses and injuries, ordered medications for those who had left them at home, sent a few people off to the ER, calmed the anxious, and oriented confused elders. The question of health insurance never arose. All who needed treatment got it.

The show line featured great food donated by Napa restaurants. By the weekend, masses of a country music band, and costumed action heroes showed up. Food trucks from as far away as San Francisco distributed free food.

Over a hundred people crowded out in the parking lots, preferring to sleep in their vehicles. Sadly, many of those car campers were undocumented residents, who, despite assurances, could not be getting themselves to trust the shelter organization to protect them from ICE. Volunteers worked the parking lot, carrying out blankets and food.

As for my home, the Circle Oaks neighborhood was spared by the valiant efforts of firefighters. Each day I drive to work past the homes of those who were not so fortunate.
Tell Congress Now: No Drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge!

Big Oil has been fighting to open Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to drilling for decades, and every step of the way the American people have stood up and said NO. Now the Trump administration and Republican leaders in Congress are poised to hand this incredible piece of land over to the fossil fuel industry. This would destroy one of the world’s most iconic and vital landscapes – critical for the survival of many Alaska Native people, including the Gwich’in Nation, and home to migratory birds from all six continents and the porcupine caribou herd. With climate change already threatening the fragile refuge, it’s unacceptable that the administration and congress are putting the needs of Big Business and Big Oil before our planet and ecosystems. Activists and environmentalists have been fighting against dangerous drilling here for decades – and we can’t give up. We need to demand that Congress act now to protect America’s last unspoiled wilderness from oil drilling. Visit https://www.sierraclub.org/ to sign the petition.

Editor’s Note: According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, “The Arctic Refuge is the only national conservation area where polar bears are regularly found and the most consistently used polar bear denning area in Alaska. These are just two of many reasons the Refuge is such an incredible natural area.”
While our communities rebuild from the devastating wildfires that began Oct. 8 and 9 and swept across our region, we are heartened by the outpouring of support and community-building efforts that have helped us heal and get back on our feet.

When we look around at the charred landscape that surrounds our neighborhoods, we are reminded daily of the immense power of the firestorm that took 42 lives and burned nearly 8,000 structures and over 200,000 acres across four counties. There’s a human impulsion to rebuild, to resume life as it was. In nature, there is the cycle of regeneration that comes after a fire. While our instinct tells us to help and our hearts are in the right place, in most cases, it’s best to let nature heal itself.

Vegetation

Most immediately spotted are the blackened hills, the brown trees and patches of nothing where trees, brush or grass once grew. In our minds, when we see charred landscape we assume it’s dead. But California plants have adapted to fire, and some even require fire to grow and spread. It is an essential part of the ecosystem. According to CalFire, native plants like ceanothus and lodgepole pine need fire to germinate, and some faunal species such as black-backed woodpeckers can reproduce only in trees that have been killed by fire. Oaks and redwood are especially fire adapted. After a fire, if the cambium just under the bark is white or pink, the tree will most likely revive. It is recommended that property owners wait a year before curbing down a burned native tree unless it presents a danger, and pruning of dead limbs is advised.

The spring following the 2015 Valley fire in Lake County that destroyed much of the community of Middletown saw an abundance of wildflowers blooming over the once-charred landscape. The blooms were so intense, it drew gawkers from all around. Botanist Karen Sullivan said some of the native wildflowers called “fire followers” need the fire to sprout and bloom. Hot fires crack the hard coats of seeds, which may have been dormant for decades, and facilitate germination when rain arrives, according to Greg Giusti, a forest and wildland ecology advisor with the University of California Extension. He told the Press Democrat in 2016 that fire is an “integral part of California landscape.”

Animal life will also rebound in its own time. Pamela Jackson of Redwood Chapter said some of the native wildflowers drew gawkers from all around. Botanist Karen Sullivan said some of the native wildflowers called “fire followers” need the fire to sprout and bloom. Hot fires crack the hard coats of seeds, which may have been dormant for decades, and facilitate germination when rain arrives, according to Greg Giusti, a forest and wildland ecology advisor with the University of California Extension. He told the Press Democrat in 2016 that fire is an “integral part of California landscape.”

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Waterways

Following fire, waterways can be impacted in a number of ways. According to CalFire, the decreased vegetation means more water will run into streams and lakes as it is not being soaked up by roots. After a fire that burns as many homes and structures as the Tubbs and Nuns fire burned in Santa Rosa, Sonoma and Kenwood, watershed managers are nervous about incoming rain washing toxic ash into the waterways.

According to the Press Democrat, there are 617 streams in fire-affected areas that could have an impact on aquatic life and drinking water. City and county workers are working to offset the runoff by placing gravel bags and straw wattles around storm drains to divert and absorb runoff.

Rebuilding

California is the most populous state in the nation and the third-largest by area. While most of the population is concentrated in cities, the state has a general expansion of suburban communities moving outward from city centers. For instance, fire generally loses to the sprawl of single-family homes and the strip-malls that accompany them in outer-lying subdivisions. As homes are built farther out into fire-prone wildland areas, property loss and death resulting from wildfires has increased.

CalFire says the housing incursion into wildland areas “makes it difficult to maintain the natural role of fire and to protect human lives and property.” According to Jon Keeley, a research fire ecologist at the U.S. Geological Survey, about one-third of Californians live in fire-prone areas encroaching on wildlands. “We need to respect the fact that these are going to happen in the future and that what we need to do is we need to have communities adapt to the fires,” he said on NPR on Oct. 25.

While Northern California works to rebuild from the October fires, there is work and soul searching to do about what kind of communities we want to live in. Sierra Club has long advocated for growth and development that takes ecosystems, transit and affordability into account. Rushing to rebuild without taking into consideration these ideas to make a community more livable and equitable could hurt the area more than it helps to recover. In other words, this is an opportunity to repopulate the land for swallows, bluebirds, and wrens.

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Recovering from Wildfire, Healing the Land

Benefit for the Environmental Center of Sonoma County Holiday Networking Dinner Party

Monday, December 11, 2016, 5 – 8 pm

Location: Sebastopol Grange Hall, 6000 Sebastopol Ave/Hwy 12, (approx. 2.5 miles west of Fulton Rd.)

Join members of many local environmental groups for good food, wine, hot cider and music with the NewGrange Jam Band – Bluegrass with a holiday theme!

Hosted by the Sonoma County Conservation Council, the Sierra Club Sonoma Group and the Sebastopol Grange.

$30 per person includes dinner and one drink! RSVP optional but appreciated.

Get tickets online at envirocenterssoco.org, mail a check to SCCC: PO Box 4346, Santa Rosa, CA 95402 or buy at the door.

Volunteers needed to bake or cook, set up, clean up and drink service.

To help or for more information, contact Wendy Krupnick, 544-4582, wlk@sonic.net

“Highway 37 Plan Rolls” continued from page 1

inexpensive modifications to existing traffic lanes and intersections that could make carpooling an attractive way to ease traffic congestion. Ferry and passenger rail service should also be in the corridor plan.

Other groups, including the Sonoma County Transportation and Land-Use Coalition, Land Paths, Audubon Society and Greenbelt Alliance are also sharing concerns and suggestions with the Policy Committee focus on wetland preservation. Public meetings are scheduled every other month at rotating sites around the region.

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.

Redwood Needles December 1, 2017 3
**Sonoma Group Report**

**Special Firestorm Report**

As I write this, the ground is wet and the clouds dispersing after the first rains. A few short weeks ago, the landscape was on fire and smoke was everywhere. Now Sonoma County is recovering, rebuilding and restoring our communities and landscape.

The Sierra Club Sonoma Group Executive Committee offers heartfelt condolences to everyone who has lost their homes, jobs or a loved one from the fire. Everyone in Sonoma County has been affected, and we will be forever changed. Several of the ExCom members evacuated during the fires, and we are all fortunate to be safe. We thank the firefighters, emergency responders, county and city staff and elected officials for their heroic actions.

Our world has shifted again. We are helping where we can and sharing our stories. Sierra Club is looking ahead to find ways to help lead a resilient, environmentally sound and just recovery.

In immediate response to the fires, the Redwood Chapter took the lead on establishing the North Bay Just and Resilient Futures Fund to help with immediate fire relief assistance. You can donate here: http://www.sierraclub.org/redwood.

**The Land**

Treasured open space, such as Sugarloaf Ridge State Park, Hood Mountain Regional Park and Annadel State Park, were burned by the fires. In Sonoma Valley, the golden light of late October revealed a mosaic of charcoal, yellow and deep green.

While the burned areas were extensive, from the valley floor you could hardly tell. To be honest, the landscape was gorgeous. It will survive and thrive in most places. After all, the California landscape evolved with wildfires, though not necessarily at this level intensity.

Already, green shoots are popping through the charred surface at Pepperwood Preserve, where deer and coyote were spotted by returning staff members.

Some naturalists are predicting an unprecedented wildflower display in the spring.

The biggest challenge will be soil erosion from the rains and coming storms. Sonoma County land protection agencies and organizations are already at work. You can help with erosion control and prevent contamination of our water through the new Friends of Sonoma County Communities Taskforce. Simply register as a volunteer on sonomacounty.recovers.org and add the label “watershed”: https://sonomacounty.recovers.org.

Among the many conditions now working to address fire recovery and rebuilding, Sonoma County Rises (SOCOrises.org) is an emerging grassroots action network of people with the common goal to rebuild Sonoma County with full community involvement as decisions are made. Express your views and engage by going to SOCOrises.org.

**The Built Environment**

The fire blasted through the Mark West Springs area, over Fountainaire, down through the community separator at Larkfield-Wikukip, and into the Coffey Park neighborhood inside the Urban Growth Boundary. The losses may have been worse if not for these longstanding growth policies that have prevented sprawl into the green buffers separating our towns and cities. We need them more than ever.

Our challenge now is how to rebuild in a way that allows people to quickly rebuild their homes while reducing fire risk. The risk of fire in wildlands-urban interface areas such as Fountainaire is widely recognized. The recently overlapping maps of the Tubbs Fire and the 1964 Hazy Fire are eye-opening.

The housing crisis facing Sonoma County before the firestorm was now exacerbated by the loss of about 5,300 homes, nearly 3,000 in Santa Rosa alone, representing about 5 percent of the housing stock. The City of Santa Rosa and the County

**Mayacamas after the wildfires, October 2017.**

**North Group Report**

North Group Water Chair Felice Pace has been in the field checking to see if Chinook salmon ascending the Scott River, a major Klamath River tributary, will be able to make it to their natal spawning streams to spawn this year. In early November Felice found that major spawning streams were still not accessible due to stream dewatering at the tail end of the Chinook Salmon run. He also found that water was being diverted and pastures were being irrigated even though the irrigation season was supposed to have ended pursuant to the Scott River and Shackleford Water Rights Adjudications. The Forest Service has a right to flows for fish in Scott River but that right is regularly not met in late summer and fall which negatively impacts salmon and steelhead. In November Scott River flows are supposed to be 200 cubic feet per second but, as measured at the USGS river flow gauge, flows in early November this year were less than half that amount. Felice has asked the State Water Board’s Public Trust and Enforcement divisions to look into the situation and to end out-of-season pasture irrigation.

**Mendocino Group Report**

**Frenetic Times**

Mendocino County survived an intensely chaotic week of fires, death and disruption with millions of acts of compassion and heroism. Post-fire recovery efforts are being implemented with dazzling speed, often with little regard for long-term ecological effects—swiping aside long-term planning regulations in the rush to act.

At this point there are many more questions than experienced answers. Where will we dispose of tons of toxic debris? Can we afford to rebuild in steep canyons above waterways? Does hydro-seeding suppress native plant reclamation? Is there any evidence that the clay/cement slurry in use actually helps mitigate erosion? Can the landscape, after all, evolve with fire for thousands of years? Are we capable of learning to work with nature? We have entered the rainy season and as it is said about the best laid plans...they gang off s'gap.

In October, Mendocino Group members began building alliances with First American communities, attending an Acres Celebration in Manchester/Pt. Arena, and participating in a Forest Health roundtable and Salmon Fest in Round Valley. A lively discussion ensued over whether “wilderness” means “untouched by humans,” or whether we might have a role to play in sustaining and deepening a healthier home.

**Non-Sierra Club Outings & Events**

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

Sonoma County Regional Parks trail work days.

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

Garden Volunteer Days: First Friday of the Month, 9am – noon. Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa. Enjoy our native plant garden! Volunteers are essential in beautifying our site. Share your expertise or learn new skills by getting involved today! http://lagunafoundation.org/volunteer_garden.html

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

Details of the site location announced 2 weeks in advance of the workday (various sites along the Laguna) Help care for the Laguna and restore critical wildlife habitat! Joining the Laguna Stewardship effort is a meaningful way to volunteer while enjoying the outdoors. http://lagunafoundation.org/volunteer_lagunastewardships.html

**December 1, 2017 Redwood Needles**

–TERI SHORE, SONOMA GROUP CHAIR

–ROBIN LELER, MENDOCINO GROUP CHAIR

–TERI SHORE, SONOMA GROUP CHAIR
Every city in Solano County has Christmas tree recycling programs.

Check with your Recycling Coordinator for details. The Boy Scouts also have a tree recycling program in many areas, for a donation. You will receive a flyer if your neighborhood is covered.

Solano Group Meetings

Please attend Solano Group meetings, usually on the first Monday of each month.

Our next dates are: December 4, 2017, January 8, 2018 (likely), February 5, 2018. To confirm, call Jane at 707-319-6398.

VALCORE Recycling and Paper Shredding Updates

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

WEEDAY SHREDNING from 10 and 11:30 for a charge of $.75 per pound for lunch (CERTID OR DEBT ONLY).

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

Lake Group Report

Wild and Scenic Film Festival a Great Success

After nearly a year of planning, Lake Group recently hosted its first-ever Wild and Scenic Film Festival. The event was held on Saturday, October 8, at the Soper Reedy Community Theatre in Lakeport; besides a series of prize winning films from last January's acclaimed Wild and Scenic Festival in Nevada City, it featured some local films and a live presentation with musical accompaniment by Lake County's own ecology professor Dr. Harry Lyons about the Middle Creek Marsh Restoration Project. Festival proceeds have been earmarked to benefit the project.

In the words of Vice Chair Cherri Kesner, who proposed this idea in the first place and who did the lion's share of the work: "People had a wonderful time. We made a lot of dollars, I've paid for all my books, access codes, parking passes and other fees, with a little bit of money left over to help pay for next year. Again, I am so very grateful for the Sierra Club and I've never been so honored to win such an amazing scholarship."

CONTRIBUTOR: JANE BOGNER, EDITOR: GREG PETERSON

Napa Group Report

Napa Group to Oppose Limited Winery Ordinance

This ordinance allows fast-tracking of “small winery” approvals, avoiding public hearings. Its definition of “small wineries”—up to 30,000 gal.—would include over 50% of winery applications, and avoid public scrutiny of concerns such as water, traffic, and infrastructure.

The Oak Woodland-Watershed Protection Ordinance

The Oak Woodland-Watershed Protection Ordinance, which was kept off the Ballot in 2016 due to legal technicalities has been revised with input from the Napa Valley Vintners. Napa Group is Appraising for support for this ordinance prior to its getting the requisite signatures to be placed on the ballot.

Palmaz Heliport Application Update

Palmaz Heliport application, turned down by the planning commission, has been appealed to the BOS. Meanwhile, an initiative to prevent more private helicopters is being prepared by the Napa County Transportation Commission.

Climate Change Film and Discussion

Environmental Education Coalition of Napa County and Napa Climate are sponsoring a film on Climate Change: "Before the Flood" for Dec 14th. It will include a discussion of local responses to climate change.

–NANCY TAMARISK, NAPA GROUP VICE CHAIR

Meetings

Mon. Dec. 4 - Solano Group ExCom.

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. 4 - Sonoma Group.

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


We're keeping our ears close to the ground. 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.


North Group 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 Adoni Center Conference Room on the Eureka Waterfront. For more information, contact Gregg at (707) 826-3740.

Sat., Jan. 6 - Redwood Chapter ExCom. And ConsCom.

Location: Santa Rosa Environmental Center, Conservation Committee meets at 10 a.m., ExCom meets 1-3 p.m. Info: Victoria vbrandon@lakenetlakeinfo

Mon., Jan. 8 – 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

Napa Group

Our next dates are: January 8, 2018, February 5, 2018, March 4, 2018. Please attend Solano Group meetings for details. The Boy Scouts also have a tree recycling program in many areas, for a donation. You will receive a flyer if your neighborhood is covered.

Solano Group, Lawrence Avenue, Vallejo from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. There is a charge of $.50 per pound (CASH or CHECK ONLY) of paper shredded. (Maximum: 100 pounds)

WEEDAY SHREDNING from 10 and 11:30 for a charge of $.75 per pound for lunch (CERTID OR DEBT ONLY).

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

Solano Group Awards Annual Scholarship

Congratulations to this year’s recipient of the $600 Sierra Club Solano Group Scholarship, Lawrence Antonio. Lawrence is a business major who has completed 46 units at Solano College, with a 3.7 GPA. Lawrence has loved the outdoors since he was a child. He played soccer and tennis in high school, and spent many hours outside skateboarding and running. He is an avid hiker (at Sugarloaf State Park, Pena Altos, North Rockville Park) and snowboarder. He enjoys nature and all of its beauty. Says Antonio, “The award of six hundred dollars may not mean much to some, but to me, it meant the world. I have been more motivated than ever in my life, but winning a scholarship amongst such fierce and hard working individuals blows my mind. This scholarship is very important to me, because this is the first time in a long time that I have ever felt that my hard work has been recognized, and for that, I am very thankful and appreciative of the Club. Earning this scholarship tells me that my work is not done, and it has given me the motivation to work even harder. The scholarship money has helped my life tremendously. I have paid for all my books, access codes, parking passes and other fees, with a little bit of money left over to help pay for more books. Again, I am so very grateful for the Sierra Club and I’ve never been so honored to win such an amazing scholarship.”

Solano Group

Solano Breeze Corner
Covering Benicia, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun, Vacaville and Vallejo
sieroclubsolano@gmail.com 707-319-6398

Napa Group

Napa Group

Napa Group

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Napa Group

Redwood Needles

February 2018 Deadline: Due Jan. 8th
Submit Articles/Reports/Ad Copy via e-mail to: odavison@sonic.net
Send Outings and Meetings to Carl Inling: chingsl@sonic.net

Redwood Needles
December 1, 2017

Redwood Needles

Redwood Needles
Outings

Our recent fires are the most devastating in California history. The Tubbs fire started at Oct 8th Sunday just before 10 p.m. miles away by Calistoga. By 1:12 am firefighters warned that the fire would reach eastern Santa Rosa within the hour. There was total chaos in Sonoma County from then until Tuesday. The Pocket fire threatened Geyersville, the Nuns fire that started in Napa County spread to Annadel Park and began to threaten southeastern Sonoma County and Kenwood. By Tuesday some firefighters had been working more than 24 hours without food or rest and the fires were 0% contained. We all knew we had to have N95 respirator masks to be outside, even in the Bay Area. A NASA satellite image showed the wildfire smoke had traveled all the way to San Diego. Sonoma County’s representatives in Congress, our state and local level politicians made plans. By Wednesday we had 574 engines from all over the country, 95 dozers, 58 water tenders, 33 helicopters, 106 hand crews and a 747 jet water tanker. Our local radio stations were on the air to give us hour by hour details of the fire. The Press Democrat photographers did an amazing job of documenting the fires. Sonoma County Proud rose from the ashes. Millions of dollars were raised to help fire victims as it will cost billions to re-build.

Meanwhile I was set to step down as Chapter Outing chair. I was going to start leading hikes again. However, most of our parks were closed to the public and I couldn’t scout my hikes. Sierra Club hikes are limited right now due to the disruptions for leaders throughout much of the Redwood Chapter. Jim Gannon is taking well deserved time off and will not lead any winter backpacking trips to our Sierra huts this season. The record snow in the Sierra last winter did damage to some of the huts and made summer work parties challenging. Jim deserves a break.

Memories and Highlights

I will say I am fortunate to have had great outings leaders to offer outings during my time as chair. I joined Sierra Club in 1982. In 1984 Clark Nattkemper talked me into becoming the Sonoma Group Outings Chair. There weren’t manuals or guidelines. I took training from other Chapters and quickly helped out with our newsletter. I helped build what is now called the Nattkemper trail from 1982-1985. I became the 1st Redwood Chapter Outings Chair in 1985. I formed a Parks & Trails committee for the Sonoma Group, started having an evening Valentine’s potluck with a slide show (remember those) of the highlights of the year. In the Fall, I had a Sonoma Group members meeting and members were asked to bring their favorite vacation slides. This was very popular and well attended. I started a Sierra Singles Group in 1985. I volunteered for our Sierafrast and in 1987 moved the annual dinner over to the Junior College, asked local merchants to put up displays, reserved the pool for the Paddler’s Section, and had daylong lectures with slide shows on conservation topics. There were awards for 25 year members. It was discontinued when I couldn’t keep up with all my volunteer responsibilities. In 1985 I initiated Sierra Club Insurance meetings so outings leaders could come up to speed on new liability issues. I led trips to areas being considered for landfill sites, wastewater-holding pond sites, invasive plant sites, future housing development sites, future resort sites, proposed park additions, and areas of concern to me. In 1986 I started a Hazardous Waste Committee. In 1988 I started the Chapter Backpack Section. In 1989 I put together the 1st Redwood Chapter Backpack Workshop. I organized the 1st Redwood Chapter Outing Leader’s retreat at Juglhane Farm and continued them for many years. I was awarded the Sierra Club Oliver Kelchlin Award in 2000 and received many other awards for my volunteer environmental work. Assemblmenber Pat Wiggins named me Woman of the Year in 2001 for my outstanding service & dedication to the people of California. Now on January 1st 2018 I will be stepping down as Chapter Outings chair. I will continue to be inspired by John Muir and his message “Going to the mountains is getting home.”

—CAROL VELLUTINI, REDWOOD CHAPTER OUTINGS CHAIR

“Wildfires Spark Attention” cont. from page 1

In an NPR interview Oct. 25, Sonoma Group Chair Tee Shore, speaking on behalf of Greensbelt Alliance, said this is an opportunity when “we can think about doing things a little bit differently.”

The map above shows in cross hatch the Hanly 1964 fire footprint along with the 1964 Nuns fire and the 1981 Atlas fire in Napa. Colored dots are the Tubbs fire footprint as well as the fire footprint for earlier fires in the same area. The Hanly fire took several days to make it to Santa Rosa, and 111 or so thousand homes. The Tubbs fire took just over 4 hours to reach Santa Rosa and destroyed several thousand homes.
**Redwood Chapter Executive Committee Election**

*December 1, 2017*

**North Group**

(*Humboldt, Del Norte, Trinity, and W. Siskiyou Counties*)

- **Ned Forsyth**
  - I have served on the North Group Executive Committee since 1980, because I believe strongly in the Sierra Club’s mission to “Explore, Enjoy, and Protect” our planet. North Group continues to advocate for wild things and smart growth and to support our political allies. Today, our public lands are under serious threat. Now is a good time to influence decisions that will have a lasting effect on our wild heritage and on the quality of life for future generations. I have been serving as North Group Vice Chair, executive committee and as an outgoing leader since 2014. These duties empower me to help both experienced activists and newcomers to take advantage of Sierra Club’s institutional resources.

- **Victoria Brandon**
  - These are crucial times for the environment in Lake County, even though the imminent threat to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument seems to have receded, our public lands are under serious threat. We’re trying to modernize and expand our communications strategies and seeing every opportunity to connect with you, our members.

- **Denise Rushing**
  - I am an environmentalist of the great outdoors who is passionate about exploring and protecting the earth. Lake County has so much natural beauty to offer - from Clear Lake and Mt. Konocti to the vast beauty of Lake County and the Parchamama’s “Awakening the Dreamer: Changing the Dream” - Pachamama’s “Awakening the Dreamer: Changing the Dream” - Pachamama’s “Awakening the Dreamer: Changing the Dream.”

**Solano Group**

(*Vallejo, Fairfield, Solano County*)

- **Joe Feller**
  - I have been a member of the Executive Committee for the past 6 years. I hope to continue representing the membership for the next 2 years.

- **Greg Peterson**
  - I have been a member of Sierra Club since the early 80’s, and Solano Group since the early 2000’s. Currently, I work as a contract employee for the Sonoma Group Political Comm. In my professional capacity, I have been an activist Sierra Club member since 1998, serving on the Sonoma Group ExCom and as Chair, and as an at-large member of the Redwood Chapter ExCom since 2002. Presently I am an advocate for climate change, biodiversity, the preservation of our natural environment, and the protection of public lands.

- **Amy Yocuk Hartman**
  - As a resident of the city of Vallejo in Solano County, I have been attending Solano County Club meetings since February 2017. I have helped with tabling at Earth Day at Solano College and at the Visions of the Future Festival at Sonoma State University. I provided regular monthly updates on the status of creating a countywide park and open space district in Solano County. I will be serving as a mentor for a Solano Community College student who will be planning and implementing a clean-up day in Solano County.

- **Joe Green-Heffern**
  - Since the beginning of 2017 I have been a regular attendee at the Solano Group’s ExCom meetings and participated in a number of Sierra Club activities. This has included Valore recycling, Earth Day at Solano College, a More Island hike, and most significantly – regular participation in a collaborative effort with other groups to establish and maintain the Bata & Bay Area Chapter of the Sierra Club. We’ve been working on and planning a Sierra Club Lake Group Executive Committee election.

**2017 Redwood Chapter and Group Executive Committee Election**

*December 1, 2017*

**Redwood Chapter**

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**Lake County Group**

- **Amy Yocuk Hartman**
  - I would like to continue serving the membership and the environment.

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Calendars for Sale

Calendars are available for purchase at the Environmental Center at 55 Ridgway, Santa Rosa. Call for hours: 707-544-7651. If ordering by mail, shipping is $2 per calendar and sales tax is included. The mailing address is Sierra Club PO Box 466, Santa Rosa, CA 95402. If you would like to pay by credit card, please order from the general Sierra Club website: https://store.sierraclub.org/sierra-club-store-c27.aspx
Your purchase directly benefits Sierra Club's conservation work.

NAPA COUNTY GROUP

Tony Norris
As Chair of the Napa Group of the Sierra Club I once had the privilege to actively participate in the Napa Community Flood Control Coalition process which resulted in a funded match to a superior plan for the Flood Control Project based upon Living River Guidelines. This has had measured success in partnership with federal and State agencies.

Since then I remain on the executive committee of Friends of the Napa River and represent Environmental Sciences & Natural Resource Management on the Technical Advisory Panel for the Flood Control District. I have also served in other public capacities including election to the founding Board of the Napa Open Space District.

Now, we environmentalists are keenly aware of pressing needs to correct global warming, urban sprawl, diminished wetlands, loss of oak woodlands, environmental inequity and so much more.

Federal administration may seem backwards in seeking corrections for the moment; but locally I foresee measured success in coalitions coming where the Sierra Club rightfully deserves a seat at the table. If you will have me on the Executive Committee again, perhaps we can still see to needed corrections in our priorities.

Diane Shepp
I am a lifelong environmentalist and a "life member" of the Sierra Club.

My interests and values are closely aligned with the mission/activities of the Sierra Club Napa Group: promotion of Climate Action Plan, against the development of Napa West Ranch, and the proposed Cement Plant in Vallejo, among others. My personal areas of interest include the long-term sustainability and protections in Napa County regarding: watersheds, wildlife habitat, open space, clean air/water and quality of life issues. As a recent candidate for County Supervisor (June primary 2016), I advocated for responsible planning to ensure sustainability of the finite resources of Napa County; the promotion of the Berryessa region as a premiere Family Destination that could include more fishing and hiking trails, camping, eco-tourism, sailing, kayaking and other outdoor sports; and long range planning for light rail on the SP tracks, among others.

I am a coalition builder and have worked with many nonprofit organizations over the past 40+ years as an executive administrator, fund developer, board member and community organizer. As a member of the Napa Group I would work to build stronger relationships with environmental groups specifically Protect Rural Napa and Napa Vision 2050. I have a long track record of getting the job done.

On a personal level I am a charter member of the Golden West Women Flyfishers. I enjoy fly-fishing and travel when not at my oyster studio.

Chris Benz
I have served on the Napa Group Executive Committee since 2014 and currently serve as the Chair and on the Executive Committee.

Working on local issues of growth, tourism, and Napa County’s response to climate change as a Sierra Club activist lets me speak out about the environmental impacts of new developments and policies.

In the past two years, the Napa Group has been working in partnership with local groups on developing an effective Napa Climate Action Plan, actions to preserve wild lands, ligation against the Walt Ranch Vineyard EIR, and educating our community about climate change.

I hope to continue to serve on the Executive Committee and work on these projects.

SONOMA COUNTY GROUP

Tom Conlon
As a demand-side energy management consultant, I have worked on energy efficiency and climate issues for electric and gas utilities and governmental agencies for over 25 years. In addition, I have served locally as an appointee to the Sonoma County Economic Development Board’s Business Environmental Alliance (developers of the Green Business Program) and the Stakeholder Advisory Group for the Sonoma County Climate Action 2020 Plan. I currently sit on the Sonoma County Air Pollution Control District / Regional Climate Protection Authority’s Citizens Advisory Group (representing Sonoma County Conservation Coalition) and the Climate Action Advisory Committee.

As co-chair of Sierra Club’s new Climate Protectors project, and a weekly contributor to the CCNRC, Sierra Club California Energy Climate Committee Conference Call, I am well known for my advocacy in support of local climate action literacy and policy results.

We are now at a critical juncture as our species comes to terms with the biosphere’s limited capacity to support our collective needs and wants. The high-level policy framework for dealing with GHG emissions is finally in place. Now it is time to design, negotiate, perfect and scale the market-actor-targeted implementation and verification details, without which these high-level policies will not be able to support the work that needs to be done.

We kept watch on our parks and public safety. We forwarded Inconvenient Truth. We forwarded Zero Waste policies and events. We kept watch on our parks and open space. We spurred action and back the measure to replace the Flume and the Needles. The next year will be even more exciting with critical elections ahead and important parks and housing measures going to the voters. I’m committed to continuing on Sierra Club’s leadership team to forward our work to acknowledge pain and suffering, and to support our collective needs.

Suzanne Doyle
I’ve volunteered for the Sierra Club Sonoma Group for many years, serving first as a committee member, then as Conservation Chair and on the Executive Committee. It’s been interesting and fulfilling work and a constant education – from learning about the ecology of our local landscapes to urban planning and political lobbying.

For much of this time, we have not had enough activists to do the work that needs to be done. The Sierra Club relies on grassroots volunteer activists at the Group and Chapter levels to work on local projects that I do, but for you to join us and become active Sierra Club members. Come to our meetings on the first Monday of every month. Help advocate to reduce our county’s greenhouse gas emissions, build affordable and sustainable housing and public transit, and protect our water, wildlife, and forests.

MENDOCINO COUNTY GROUP

Mary Walsh
Hello Mendocino County. I am again asking for your vote for the Executive Committee of Mendocino County Group. I have served on this Executive Committee for over twenty years and in this time of heartache and turmoil would point that consistency in some measure is a necessary feature of recovery. All of us have been traumatized by the recent fires. The Mendocino Group Executive Committee wishes to acknowledge pain and suffering as well as courage and hopelessness.

Thank you for your vote if it should be mine. I shall do my best to help mend and find a way forward. We need more activists to do the work that needs to be done. We need more activists to do the work that needs to be done.

Teri Shore
Over the past year as Sonoma Group Chair, I’ve been inspired by the vision and action of our leadership team and members to join in for new projects to the Executive Committee. We’ve been working together successfully as a collective of passionate people with a variety of skills and expertise. Our Climate Protectors engaged us on climate policy and the screening of an Inconvenient Truth. We forwarded Zero Waste policies and events. We kept watch on our parks and open space. We spurred action and back the measure to replace the Flume and the Needles. The next year will be even more exciting with critical elections ahead and important parks and housing measures going to the voters.

I hope to continue to serve on the Executive Committee for another term.

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