Pivotal Election Looms

By Victoria Brandon, Redwood Chapter Political Chair

We seem to be in the middle of a pivotal year for the environment, nationally and locally, as outrage over the excesses of the Trump administration fuels a level of grassroots activism that hasn’t been seen for many years. The 2018 elections provide a vital opportunity to restore a Congressional bulwark against the cynical efforts to roll back environmental protections at a time when climate disruption makes them more important than ever.

Closer to home, we think that the election of candidates endorsed by the Sierra Club offers the best hope of protecting the best qualities of the North Coast—abundant open space, towering forests, fire-fighting rivers, charming, friendly small towns with a rural atmosphere—so we’re asking our members to support those individuals who appear via the endorsement link on the back page of this newsletter. Please also consider making a personal endorsement, volunteering a few hours of time, or providing financial support: the future of all our communities hangs in the balance this year, and action by Club members can potentially tip that balance.

Above all, please be sure to VOTE on June 5!

Prop 68: Protecting California

By Amy Hartman, Solano Group ExCom

When you go to the polls (or fill out your mail-in ballot) in California on June 5, 2018, you’ll have the opportunity to vote for the first parks and water bond that has been on a statewide ballot in 12 years. Senate Bill—the Park Bond Bill—passed out of both the Assembly and the Senate this past legislative session in Sacramento. Governor Brown signed the bill in October of 2017 and now, the $1 billion bond bill is investing parks, water projects, and climate adaptation efforts throughout the state of California, will be brought to the voters in this year’s primary election.

The federal administration seems determined to put the nation’s environment at risk. Now is the time for Californians to stand up for our natural resources. Proposition 68 is an opportunity to do just that. The funding from the Park Bond Bill falls into 4 main categories: parks, flood, water, and climate adaptation.

Parks

In a recent Mercury News article, Bay Area Open Space Council Executive Director Deb Callahan noted that the measure contains $1 billion in competitive grants that are open to all regions of the state and that the Bay Area historically has done well in applying for them. One of the largest allocations of the Park Bond Bill’s $350 million is for parks in “poor neighborhoods.” According to California Senate Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, funding from the Park Bond Bill is “the single largest investment in the history of the United States to park-starved communities.”

Another $285 million will be allocated as local grant monies supporting local parks, regional park districts, and open space districts. Existing state parks in California will receive $218 million to improve public access and catch up on deferred maintenance.

Flood

In a recent opinion piece, the Vice President of the Sierra Club, Susana Reyes, and California State Senator and Park Bond bill–sponsor Anthony Portantino wrote, “Five years of severe drought followed by heavy rains have magnified the lingering aftermaths of the 2008 economic downturn, leaving our state with a substantial need to invest in deteriorating local and regional parks and aging water infrastructure, dams, reservoirs, and flood control systems.”

The Park Bond Bill, if passed by California voters, will provide $550 million for flood protection and repair. This will include $350 million in co-funding opportunities for parks in “poor neighborhoods,” $3 million to restore the Russian River in Sonoma County, $20 million for the Coastal Consensus to help fund Bay Area wetlands restoration.

Climate Preparedness

According to State Senator Portantino, the Park Bond Bill will allocate $443 million for climate adaptation and resilience and $767 million for wildlife conservation and state conservancies. Much of this funding will protect and expand wildlife corridors, and will fund adaptation projects for fish and waterfowl and fire resiliency projects in the Sierras and the Cascades. The Bay Area Conservancy Program’s climate work will also receive funding from this category.

Prop 68 also provides a powerful message to the nation about how much we value the environmental, economic, and quality of life benefits that our parks and natural resources provide for all Californians—now, and for many generations to come.

On June 5, vote YES on Prop. 68—the first parks and water bond on a statewide ballot in more than 10 years.

Talking Zero Waste Across California

By Portia Simkoff, Zero Waste USA and Zero Waste Sonoma County

The California/Nevada Regional Conservation Committee (CNRCC) Zero Waste Committee supports the 13 California chapters and Sierra Club California in advocating for Zero Waste initiatives at the state and local level. To that end, the Committee asked Sonoma County (and Bay Area) based Zero Waste USA to implement a state-wide Train-the-Trainer program utilizing the fun, interactive Zero Waste Curious presentation that ZWSUSA volunteers give in San Francisco and Alameda County. The development of these presentations were in part funded by a 2017-2018 Altamont Education Advisory Board grant undertaken by Altamont Landfill mitigation fees resulting from a lawsuit of which the San Francisco Bay Chapter was a party.

The early planning is to develop the series this Spring at the Sonoma Group offices and then give 20-minute talks all over the county. This summer we will start training Redwood, San Francisco Bay and San Diego chapter members to train others to talk Zero Waste. The planning team is looking for a host and presenter training for a large mid-California training later this year. Next year some or most of the trainings may be done via webinars and conference calls.

Vote No on Prop. 70: Greenhouse Gas Reduction Reserve Fund

This measure would require a one-time, two-thirds vote of the legislature in 2024 on the distribution of greenhouse gas reduction funds generated by the cap-and-trade program. For more information, visit https://stopprop70.org/.

The policy will empower a small set of legislators to extract significant policy concessions in exchange for their votes. It will postpone urgent expenditures for climate, air quality, and other statewide and local priorities, including expenditures in environmental justice communities

Fire-Resistant Materials Key to Rebuild

Santa Rosa couple embraces fire-resistant materials to rebuild home destroyed in Nuns fire

By Shoshana Hebsi, Redwood Chapter Communications Coordinator

When Karen and Stan Sommer Red their home on Bennett Ridge in the early hours of Oct. 9, the flames were coming up from Annadel State Park, which borders the east end of their property. They grabbed some key items, and Karen remembers glancing at her prized artwork hanging on the walls and wishing there was room in her car to take the pieces. Stan grabbed the hinges, silver and brass that he used on doors, drive through the smoke and flying embers into Santa Rosa and safety.

They left the house they designed and built in 1973 not knowing if they left the house they designed and built in 1973 not knowing if they

Karen Sommer is rebuilding her home on her property that burned in the Nuns fire Oct. 9, 2017. She and her husband, Stan, are using fire-resistant materials and paving the way for thinking differently about how to live in harmony with nature.
Redwood Chapter

The Redwood Chapter is governed by an executive committee, with one (1) member elected by each of six (6) regional groups and six (6) members elected at large. Each group elects its own executive committee.

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Joan Dambros 510-547-4691

Redwood Chapter - and all Local Groups have a variety of volunteer opportunities. Visit www.sierraclub.org/redwood/get-involved for details or contact vbrandon@lakelive.info

Redwood Chapter Sierra Club Directory

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 466, Santa Rosa, CA 95402, Phone 544-7651, Fax 544-9861
Office Address: Environmental Center, 55A Ridgway Avenue, Santa Rosa (West off of Cleveland Ave., to the west of Hwy 101)

Redwood Needles

Newsletter of the Redwood Chapter, Sierra Club of California

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Editor: Mary Davison (707)474-3704 odavison@sonic.net

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Classifieds: $5.50/words. Send check and ad copy by the 8th of the month.

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Redwood Needles Deadline:
Issue Date: Aug./Sept. 2016
Deadline: July 8, 2016
Sept. 8, 2016
Nov. 4, 2016
would withstand the likelihood of another fire. “This is an opportunity to put in everything that’s technically an advantage for us,” she said. “It’s an opportunity to make it right.”

Stan says the likelihood of another fire sweeping through the Ridge is high, as they live in what’s called the Wildland Urban Interface—unincorporated and largely undeveloped land in Sonoma County with high fire risk but where many homes have been built during the last 40 years. These homes face stricter building codes than regular subdivisions in cities, but the Sommers have taken these codes to new levels.

“No sticks,” Karen likes to say when referring to the building materials they are choosing. The couple has opted to employ a little-known building system called Tri-D panel, which uses only wire, foam insulation and concrete to create solid structures that are fire resistant, quick to install and provide stellar insulation.

The Sommers’ architect, Sara Woodfield, suggested the Tri-D for their home, knowing the couple was keen on innovative building techniques.

“For 20 years I’ve worked with sustainable materials,” said Woodfield, who works in Santa Rosa with her firm Harrison Woodfield Architects. “I’ve done almost every single type of solid wall material, and I think this is the best there is because it’s just so easy to work with.”

The ease of the construction will keep labor costs down, and about half the time of building a traditional house. The Sommers’ house will include fire sprinklers, a metal roof, concrete floors with radiant heat, double-pane windows, steel framing, LED lighting, solar panels and iron fencing. The only wood used will be in the cabinetry. They will have ample cement outside on the patios to provide even more buffer from fire.

Another couple on Bennett Ridge is using the Tri-D system, but most of the neighbors are sticking to more traditional techniques, yet using more fire-resistant material, such as concrete and metal.

Visit https://www.sierraclub.org/redwood for the June 5, 2018 Election Sierra Club Endorsements

“Fire-Resistent Materials” continued from page 1

are emotional traumas, insurance complications and people are moving away—all of which impedes this type of progress. “It’s a real important tipping point because all of a sudden the quality of the materials are what’s needed,” she said, adding that this fire will create new openings for people to try different materials like Tri-D and bring them into the mainstream. “We have a chance to really get good at this and hopefully do more,” she said. “It’s become clear that Sonoma County, Napa County, Lake County, that these wildfires come through, maybe it’s every 30 years, but that’s not very long when you think about rebuilding a house.”

“It’s our fear,” Stan said. “It could happen in two years, you don’t know.” Yet, what the Sommers do know is the house they are building will stand up to whatever fire comes its way. They filed for a permit at the end of April and hope to begin construction in the summer.

“We’re building the safest house we can,” Karen said. “It makes so much sense to do this.”
This is the walk that was cancelled due to weather. Jeremy Nichols, local historian, will be our narrator. First we will tour the Bird Rescue Center as today is Open House. I hope to take a group photo by the mural. After snacks & talks by neighborhood residents, at sunset during the fire, we will explore. Jeremy will take us to see the site of Santa Rosa's old community hospital and “WPA 1941” rock walls. Then walking along paths with uneven surfaces and dirt roads so we wear appropriate footwear (no heels, sweats or walkers). Class: E-2-A. Bring food, water and snacks. Meet 11 a.m. (off County Farm Rd) by Bird Rescue Center 3430 Chanate Rd.

D i f f i c u l t y  M i l e a g e E l e v a t i o n G a i n
E - E a s y Actual A - Less than 1,000 E - Less than 1,000
M - M o d e r a t e Mileage B - 1,000 to 2,000 M - Less than 1,000
H - H a r d C - 2,000 to 3,000 H - Less than 1,000
S - Strenuous D - 3,000 to 4,000 S - Less than 1,000
V - Very Strenuous E - More than 4,000 V - Less than 1,000

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 well being. He is the one who has spent time in cooperation to make the trip safe, pleasant and rewarding. Never change ahead of the leader and keep within sight or shouting distance of the person ahead of you so you do not miss an interesting site. Do not lag behind the leader. If you need help, the rear leader will remain to assist you. Do not leave the group without the leader’s permission. Be adequately equipped and prepared. You should carry lunch and liquids. Wear footwear appropriate for the outing. In most cases that would be hiking boots.

Guard against fire. Do not smoke on Sierra Club outings. Build fires only with the leader’s permission, and extinguish them completely.

Group Outings Chair: Carl Inglin
Meetings to Carl Inglin: chinglin@sonic.net
Due July 8th
O u t i n g s

We will tour Anderson Marsh State Park and McVicar trail to the picnic table or perhaps all the way to the sandy beach on Clear Lake. Bring water, snacks and jackets as we will pass the animal/wildlife observation areas. Class: M-7-A. Meet at 9 am at Anderson Marsh State Park, entrance off Hwy. 53 between Lower Lake and City of Clearlake.

Will depart at 9:15. Parking $.40 per car unless you have a permit. Parking can be found on outside as well. Maximum 10 RSVP required to Leader Julie Kreis at 707-987-9040, tikaji@yahoo.com.

From the trailhead off South Fork Road, we climb past a succession of botanical communities and stunning views to about 2000 feet through serpentine, and end up in redwood. West side of Smith Hill. Bring food, water, good hiking boots, and a hat. No dogs. Class M-10-B. One-way hike with a car shuttle to the trailhead. Outing Coordinator: Ruth Rhyner, Ranger Station Hwy, 199 opposite Jedediah Smith Campground entrance. By reservation only. Leader: Allison 268-8767. carolvsr@sonic.net or g2s-365-3612.

Climb switchbacks in Ferndale’s “verdant wilderness park” through thickets of thimbleberry and passion flower. Drive to the mouth of Guthrie Creek. There should be outstanding views north to Eel River valley, shady canyons filled with fern, and a pond in a Skifta source forest. We will lunch in a redwood, grand fir, and alder grove and then return passing through a eucalyptus grove. Wear long sleeves and pants because of poison oak and stinging nettles. Bring water and lunch. Friendly dogs OK on leash. Class M-15-A. Carpools: Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Eel River Road/Herrick Park & Ride lot (off Highway 101 South). Leader Allison 268-8673. farklee@sonic.net.

Hike to a fantastical grove of ‘candelabra’ redwoods with twisted massive limbs and along cliffs with sweeping ocean views of the Lost Coast. Learn about the unique redwoods, the efforts of the Save the Redwood League and the Redwood Trust to preserve them, and Peter Douglas the founder of the California Coastal commission. Join a group camping at Ual Beach after the hike if you like. Bring lunch, water, layered clothing. Carpools: Meet 10 am at Shell Market, Fort Bragg. Class: M-4-A. By reservation only. Leader Yvonne Kramer, (707)463-0342, kraber@sonic.net.

Join a local historian on a walk along the shoreline of Benicia. The 2 mile walk begins at 9th Street Park and will head toward downtown through residential neighborhoods. Along the way we will pass local landmarks, learn more about the former industries that were located here and hear about Jack London’s time spent in Benicia. The walk ends in downtown Benicia. Participants will be asked to check out the shops and restaurants in Benicia or walk back to 9th Street Park. Bring sturdy shoes, water, a hat, sunscreen and a snack. No pets. Rain cancels. Meet at the flagpole at 9th Street Park at 10:30, walk endu at 12:30. Class: A-Peregour. By reservation only. 2016. RSVP required to zabtracey@gmail.com or 925-366-9512.

Bring your canine friend for a great walk on a trail south of Centerville. While the walk is rated easy, the return from the beach follows an old ranch road with an elevation gain of 400 feet. Dogs will be allowed to stay on leash but they must stay on the trail. Reimbursement for participants to read. Look at the difficulty of the hike. If the rating is moderate with few or more steps it will help you decide if a hike is right for you. The outing rating instructions to hikers is also important to help you decide if a hike is right for you. The outing rating instructions to hikers is also important.

Redwood Corner
Redwood National Park Trillium and Lost Man Trails Hike.
Come and enjoy the redwoods in the summer! This hike passes a mossy waterfall and blooming trillium on the Trillium Trail and then continues up Lost Man Creek through old growth redwoods and maples before returning. Bring water and lunch. No dogs. Class M-10-A. Carpools: Meet 9:00 a.m. at Ripon City Hall (Ray’s Food Place) parking lot, or 9:30 a.m. trailhead Elk Meadow Day Use Area off Highway 101. By reservation only. Leader Ned, nedfordsyth@gmail.com, 268-835-3625. Rain cancels.


Announcements
Redwood National Park Trillium and Lost Man Trails Hike.
Outings to Los Angeles:
Meetings to Carl Inglin: chinglin@sonic.net
Submit Articles/Reports/Ad Copy via e-mail to:
davidson@sonic.net
Send Outings to Louis Vas: lvasonic@sonic.net
Redwood Needles
August 2018 Deadline: Due July 8th
Submit Articles/Reports/Ad Copy via e-mail to: odavidson@sonic.net
Meeting to Carl Inglin: chinglin@sonic.net

Ratings for Outings Leaders: How fast or slow do you go?
Wonders if an outing leader walks fast or slow? Keep in mind that the leader’s speed is just one part of hiking. How high up a mountain the hike starts, the total mileage and elevation gain (up and downhill) 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 everyone who wants to read. Look at the difficulty of the hike. If the rating is moderate with few or more steps a fast pace hiker must hike slower to accommodate that rating.

Varies, see hike description for details: Jim Gannon, Phil Kohlmetz, Doug Tracey
Moderate-paced with few stops: Lorrie Lagasse, Julie Kreis, Paul Farley
Moderate-paced with more frequent stops: Carol Vellutini, Yvonne Kramer, Brian Collett, Jennifer Plante, Ned Forsyth, Pete McGee
Slower-paced: Allison Brockl, Carl Inglin

Redwood Needles
June 1, 2018
4
Send all Meeting events by the 8th of the month to Carl Inglis: chinglin@sonic.net. Meetings of the Sierra Club are open to all members. You are welcome to participate or observe as often as you wish. Visitors should call the committee chair to verify time and place.

Ridgway Avenue in Santa Rosa (West of Hwy 101, two blocks North of College Ave) is a place where you can enjoy the outdoors. There is a variety of outdoor activities that make this area a great destination for nature enthusiasts.

Laguna) Help care for the Laguna and restore in the soil that is released by fire and that in the highly endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or, just relax at sea. All cruises depart from the Eureka Waterfront. For more information, contact Gregg at (707) 826-3740.

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.

Tues, January 8 - 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.

Tues, January 15 - North Group ExCom. All are welcome to discuss local conservation issues between 7:45 and 8:45 pm. On come for the business meeting starting at 6:45 pm. Meet at the Adorni Center Conference Room on the Eureka Waterfront. For more information, contact Gregg at (707) 826-3740.

Sat., January 20 - Redwood Chapter ExCom. And ConsCom. Location: Super 8 motel meeting room in Willits. Conservation Committee meets at 10 a.m., ExCom meets 1-3 p.m at the Environmental Center in Santa Rosa, SSA Ridgway. Info: Victoria vbrandon@lakeville.info

Tues, January 22 - Solano Group ExCom. Call Jane for information.

Tues, January 23 - Solano Group ExCom. We are making a positive impact on our county and need a few more people to help carry the load. Call Jane for information.

Tues, January 29 - Sonoma 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.

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. Details 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 make a big difference. TRUVP is one of these projects please call Josh at 707-565-3356. ParksVolunteer@sonoma-county.org

GardenVolunteerDays: First Friday of the Month, 9 am – noon. Laguna Environmental Center, 900 Sanford Road, Santa Rosa. Enjoy our native plant gardens with our professional horticulturist. Share your expertise or learn new skills by getting involved today! http://lagunafoundation.org/volunteer_gardens.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 a critical wildlife habitat! Joining the Laguna Stewards is a fun and meaningful way to volunteer while enjoying the outdoors. http://lagunafoundation.org/volunteer_ lagunasteward.html

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park, 2018

Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard tour of the enchanting Channel Islands. Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines, marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds—and an occasional whale. Watch for the highly endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or, just relax at sea. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara. The cost, $675, includes an assigned bunk and all meals, snacks, and beverages. A ranger/naturalist assigned by the national park will travel with us to help lead hikes, point out items of interest and give evening programs. Kayaking will be overseen by our concessionaire; all hikes will be on trails, class 1 terrain. This trip is a fundraiser to support the Sierra Club political program in California. To reserve space send a $100 deposit, written to California Sierra Club PAC to Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye St., Elk Monte, CA 91732. For more information contact leaders: Joan Jones Holtz: jholzrhn@aol.com; 626-443-0706. Wayne Vollare: avollare1@gmail.com; 909-327-6825.

Helping a Resilient Landscape Recover from Wildfire

The spring is always special here in northern California: green grass cloaks the hills, wildflowers burst forth in profusion, and returning birds set up housekeeping in every crevice. In many parts of Redwood Chapter the spring of 2018 has also included the opportunity to rejoice in the visible evidence of the recovery of our fire-adapted landscape from last October’s conflagrations. So much that appeared dead is now bursting with renewed life, as long-dormant seeds spring forth, the roots of scraggly charred plants sprout new growth, and many blackened trees that looked dead in the immediate aftermath of the fire demonstrate vigorous regeneration.

To help guide this process, the California Native Plant Society recently issued an invaluable comprehensive “Fire Recovery Guide” specific to our region, with contributions from photographers, ecologists, foresters and land managers throughout the area. Its primary message is clear: in most cases wildlands will make a faster and more ecologically appropriate recovery from fire if well-intentioned interference is kept to the minimal level needed to protect human health and safety.

For example, “reseed with the non-native grasses that make up the bulk of “erosion control” seed mixes is likely to introduce fast-growing invasive plants and increase fire hazards for the following summer; even seed mixes that consist of native plants can out-compete the seedbank in the soil that is released by fire and that for long term will restore the land. It’s also usually a bad idea to yield to the temptation to remove burned woody debris, since charred plant remains protect the landscape from wind and water erosion and help keep surviving plants and seeds moist. What looks like a mess is actually invaluable protection against rain and runoff. The goal with runoff is to slow and spread it to give the water a chance to sink into the soil rather than gullying and increasing downstream flooding. Where the natural cover is inadequate, adding mulch is a great way to achieve this objective, as long as it is weed free. Wood chips and certified weed-free straw are good choices. On steep slopes, strategically placed straw wattles and branches can slow down the flow and filter out sediment.

Dead and structurally damaged trees near houses, roads and power lines pose a safety risk and must be removed, but others should be left alone for at least a few years. Many species—oaks in particular—will recover on their own, and even trees that are indeed dead help hold soil in place and provide habitat for many species. For example, more than 80 species of birds rely on dead trees as nesting sites and food sources. Fire has played a crucial role in shaping this remarkable landscape over the millennia, and will continue to do so. Let’s help, not hinder.

—VICTORIA BRANDON, REDWOOD CHAPTER CHAIR

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.
Welcome Party

The North Group Sierra Club will be hosting a new and continuing members welcome party on Wednesday, June 13 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the Humboldt Bay Social Club, 900 New Navy Base Rd, Samoa. It is a fabulous location out on the Samoa Peninsula with fire pits, a clubhouse with a no-host bar, local vendors available to purchase and other goodies you can roast on the provided barbecues. Music will be provided by Tyger Byke, a popular local string/country/bluegrass band. So, come and meet other local members and enjoy the start of summer! For questions and to RSVP contact Gregg Gold, greggjgold@aol.com, 707-826-3740. Hope to see you there!

Science Projects Receive Awards

By SUE LESKOW

For the 12th year, North Group sponsored an award for the best project relating to environmental issues at the annual Humboldt County Science Fair held in mid-March. (The projects were so competitive in 2018 that a second prize was given.)

The $50 first-place award went to Anneli and Mathilde Macdonald, 8th graders at Jacoby Creek School. They investigated whether levels of a nitrogen isotope (15N) found in tree rings (by decade) of a Sitka spruce near Freshwater Creek could be correlated with populations of past salmon runs in that creek. Anneli and Mathilde hypothesized that as fish numbers have decreased over the past 40 years, the marine-derived nitrogen in spruce would decline also. When salmon smolts go to the ocean, they eat organisms that contain concentrated 15N. When adults return to their home creek to spawn, they die and decompose into the river or its bank. Plants take nitrogen from the soil; thus, marine-derived nitrogen from the salmon is used by trees near the water. The girls found a strong (correlation coefficient of 0.69) between the spruce within 25 meters of the creek and past salmon runs, whereas another spruce 200 meters away from the creek had almost no correlation (0.006). Thus, the 15N in tree cores could be used to roughly estimate past salmon populations in a creek. [The twins also won first place from North Group in 2017 for a project on how log jams affected macroinvertebrates in Freshwater Creek.]

A $25 second-place prize was awarded to Samantha Gaiera, an 8th grader at Sunny Brae Middle School. She investigated the question: how does ocean acidification affect copepod mortality? Samantha thought that survivorship would decrease as pH decreased and tested it by infusing carbon dioxide (CO2) into jars of seawater containing copepods. She used a species that can survive extreme environmental changes, so if that organism was affected, “implications for less resilient species are cause for concern” (plus copepods are the base of the marine food chain). Survivorship in the control samples was 100%, compared to 63% in the test samples. [An interesting sidebar to her experiment was that her grandfather’s Master’s thesis studied how salinity and temperature affect copepods!]

Both projects were among the only 16 selected to represent Humboldt County in the state science fair competition held in late April.

North Group Report

As this edition of the Needles was going to press, Lake Group was taking a deep breath after tabling in no fewer than three Earth Day events, and about to embark on several new directions.

Next meeting “Going Solar with Confidence”

Our May 16 general membership meeting will feature a seminar by local entrepreneur Carol Cole-Lewis on how to save money on your electric bill and add thousands of dollars of value to your home, how to distinguish between different kinds of solar systems and find out if your home qualifies for solar, and gain the confidence needed to interview prospective solar providers. We’re hoping that this information will encourage local residents to become participants in a green renewable energy future.

“Chasing Coral” May 18

Then two days later we are partnering with the Unitarian Universalist Church and the Soper Reese Community Theatre to co-sponsor a screening of the acclaimed 2017 eco-documentary “Chasing Coral.” This film offers a breathtakingly beautiful look at some of the Earth’s most incredible natural wonders, while delivering a sobering warning about their uncertain future. Put together by a team of scientists and filmmakers who must overcome technical malfunctions and the forces of nature, this award-winning movie presents the story of the underwater world with powerful photography, nail-biting suspense and startling emotion. After the film Climate Chapter Climate and Energy committee chair Randy MacDonald will offer a 10 minute slide show on climate change, with facilitated discussion about how to take individual action to forestall looming global catastrophe.

Annual Lake Group Midsummer BBQ

The Group has also scheduled our annual midsummer BBQ, to be held on July 27 for the first time at Dancing Tree People farm in Upper Lake, and is also planning our first all-day strategy-setting retreat in a number of years, with the specific objective of deciding on climate-energy priorities.

Berrysena Snow Mountain Planning

As was reported nearly 18 months ago, a well-attended National Monument stakeholder workshop was held in Davis on January 20, 2017 (ironically enough, inauguration day), but the ill-conceived “review” of BSM and other monuments delayed implementation. Now plans for management plan development are finally moving forward, starting with a series of Recreation, Volunteerism and Stewardship Workshops intended to:

• Engage stakeholders in a collaborative discussion.
• Share expertise and lessons learned from previous volunteer efforts.
• Learn more about agency processes and requirements for projects that rely on volunteer support.
• Create successful partnerships. One of these workshops will be held on May 18 in Upper Lake, and Lake Group is looking forward to participating.

— VICTORIA BRANDON, LAKE GROUP CONSERVATION CHAIR

Lake Group Report

Earth Day 2018 Around the Redwood Chapter

Clockwise from the left:

• Redwood Chapter Chair Victoria Brandon distributing Douglas Fir seedlings at Woodland College, Clearlake on April 19
• Lake Group ExCom member Carolyn Ruttan gave away more seedlings at Middletown Rancheria’s festival on April 23
• Napa’s Vintage High School Sierra Club created a video showcasing breathtaking aerial views of Napa’s wild and open spaces and showed it during Earth Day Celebration on April 22
• Solano Group activists Doug Darling and Jane Bogner at the Vallejo Farmers Market on Earth Day

Redwood Needles
Help Wanted: Redwood Chapter Seeks Chapter Director

Redwood Chapter is looking for a half-time Chapter Director to strengthen our conservation programs, fundraising, volunteer development and member services.

We are looking for a talented and reliable individual to identify needs and recruit volunteers to fill them, train and oversee membership and communication coordinators at the chapter and group level who can welcome new members and work with the Chapter Treasurer on fundraising strategy, including efforts to bring fundraising components to events and outreach efforts. Strong communications and computer skills are essential, and a passion for protecting the planet.

This half-time job will be based in Sonoma County though some telecommuting may be possible, and is expected to last about six months, with an extension also possible.

A full job description and link to the application form is available on the Club Careers website, https://www.sierraclub.org/careers. Chapter Chair Victoria Brandon is also glad to answer questions: feel free to call her at 707.994.1931 or to send an email to vbrandon@lakelive.info.
Great Redwood Trail Proposed from San Francisco Bay to Eureka

State Sen. Mike McGuire is carrying a bill to create a 300-mile-long Great Redwood Trail using much of the defunct Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way north of Willits through California’s North Coast and ancient redwoods.

The bill (SB 1029) has been given bipartisan “do pass” recommendations in the state Legislature in its initial policy committees hearings. If enacted, the planning and transition process could begin in 2019.

SB 1029 would give the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit agency responsibility for freight operations on its existing tracks and dissolve the North Coast Railroad Authority, which now provides freight rail service. North of Willits, the existing rail right-of-way would be transferred temporarily to Caltrans, while a new agency is established with the goal of creating a world-class trail to connect the San Francisco Bay and Eureka.

The trail would connect with state parks and local trails, creating a way for outdoor enthusiasts to traverse some of our most scenic landscapes. There could also be rail service along with a trail north of Eureka.

Financing is yet to be determined. The Legislature has until August to work out the details of the bill.

— STEVE BRODEBOUGH, REDWOOD CHAPTER TRANSPORTATION CHAIR