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Shasta Environmental Alliance Newsletter September 2022

City Council to appoint two SEA board members to Tree Committee

Tuesday night the Redding City Council will make it official and appoint 10 people to the Tree Committee including SEA president David Ledger and SEA board member Aleta Carpenter. Three Planning Commissioners and two Community Services Advisory Board members will also serve. The Planning Department will direct the meetings. Several excellent candidates with a background in trees and development we recommended applied but were not selected. Each council member selected people they were familiar with and all candidates do have good backgrounds and work in the community.

The Committee will start meeting not long after the appointments are official, and it should be finished within two to three months. We hope!

SEA Redding City Council Candidates Forum

SEA will be holding a Redding City Council candidates forum on Wednesday, October 5 at 6 pm.. There are currently 10 candidates running for office so it will be a crowded forum although usually a few candidates drop out before the election. This will be held at the First United Methodist Church at 1825 Placer Street a in the Social Hall on the ground floor. Sierra Club will be cosponsoring, and we hope to get North State Climate Action, Wintu Audubon and the Shasta Chapter of California Native Plant Society to also cosponsor. Many of the questions, but not all will be from an environmental aspect. We hope many of you will show up and let the candidates know there are people in Redding concerned about our environment.

Battle Creek Alliance Lawsuits Against Cal Fire Timber Harvest Plans

By Marily Woodhouse

Battle Creek Alliance, a supporting group of Shasta Environmental Alliance, filed a lawsuit against Cal Fire's approval of an 1,102 acre logging plan, named "Powerhouse" early this year.

This plan is an addition to the 61,000 acres which have been logged in the industrial timberland of the Battle Creek watershed since 1998. The logged land begins on the western edge of Lassen National Forest, lying mostly between Hwy 44 and Hwy 36. The industrial timberland is a block of 75,874 acres in the middle of the Battle Creek watershed. At least 81% of that land has been logged already. Battle Creek Alliance opposes more logging because of the many effects that are already occurring due to so much of the landscape being disturbed. The loss of so much of the grown tree cover has long-lasting effects on water supply, fire danger and behavior, animal and plant biodiversity and habitat, and overall climate problems.

The first hearing regarding the case is in mid-September. Battle Creek Alliance had to file a pre-trial motion with the court to include all of the supporting documentation that was submitted to lead agency Cal Fire during the comment period. Cal Fire has chosen to leave many of the documents out of the administrative record which the Court will use to rule on the case. This censorship of evidentiary documents that were submitted according to their rules should not be happening, but here we are.

ACID Water Issues and the Drought

By Kathy Grissom

The Anderson Cottonwood Irrigation District (ACID) has been delivering irrigation water to farmers and residents for over 100 years. It consists of 35 miles of central canal and diversion ditches, spanning an area from the Sacramento River in Redding to Cottonwood. Currently there are approximately 800 ACID customers.

This year, for the first time ever, due to the ongoing critical drought exacerbated by climate change, the US Bureau of Reclamation, which has jurisdiction over ACID because it is part of the federal Central Valley Project, declared ACID would get just 18% of its normal allotment of water. The ACID Board of Directors then elected to sell off that 18%, stating that it wasn't enough to equitably provide water to all irrigators. There is no evidence that the Board considered any options other than to sell the water. This decision is adamantly opposed by many of the customers, feeling that ACID should have fought harder to protect their senior water rights. Many in the district feel that the Board could have pursued legal action, used the 18% water allocation within the district to help restore groundwater supplies or bought water from other districts to supplement the 18%, giving users at least some water.

The result has been devastating to the entire area. Land that is usually green and teeming with life is desert dry. Farmers and ranchers have had to sell cattle, hay is expensive and becoming scarce, crops wither in the fields. Wells have dried up. Residents are drilling deeper wells or buying water to fill tanks.

The effects on the natural environment are just as devastating. Because of over 100 years of receiving water all summer, the ecosystem in the area has become a naturalized environment, dependent on this water every year. Trees have root systems closer to the surface because they have not needed longer roots. Willows which lined the canals and ditches are dry and dead. Oak and walnut trees appear to be dying. People have to decide between watering their trees, running the risk of depleting their wells, or watching them wither and die. Anderson Creek and Perry's Pond, usually home to all manner of wildlife, are bone dry.

And then there is the Mouth of Cottonwood Wildlife Area. This is an 1100-acre state Fish and Wildlife Area and is also a customer of ACID water. It is a lush, green riparian habitat with many ponds and marshes. Fish and Wildlife's website states it is "...excellent habitat for Swainson's Hawk, bald eagle, ringtail, river otter and beaver..." among many other animals. This year, no water, no green, no ponds, no birdsongs.

Kathy Grissom lives in Anderson on 5 acres of land in the Anderson Cottonwood Irrigation District.

**End of summer Oak Seedling Watering
September 6, 7:30 am.**

This will be our end of summer watering of blue oak seedlings as well as pruning back toyon from resprouting black and interior live oak. We now have an excellent small electric chain saw, but bring loppers too if you have them. We will meet at the end of Kilkee Drive at the start of the Westside Trail at 7:30 am. For more information, email David at david@ecoshasta.org.

**Nur Pon (Henderson Open Space) Field Trip Native (and Non-native) Plant Identification
Thursday, September 15, 9 am**

This will be a joint Shasta Environmental Alliance and Shasta Chapter of California Native Plant Society plant identification field trip. Walk leader David Ledger will identify the native and non-native plants of the area and provide participants with a plant list. Now that the area has been fenced off and cleared of illegal camping, this should be a fun outing. This will be an easy walk of 1 1/2 miles, taking about 90 minutes. The City is not allowing bicycles in this area and dogs must be on leash at all times. The area is near Hartnell Avenue at the intersection of Parkview Avenue and Henderson Road on the *east* side of the river. Park behind the Cobblestone Shopping Center inside the wrought iron fence. For more information contact david@ecoshasta.org.

**Lassen Park Paradise Meadows Field Trip
Saturday, September 17, 8 am**

This field trip will be to Paradise Meadows in Lassen Volcanic National Park where we will see the tail end of summer wildflowers at Paradise Meadows and on the trail above the meadows. This will be a moderate four-mile hike going to Paradise meadows and on the trail above the meadows to see some different plants. It has a few steep spots requiring agility, but overall, not too hard. We will also walk around the edge of the meadows to see late blooming wildflowers. SEA will have a plant list of the major trees, shrubs and wildflowers along the trail. Regardless of the heat in Redding, this will be 25 to 35 degrees cooler. Bring a hat, plenty of water and a lunch. For meeting place and information email david@ecoshasta.org.

**Tree Identification Walk in Caldwell Park
Saturday, October 1, 9 am**

Local arborist Rico Montenegro will lead this field trip through Caldwell Park identifying trees in the park, their adaptation to Redding's environment, and uses for backyard shade trees or street trees in Redding. Chico is an expert on trees, he brought the 100 plus year old Whiskeytown apple orchard back to life and has been a consultant on fruit tree around the world. Meet in the boat ramp parking lot in Caldwell Park near the railroad trestle at 9 am. This will be about a 90-minute walk. For more information, email david@ecoshasta.org