



**Shasta
Environmental
Alliance**

P.O. Box 993777 • Redding, CA 96099 • ecoshasta.org

March 2025 Newsletter

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SEA & Community Events



Bailey Cove Loop Field Trip

Saturday, March 8th, 9am

Sign up here:

<https://forms.gle/Ubpt5Bdnh5WpmrjaZ>

Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup (hosted by Horsetown-Clear Creek Preserve)

Saturday, March 29th

9am-12pm

2025 Earth Day Festival - Join Us!

JOIN US for another **FREE Earth Day Festival** at **Caldwell Park** on **Saturday, April 19, from 11 AM to 4 PM**. This year's theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," highlights the importance of renewable energy and the power of collective action for our environment. Learn more about the Festival at seashasta.org!

We will have many children's activities and games in addition to live music and food vendors. Animals from Shasta Wildlife Rescue will be visiting as will an animal with the Backcountry Horsemen. There will also be many educational booths for adults as well. This is a free, family-friendly event so we hope you'll join us!

There will be free and secure bike parking and, in the spirit of Earth Day, RABA will be offering rides on all routes free all day the Redding Area Bus Authority (RABA) will provide a free fair day this day - passengers can ride RABA buses at no cost to and from the event, making it easier for the community to participate in the Earth Day festivities at Caldwell Park. Can't wait to see you there!



Trip Report: Blue Gravel Mine Walk



Photo by Sarah Risher

Our February 9th walk along the Blue Gravel Mine trail in West Redding was met with sunny skies and a brisk wind. Fifteen people and four canine friends joined SEA walk leader Juliet Malik to explore native plants and local history. We noted some early spring blooms such as warrior's plume, California Dutchman's pipe, and a ceanothus (buckbrush) in full bloom. Further down the trail, we stopped at the physical remains of the historical Blue Gravel Mine that defined this stretch of

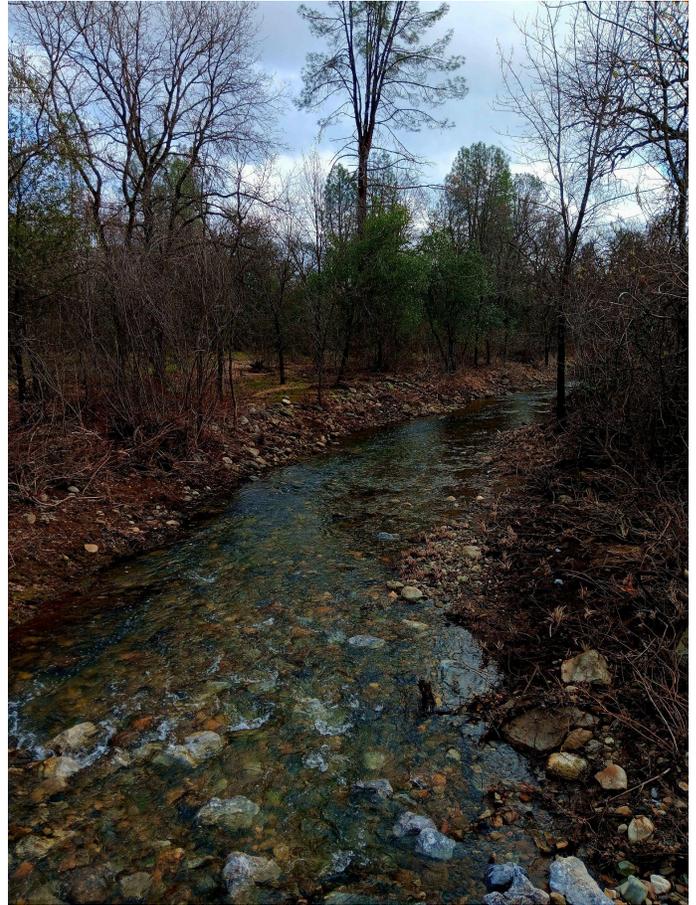
land between 1910 and 1958. Juliet provided a historical photo of the land from the 1930s (sourced from Jeremy Tuggle's blog, [Exploring Shasta History](#)), to compare the stark differences between the denuded landscape of then, to the one today that is lush with mostly native vegetation.

We discussed how taking an environmental history perspective allows us to think philosophically beyond the ecological impact and purported economic benefits of mining to consider how human cultural and ideological shifts are revealed in our landscapes. The physical remains of this once city-owned gold mine are the concrete remnants of the stamp mill that crushed the extracted quartz to separate the gold, but perhaps more important is the fact that many decades later we can now enjoy the shade of towering oaks, cottonwoods, gray pines, and even one planted Douglas-fir while listening to the breeze and birds as they flit through the willows, redbud, and toyon. The restoration and resilience of this land is a testament to a shift in land-use attitudes by the City of Redding from one of extraction for monetary gain to one of social and spiritual connectivity and ecological balance.

Trip Report: Battle Creek Walking Field Trip

Photos by Brigitte Robertson

For this February field trip, we went through the maze of short trails in the riparian areas behind Boulder Creek Elementary School. We had a friendly group of 11 people who had to learn plants the hard way as few plants were in bloom. We started with the easy ones: valley oak, interior live oak, oracle oak, redbud, and gray pine. From there, we found a white leaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos viscida*) and common manzanita (*A. manzanita*) that were in bloom. They are in the heath family, Ericaceae, and since they were already pollinated and fertilized, it was easy to identify the ovary, style, and stigma if you pulled off the united flower petal.



This area has two willows, the arroyo willow and the red willow. We found a female arroyo willow in bloom and using a magnifying glass everyone was able to see the female ovary and the stigma - the only flower parts of a female willow. They grow on a catkin and are easy to identify as they are usually the first willows to bloom and the flower matures before or with the



emerging leaves. They also have a fat-arched bud. The catkins do have nectaries on them to attract insects for pollination. Some willows are both insect and wind-pollinated, but the arroyo are only insect-pollinated.

For the other plants we identified, most were familiar with: mugwort, gumweed, buck brush, chaparral honeysuckle, pipevine, California poppies (not in bloom), California rose (*Rosa California*), coffeeberry, Fremont cottonwood, and

leafless Oregon ash. All were not in bloom except for the pipevine.

This was an easy-level walk meant to teach participants a bit of a deeper understanding of plants rather than just identifying a bunch of plants. A brief explanation of photosynthesis and water movement was given to round out the participants' knowledge. This was discussed in sections on the walk to learn the principles in specific steps. For instance, we discussed the 1000's of pores (stomata, pl.) on leaves (for most plants on the lower part of the leaves) and how this lets carbon dioxide in and water vapor and oxygen out, a necessary part of photosynthesis and water transport in plants.

Hawes Ranch Decision

Photo: Amusement Rides at Hawes Ranch

By David Ledger

The decision on the Hawes Ranch zoning change from Agriculture to Commercial Recreation was approved in concept in a compromise decision by the Shasta County Board of Supervisors at its February 25 marathon meeting.



The Supervisors, on a 5/0 vote, moved to send it back to the Planning Department to remove the parcels in the floodplain, comprising about 40 acres, out of the Recreational Zoning change and leaving it with its current "Agricultural" zoning. Noise restrictions from the amusement park were restricted to 55 decibels at the property line, as that had been a big complaint from the neighbors; restrictions on lighting were imposed and no overnight camping of any type would be allowed. The former annual harvest festivals at the Hawes Ranch had developed over the years, adding events throughout the year including rock and country bands, with noise and lights keeping the neighbors up until midnight on the weekends. This was a bone of contention among neighbors, many of whom had lived nearby years before Hawes had developed the festivals.

SEA, CNPS, Sierra Club, and Battle Creek Alliance had submitted a joint letter opposing any development in the riparian areas. Shasta Birding Society had submitted comments opposing the same, as well as concerns about the effect of noise on protected bird species. While a biological assessment had found monarch butterflies on the property, a sensitive species that will soon be listed as threatened or endangered by the USFWS, the Supervisors did not require any mitigation or protection for the butterfly.

The monarch butterfly population collapsed to only 20,000 estimated in wintering areas in the winter of 2020-2021. In the winter of 2022-2023, the wintering population increased to 300,000 but far below the 1980s populations of 1 million to 4 million per year. When I visited a monarch butterfly preserve in Pismo Beach this winter, the populations were way down from the 1980s. Back then, butterflies covered some of the trees down to eye level. This year you had to use binoculars to see a few in the upper reaches of tall Eucalyptus trees.

The decision by the Supervisors regarding the zoning change has to go back to the Planning Commission for approval and then return to the Supervisors for a final vote. The Supervisors had been overwhelmed by emails and phone calls on the subject and were unlikely to make any changes to their provisional decision.

Remarkably, this session of the Supervisors' meeting had little of the rancor of previous meetings and was quite civil despite sharp disagreements from those commenting, both proponents and opponents of the project. The decision basically just brought into conformance the violation of the Planned Development zoning that Hawes had already been doing for many years but it does allow for the expansion of the amusement area.

Ocean Conservancy Namibia Seal Rescues

There are many short clips on YouTube showing the work of the Ocean Conservancy on the coast of Namibia rescuing seals that are entangled in various waste in the Atlantic Ocean, primarily fishing lines, nets, and hooks but also plastic bags, clothes, and other trash in the ocean. This is why beach and creek cleanups are important - they stop trash before it reaches the ocean.

Namibia is a country just north of South Africa on the Atlantic Coast. Below is one of many videos on YouTube, but a warning, some are hard to watch due to the suffering of the seals. Here's one that is worth watching! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTJAh8RgbyQ>

The Trump Administration and Threats to Our Environment



*Photo by: Chad Davis from
Minneapolis, United States, CC BY 2.0,
via Wikimedia Commons*

Article by David Ledger

Removing Charging Stations at Government Buildings

The Trump administration is turning back many of the initiatives of the Biden Administration to combat climate change. Recently the Government Services Administration (GSA) has

not only been cancelling programs for new EV charging stations at government buildings, they have also ordered those buildings to shut off electric vehicle chargers that are currently operating. Eventually, they are likely to be removed.

Orders under the Biden Administration for the GSA to purchase 58,000 EVs and install 25,000 charging stations are being canceled by Trump. All current EVs will be sold or put into storage according to reports.

This latest move to rescind pro-EV initiatives in President Donald Trump's first 40 days in office bodes poorly for the future. Read *The Verge* article [HERE](#)

Arbor Day Tree Planting Grant Canceled

The US Forest Service has canceled a \$75 million grant to the Arbor Day Foundation to plant shade trees in neighborhoods affected by fire, hurricanes, or neglect because there was an emphasis on funds going to disadvantaged communities in other words, anything to do with DEI. Apparently, poor neighborhoods will have to plant trees with their own money, unlike more affluent neighborhoods which have their cities plant them. Some 105 grants that had been awarded to various communities and organizations that would benefit all citizens are now canceled. See *Oregonlive.com* article [here](#)

Executive Order to Increase Logging on Public Lands

The Trump administration has issued orders to the Departments of Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce to streamline regulations to increase logging of our National Forests, BLM lands, and National Monuments and possibly salvage logging in National Parks. They will use the “God Squad” to disregard endangered species protections if necessary. This is a serious threat to our public lands and transferring the wealth of our forests for recreation, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, wilderness areas, and future uses for the immediate profits of logging companies although this process will take over six months to start, a lot of damage could be done before Trump’s term runs out.

Trump and his advisors are using the burning of homes in fires in Los Angeles as an excuse even though none of the fires were in forested areas. Almost all were in chaparral, which is dominated by shrubs and a few near Altadena had mixed hardwood woodlands nearby. None were in areas of conifer forests. Unfortunately, Governor Gavin Newsom is jumping on the bandwagon, following Trump's lead and making proposals to weaken California’s landmark California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). While the Board of Forestry generally ignores CEQA’s greenhouse gas accountability in approving Timber Harvest Plans, this will take away protections for plants and animals, all in the name of healthy forests, forest resiliency, thinning forests, fire protection, or whatever euphemism used for logging regardless of how far these logging operations may be from towns or villages that need protection.

Recommended reading:

-The Wildfire Reader, A Century of Failed Forest Policy, Edited by George Wuerthner

-Smokescreen: Debunking Wildfire Myths to Save Our Forests and Our Climate, by Chad Hanson

Redding Loses Street Trees on Liberty Street



Photos by David Ledger

Recently, all the street trees on a long block of Liberty Street next to Trinity Street in Redding were cut down, however, it was for the right reasons. All the trees were Liquidambar, a tree with very shallow roots. The trees have pushed up the sidewalk along most of the street, making it hazardous for people walking, especially at night.

The accompanying pictures show how badly the sidewalks were damaged. One photo on nearby Trinity Street shows where the city crews had repaired the sidewalk to circumvent the trees of a different species, giving them room to grow.

Rico Montenegro, a local arborist and tree advocate, said cities throughout California have had trouble with Liquidambar trees, which is why they are no longer used as street trees.

Montenegro recently saw some tall shady sycamore trees on Churn Creek Road near Mistletoe that were being topped by a gardener, which will result in a continuing need for extensive pruning once they are topped.



Both of these examples point to the need for Redding to hire an Urban Forester or have a citizens advisory committee composed of experienced arborists to advise the Planning Department and Streets and Parks Department on proper tree selection.

Many cities require any company that prunes or removes trees to have a certified arborist on their staff. This would help the short-staffed Redding Community Services Department, which oversees Parks and Recreation.



First photo in article: sidewalk buckling from tree roots on Liberty Street; Second photo: sidewalks repaired on Trinity Street; Third photo: Sycamore trees poorly cut

DONATE!

We Couldn't Do This Work Without You.

Please consider donating to SEA!

You can go to ecoshasta.org to donate!

If you prefer to send a check, our mailing address is:

Shasta Environmental Alliance, P.O. Box 993777, Redding, CA 96099-3777

