



**Shasta
Environmental
Alliance**

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

February 2024 Newsletter

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Thank you to our donors!

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UPCOMING SEA EVENTS



Photo by Kathy Urlie

For more information about SEA-hosted events, email david@ecoshasta.org

Redding Seed Swap

(hosted by the Shasta Seed Library & Family Project)

Sunday, February 4th, 1:30 pm - 4 pm

Redding Library Community Room

Cloverdale Trail Ecology & Restoration Field Trip

Saturday, February 10th at 9 am

Bark Beetles: A Natural Part of Our Local Forest Ecology

Tuesday, February 13th at 6 pm

Redding Library Community Room

Audubon Conservation Ranching Program

(hosted by Shasta Birding Society)

February 14 at 7:00 pm

Online - Zoom

Trail 58 Field Trip

Saturday, February 24th at 9:30 am

Planning Commission to Consider General Plan in February

Redding's Draft General Plan will be coming back to the Planning Commission in February, according to a statement by Development Services Director Jeremy Pagan. The original plan was horrific, consisting of a series of weak platitudes such as "strive to," "seek," "consider," and "encourage." Due to considerable criticism of the weak, meaningless wording, the language was changed in many instances, but not all.

In addition to the inclusion of all the weasel words, there are two other areas of great concern:

1. The General Plan calls for the protection of stream corridors, including a recommendation that development be set back at least 75 feet from the edge of the Sacramento River riparian zone or 150 feet from the top of the river bank (whichever is greater), which is commendable. Unfortunately, a footnote on Figure NR-1 exempts all "water-orientated commercial projects in the Cypress Avenue, Park Marina, and Convention Center areas" from the standard setbacks. Additionally, Policy NR5A allows any and all stream setbacks to be reduced, making the stream corridor protections nearly worthless. As a side note, the City Zoning Ordinance is even worse, stating that all prescribed buffers are *average* setbacks, not minimums, and that "Reduced setbacks are *appropriate* for *water-oriented/commercial activities* and for bluff areas for that section of the river between the North Market Street Bridge and the alignment of the future Parkview Bridge" (emphasis added). The added slash ("/") in *water-oriented/commercial activities* suggests that all commercial activities are exempt from the standard setback, which is even weaker than the proposed General Plan policy. The Zoning Ordinance also contains a whole section allowing reduced setbacks along all other stream corridors.
2. Another second major problem is found in the weak wording of the Climate Action Plan policy. Environmental Justice Section 3E of the Draft General Plan says, *Consider the development and adoption of a Climate Action and Resiliency Plan. Support plans, standards, regulations, incentives, and investments, and seek grants and other funding to reduce the impacts of climate change on vulnerable residents.* This sounds like the City has already considered it and definitely does *not* want to adopt a Climate Action Plan.

We will keep you updated when this comes to the Planning Commission. Look for our next Action Alert.

For more environmental issues and SEA news—including info on oak seedling and shade tree programs, trail cleanups, and Earth Day preparations—please see Shasta Environmental Alliance’s February 2024 Newsletter.

~David Ledger, Conservation Chair

This corrects and expands on issues related to the General Plan in an earlier edition of our newsletter.

Four SEA Volunteers Get Chainsaw Certificates for Trail and Restoration Work



Four of our hardest-working volunteers spent three hours on February 13 getting certificates to operate chain saws on BLM lands where we have adopted a trail on Clear Creek and another parcel on the Westside Trail where we have planted blue oak trees and are cutting back shrubs and pruning multi-sprouting oak trees in the Carr Fire area as well as some dead wood.

The volunteers were Terry Swanson, Yo Sadohara, Derle Gilliam, and Doug Mandel. Chris Pearson, a volunteer at Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve also joined SEA and there were a few mountain bike trail volunteers. These SEA volunteers have also done a lot of hard work on our shade tree planting project.

Deluge of Emails Hits the Planning Commission on Trees



Google photo, looking north on Churn Creek Road at Rancho Road 2017



After the cut at looking south to the intersection of Churn Creek and Rancho Road. An oak woodland clearcut

Congratulations to many of you who sent in comment emails on the discussion of a new tree ordinance for Redding by the Planning Commission, taking up where the Redding Tree Committee left off. We had almost 100 emailed comments that went to the Planning Commission and most were cc'd to the City Council and this was after SEA had only one week of official notice before the meeting to get the word out. It's probably the largest number of comments since Turtle Bay. Eight people spoke including three SEA board members which is a good turnout for the commission and many tree advocates were in the audience.

There will be other meetings coming up and we will notify the public again to comment on preserving Redding's oak trees and when they can't be preserved require enough mitigation to plant other trees in Redding parks and streets to take their place. The turnout and many emails really made a difference in the tenor of the Planning Commission meeting as the commissioners and staff know there is a great deal of dissatisfaction with Redding's disappearing tree canopy and our spreading asphalt parking lots and streets.

Next month we will try for 200 comments and 15 people attending to comment. While the meetings are long, they did let the public comment at about the one-hour mark, so people can leave early if they wish. It is important to make your voice heard. Thank you to all who commented whether three sentences or three pages, it all helped.

Hawes Ranch Update



Hawes Ranch - moving dirt to change the landscape. County says no environmental mitigation is required.

The Zoning change on 145 acres of land at the Hawes Ranch at the corner of Dersch and Deschutes Roads from primarily Ag land to Commercial Recreation is still pending following a failure to get a quorum for approval at a Board of Supervisors meeting. Jones, Crye, and Rickert cited a conflict of interest, and thus the two remaining supervisors were not a quorum and a vote could not be taken. If Crye is recalled and a new supervisor is elected it will

likely come up for another vote.

Since that hearing, Shasta County cited Hawes for grading in a floodplain without a permit and holding weddings and other events on the river without a permit. Over the years there have been numerous health and safety, zoning, and building violations and 10 plus fire safety codes

Cultivating Conservation: Ghost Pine Native Plant Nursery's Mission



In the heart of far northern California, a nonprofit organization called [Ghost Pine Native Plant Nursery \(GPNPN\)](https://ghostpinenursery.org) is taking root, aiming to educate, motivate, and cultivate a deeper understanding of the importance of native plants. This nursery, an aspect of the nonprofit corporation, is committed to not only propagating and selling California native plants but also serving as a beacon for environmental conservation. In this article, we delve into the mission of GPNPN, its journey from inception, the significance of native plants, and ways for individuals to contribute to preserving our environment.

Ghost Pine Native Plant Nursery (GPNPN) operates with the mission to propagate and sell California native plants as a means to educate and inspire the public about conserving natural resources. For those eager to connect with the organization, inquiries can be directed to info@GPNPN.org, and more information is available on their website at [GhostPineNursery.org](https://ghostpinenursery.org)

The driving force behind GPNPN lies in a genuine belief in the necessity of educating the public about native ecosystems, biodiversity, and the myriad benefits of native plants. The void in comprehensive educational materials prompted the establishment of GPNPN, fostering initiatives to inspire individuals to incorporate climate-adapted native plants into their landscapes.



Ghost Pine Nursery was born out of the realization that enthusiasts often struggle to find locally sourced native plants. Currently in its second year, the nursery is gradually expanding its reach. Participating in local events like the Redding Farmer's Market and planning to launch an educational website, the nursery aims to bridge the gap between the demand for native plants and their availability.

The importance of native plants cannot be overstated, and GPNPN underscores this through various activities. Native plants reduce water consumption, support biodiversity, and contribute to essential ecosystem services. GPNPN emphasizes the role of native plants in sustaining bird populations, building soil health, and preventing flooding through their deep root systems.

To support native plants and the environment, GPNPN encourages individuals to embrace simple yet impactful practices:

- Plant more local native plants
- Replace lawns with native plants
- Remove invasive species
- Minimize the use of herbicides, insecticides, and fungicides
- Cultivate keystone species like oak trees, cherries, and sunflowers
- Establish pollinator gardens with native plants
- Leave stems and seed heads for wildlife
- Preserve fallen leaves which are vital habitat for moth caterpillars
- Incorporate water features in gardens
- Modify or turn off outdoor lights to benefit nocturnal pollinators

As GPNPN continues to grow, support from volunteers and donors is crucial. The organization is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit, welcoming donations, grant applications, and volunteers for propagation. Additionally, plans are in place to secure a physical space to facilitate nursery operations and engage with the community more effectively.

Ghost Pine Native Plant Nursery stands at the intersection of environmental conservation and public education. With a commitment to propagating native plants and fostering awareness about their significance, GPNPN invites individuals to join the movement toward sustainable gardening and environmental stewardship. By supporting this initiative, we contribute not only to the preservation of native plants but also to the overall health and vitality of California's ecosystems.

In addition to GPNPN, there are a few other places you may be interested in checking out to buy native plants, including the fall plant sale at Shasta College's farm where the [Shasta Chapter of the California Native Plant Society \(CNPS\)](#) has many for sale, selling nearly 600 plants at each sale. [The McConnell Arboretum at Turtle Bay](#) often has native plants for sale as well.



Trip Report: Chamise Peak Field Trip



Photo by David Ledger of Penstemon (blurry but beautiful still!)

This field trip near Shasta Lake and above the Sacramento River provides a gentle climb of 700 feet in a vegetative habitat of mixed conifer, oak woodland, and chaparral over a 2.3-mile upward climb to the top and a 4.6-mile total hike. The field trip was postponed one day due to rain but it was for the good as this is a very popular weekend trail and with a thick cloud cover we saw few hikers until the return trip.

The most common conifer on the trail is knob cone pine, interspersed with a few gray pines and ponderosa pines near the top. Black, blue, and canyon live oaks were the most common broad-leaf trees. For shrubs, white-leaf manzanita was the most

common, many 20 feet tall. Other shrubs included coffeeberry, Lemmon's ceanothus, deer brush, and redberry. *Keckiella* sp. (most likely Lemmon's) and, of course, toyon.

An interesting herbaceous plant we did see in bloom was Penstemon underneath the powerlines. Most of the Lemmon's ceanothus and cudweed were also under the powerlines.

Despite the last-minute date change for the field trip due to rain, we had a cheerful group of nine hikers who made it to the peak. The cloud cover began to lift after we reached the top and we could make out Shasta Dam and the Sacramento River but not Mt. Shasta.

As to why there were no chamise shrubs on Chamise Peak, one can only speculate. At one time one can assume it did grow there due to the name and it does grow just about a mile to the north next to the road to Shasta Dam. It is possible either it was killed by the pollution from the copper smelters 100 years ago or there was a fire that killed it. If it was a fire, it wasn't too hot as some of the canyon live oaks looked to be over 200 years old. Either way, smelters or fire it was out-competed by other vegetation. It was most likely over-topped by the white leaf manzanita, which was quite tall for this manzanita the black oaks and canyon live oaks also out-competed it eventually in the fight for sunlight.

Next time you drive back from Weaverville, look at the tall hills to the north of the highway. Most of this is solid chamise. It outcompeted the other shrubs and trees in the fight for sunlight and nutrients, plus chamise thrives in full hot sun. This is a great place to take a hike but it is best on the weekdays as it is fairly busy on weekends.

Volunteers Needed: Do Your Part to Keep Redding Green!

Oak Seedling Program: Starting in late February we will need to increase the fencing around the seedlings we planted as they are outgrowing their cages. We will also be putting burlap on the fencing, cutting back some of the brush, and pruning back multi-sprouting black and interior live oaks. On a related note, BLM recently told us a volunteer monarch butterfly group wants to plant milkweeds on the parcel we are working on. If you would like to help, contact david@ecoshasta.org

Clear Creek Trail Cleanup: SEA will be conducting a quarterly cleanup and trail maintenance day on a two-mile section of trail in the Clear Creek Greenway. Meet at the Clear Creek

Overlook Parking lot on Saturday, March 2 at 9 am. Bring gloves and water. About 2 1/2 hours of work. For more information, contact david@ecoshasta.org or go to our [Meetup.com site](#).

Shade Tree Program: Starting in March will begin our 2 nd year program of planting shade trees in Redding front yards at no cost to the homeowner. Work 3 to 5 hours as your schedule allows, planting trees with a group of friendly volunteers. For more information, contact David Ledger at david@ecoshasta.org. This is to build up Redding's tree canopy, sequester carbon, and combat Redding's heat island. To sign up for a free shade tree planted in your yard, go to [our website](#).

Earth Day Volunteers: SEA is organizing Earth Day again this year in Caldwell Park on April 20, we can use volunteers to help on the day of the event and in the organizing. For more information, contact ecoshasta@gmail.com

Sulphur Creek Cleanup: We will have another annual cleanup of trash on a section of Sulphur Creek. This is an easy two-hour work session in a beautiful setting on an isolated section of Sulphur Creek in late April with creek levels determining the exact date. If you would like to volunteer, contact david@ecoshasta or follow [our website](#) or [our Meetup.com site](#)

Thank You to Our Donors!

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Kris Bertleson-Williams, Sandra Cameron, Barbara Dorris, Tammi Douse, Ailene Genoff, Robert Hixon, Jim Milestone, Cathy Reisfelt, Linda Samuels, Jamie Spielmann, Michael Koturba, Brigitte Robertson, John Winchell, Marti Weidert

\$100 to \$249

Aleta Carpenter, Sierra Club, Paula Dulak, Derle Gilliam, Kathleen Gilman, Green Party of Shasta County, George Horn, Laura Bradley, Siskiyou Land Trust, Karen Foss, John Lefler, Doug Mandel, John Springer, Connie Word

\$250 to \$499

Mary Belkin, Don and Laurie Burk, Barbara Featherstone, Ryan Henson, Peter Waller, Shasta Chapter, California Native Plant Society

\$1000 & Up

Chris Harvey

Please consider a donation to SEA!

You can go to ecoshasta.org to donate!

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

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