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June 2023 Newsletter

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Thank you to our donors!

SEA Needs Your Support - Become a Member Today!



Become a Member of Shasta Environmental Alliance (SEA) and help the Northstate's environment stays beautiful and healthy for generations to come!

SEA brings local environmental groups together to create a unified front to protect our precious natural resources including the air, water, land, and wildlife of the Sacramento Valley Watershed. We make this a reality through the following:

- **EDUCATION:** Leading free monthly field trips to help connect community members with our environment and teach about the native plants and animals vital to our area. Hosting larger events such as the Redding Earth Day Festival.
- **ADVOCACY:** Attending monthly local government meetings, creating relationships with local stakeholders, and writing public letters to advocate for our environment.
- **DIRECT ACTION:** Sponsoring local waterway and land clean-up days to get the community directly involved in the care of our Northern California environment.
- **OUTREACH:** Providing volunteer opportunities and creating connections with community members and other local environmental groups, giving opportunities for local groups and members to connect through meaningful talks, field trips, and events
- **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT:** Serving on focus groups (e.g. City of Redding General Plan Focus Groups); committees (e.g. City Tree Committee); and advisory groups (e.g. Redding Electric Utility's Integrated Resource Advisory group)

For \$25 or more, you can become a year-long member of SEA and help us sustain our advocacy work!

As a member, your perks include:

- Free SEA bumper sticker
- Events and field trips
- Monthly e-newsletter with your name printed in it
- Exclusive early access to applications for our special programs

SEA could NOT do this work without members like you. Please consider donating today!

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

Redding Seeking Comments on Trails in Oregon Gulch



Redding Parks and Recreation Department is asking the public to comment on proposed trails in Oregon Gulch, a natural undeveloped area of oak woodlands and chaparral of about 380 acres in southwest Redding. The current proposal will have many trails for both bicycles and walking trails.

These trails would be good to add to the trail system of Redding; however, SEA feels that there are too many trails and they are too close together, disrupting too much wildlife habitat. We are also concerned that one of the trails will have a downhill section for mountain bikes only that is considered “high tech” and would make the area more like the Swasey Recreation Area -- a great area for mountain bikes, but not for anyone wishing to enjoy nature due to the number and speed of mountain bikes on some trails. SEA supports the building of trails in the area, but feels that most should be for hiking and dog walking, with two ridge trails that could be wide enough for joint bike and foot traffic.

You can submit your comments in a survey on the City of Redding website at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QRRNSRD>

BLM Restoration Field Trip with SEA



Shasta Environmental Alliance (SEA) will be sponsoring a field trip led by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ecologist Brooke Thompson at a 426-acre property on the Sacramento River near Battle Creek. This will be more of a driving and walking lecture than a hike as Brooke will explain how the BLM plan to restore this riparian area. This will be an exciting and rare opportunity to see the “before” picture of a long-term restoration project with an explanation of all of the issues involved and the sensitive species that will be helped. The area is on the east side of the Sacramento River. To sign up and for meeting information contact David Ledger at david@ecoshasta.org

The Bureau of Land Management Redding Field Office acquired the 426-acre Rancho Breisgau Unit adjacent to Battle Creek and the Sacramento River in 2011 to restore the area to a riparian oak woodland. This project is part of a landscape initiative to restore the Battle Creek watershed due to its critical importance for threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead runs (notably Endangered winter-run Chinook), the Western Monarch, the Threatened Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and the Threatened Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle.

This BLM property has been heavily degraded and fragmented for over a century due to intensive agriculture. Landscape conversions over such a long period have resulted in fallow fields dominated by non-native, invasive species. Currently, a stark 10% of Valley riparian forests in California remains due to decades of decline from agriculture, urbanization, and altered hydrology. It is critical that the BLM seeks out riparian restoration projects on large pieces of contiguous land so these ecosystems can be conserved for the enjoyment and benefit of current and future generations.

This project is to implement the Rancho Breisgau riparian restoration on approximately 130 acres. Site preparation will include the removal of walnut orchards and the manual and chemical treatment of non-native, invasive species. Currently, the site is 100% dominated by a monoculture of Cal-IPC-listed invasive species growing to the maximum extent of their phenology. Intensive treatment of invasive species, including mechanical and chemical treatments, will be critical prior to planting and will also remove a major source of weed seed from BLM-administered land.

After initial site preparation, native trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs will be planted and irrigated until they are self-sustaining - at around 3 years. This important step of riparian restoration is critical to the success of these projects and will drastically improve the success of the restoration. Restoration in valley ecosystems is among the most important work we can do to conserve sensitive species' habitats, protect threatened ecosystem types, and fight the climate crisis.

Millville Gun Range Decision Postponed

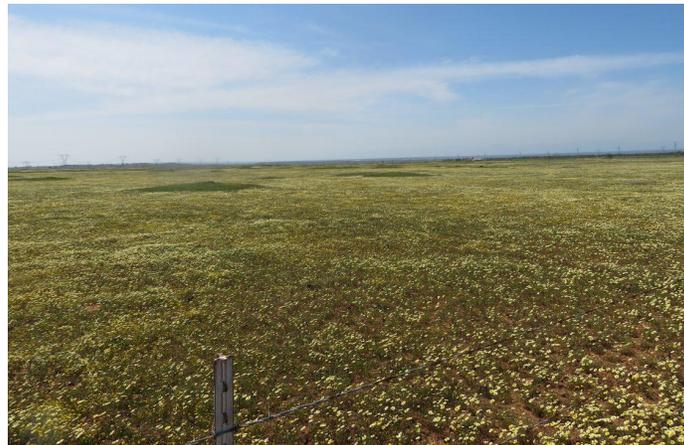


Photo by David Ledger, Millville Plains a few miles east of proposed site.

A decision on the High Plains Shooting Range proposed by Supervisor Patrick Jones in the eastern Millville Plains area was postponed by a 4/0 vote by the Board of Supervisors at their May 16 meeting at the recommendation of the Shasta County Planning Department. This meeting had a standing-room-only crowd and all of the speakers except three were opposed to the project.

The projects had a number of studies required by the Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) that did not appear to have been as thorough as required by the regulations. SEA submitted a three-page letter opposing the project based just on the biological survey which was inadequate. The proposed gun range area has a number of vernal pools and it requires an extensive survey for rare plants and animals that can live only in vernal pool habitats. Rather than surveying for plants during the blooming period, a survey was done in January and February, before the blooming period of most vernal pool plants. A supplemental survey was also required by the Planning Department which was not completed until the end of May after several days of 100-degree heat and 29 days without rain. This made any sensitive plants difficult to identify as it was past the blooming period. Other speakers spoke of defects in the study based on traffic, noise, archeological studies, and safety due to the high-powered rifles used in the outdoor shooting range.

In a phone call with the Planning Department, they indicated it could be some time before this would be brought back to the Board of Supervisors. This will first require a review by the staff of all of the comments that were submitted and a discussion with the applicant, Patrick Jones and both county counsel and outside legal counsel with a CEQA law firm should staff find legal questions needing clarification. They said the public would be given ample notice to comment should the applicant decide to go forward with the project

Trip Report: Sacramento River Trail Field Trip (north)



Photo by David Ledger

On a cool early morning on a May 4th SEA field trip on the north side of the Sacramento River Trail, our small group found a variety of plants in bloom on our easy three-mile walk. This beautiful trail with great views of the river and surrounding countryside is always a pleasure to walk, especially when there are few people on the trail.

Despite a late spring, many plants were in bloom. One common shrub in bloom found all along the trail is Yerba Santa, a fire follower that springs to life following a fire as dormant seeds are able to germinate following a fire due to the heat and chemicals released by a fire which breaks down the protective seed coat.

One uncommon flower we found in a large bunch was clustered broomrape, a wholly parasitic plant that gets its nutrients from the roots of nearby plants. Because it has no chlorophyll, the plant is entirely whitish to yellow with no green parts.

Paper onions, California poppies, valley sky lupines, fiddleneck, and snowdrop bush were some of the native plants we observed as well as recovering blue, valley, and interior live oaks, Oregon ash, arroyo, black and sandbar willow, and many non-native weeds were other plants that we observed.

Unfortunately, the Spanish broom is coming back aggressively and will soon dominate a large section of the floodplain. This was following years of removal by various work crews organized by Randy Smith. On May 25, 2023, SEA will be leading a native plant walk on the south side of the Sacramento River Trail, which has a greater diversity of riparian plants. See our website ecoshasta.org to learn more!

Clear Creek Presentation



On May 11th, SEA had the privilege of hosting Tricia Bratcher, a biologist with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, in a presentation about her 20 years of work in the restoration of Clear Creek.

The presentation was fascinating, discussing the history of Clear Creek and the restoration work that has been taking place over the last 30 years. Stories of designing restoration areas, planting native plants, and removing a small diversion dam to allow for migrating salmon to spawn upstream were told for this very informative talk.

The Carr Fire had such an impact on Clear Creek: the ash from the fires fell into the creek and covered the water's surface, causing mass death in the aquatic life. This along with the restoration efforts was highlighted in this talk.

Trip Report: Sacramento River Trail Field Trip (south)



Photo by David Ledger

Shasta Chapter CNPS and Shasta Environmental Alliance led a three-mile walk along the Sacramento River Trail in the cool, early morning of May 25. Working off of a plant list, we started identifying common plants along the trail. One now-common invasive plant on the trail is the annual moonwort

(*Lunaria annua*), a pretty plant in the mustard family with a round seed pod (silicle) about the size of a 50-cent piece. Redding Parks and Recreation has eliminated a lot of the Japanese honeysuckle on the trail as well as many black locust trees, but they still keep popping up in various places.

Close to the one-mile mark from the parking lot, we headed up a primitive dirt trail that led to the lower portion of the Sunset Heights neighborhood. This short dirt provides easy access to the River Trail for the neighborhood and even has a concrete bench on it. Here we found many native plants including Bolander's onion (*Allium bolanderi*), forked-tooth ookow (*Dichelostemma congestum*), bird's-foot fern (*Pellaea mucronata*), many soap plants, toyon, coffeeberry, buckeye, and an open canopy of blue oaks. Along the River Trail, one can find scouring rush as well as many fern species: maidenhair fern, fragile fern, narrowleaf sword fern, rock fern, bird's-foot fern, chain fern, and goldback fern. There really is a great diversity of native plants, once you ignore the invasives

Want a FREE Tree Planted in Your Yard?



We still have several spots left! If you live in the City of Redding and would like a free shade tree planted for FREE in your front yard this fall, don't hesitate to fill out the interest form on our website by clicking the button below!

We would also love it if you would help spread the word about this project!

Thank you to our donors!

\$25 to \$99

James Aven, Margaret Beck, Muffy Berryhill, Becky Bestwick, Dawn Bieser, Brady Family, Melinda Brown, Steve and Cathleen Callan, Richard Christoph, Jim & Gayle Citta, Allan Craig, Lang Dayton, John Deaton, Shirley Flynn, Carol Forester, Jonathan Foster, Kathy Grissom, Penny Harris, Sandy Harrison, Diane Hawthorne, Jose Hernandez, Belinda Higuera, Bruce Hillman, Robert Hixon, Sabrina Hofkin, George Horn, Janice Hunter, Larry Jordan, Sharon Kennedy, Buzz & Jennifer Knight, Buck & Sue Lang, Alan Lefler, John Livingston, Bob Madison, Lee Macey, Catherine McKnight, Linda Miller, Tom Morehouse, Mary Mitchell, Geneva Omann & Dan Axelrod, Cathy Reisfelt, Brigitte Robertson, Carolyn Salus-Singh, Jamie Spielman, Linda Samuels, Rick Ramos, Cathy Resfelt, Cathy Scott, Carolyn Salus-Singh, Jamie Spielmann, Hugh & Denise Williams, Julie Winter, Vickie Hall, Robert Winter, Kris Bertelson Williams, John Winchell

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\$500 to \$999

Becky Bestwick, Mark Martinek, Karen Little

\$1000 & Up

Chris Harvey, Bob and Diane Madgic