



**Shasta  
Environmental  
Alliance**

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P.O. Box 993777 • Redding, CA 96099 • [ecoshasta.org](http://ecoshasta.org)

## **November 2023 Newsletter**

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# UPCOMING SEA & COMMUNITY EVENTS



## **Jenny Creek Field Trip**

Wednesday, Nov. 8th  
at 9:30am

## **Clear Creek Greenway Field Trip**

Sunday, Nov. 12th at 1pm  
Meet at Clear Creek Gorge  
parking area

## **Inside Rotart Screw Trap and Nature Walk (HCCP)**

Saturday, Nov. 4th at 9am  
Horsetownhccp@gmail.com  
for more info

## **Acorns: A Native American Staple (HCCP)**

Sunday, Nov. 5th at 1pm  
Horsetownhccp@gmail.com  
for more info

## **Geography and More (HCCP)**

Saturday, Nov. 11th at 10am  
Horsetownhccp@gmail.com  
for more info

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## Volunteers Still Needed for Tree Planting

SEA is planting a few more front yard shade trees and we could still use a few volunteers. We are better organized now and if you would like to help, we will schedule a few people at a time throughout the next two weeks. If you can help, please email David Ledger at [david@ecoshasta.org](mailto:david@ecoshasta.org)

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## 2024 Earth Day Celebration Announcement



*Photo by freepik*

Shasta Environmental Alliance (SEA) will again be hosting the Redding Earth Day Festival in 2024 and we hope you will join us! We will be celebrating on Saturday, April 20th at Caldwell Park, with various exhibitors from local, state, and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, community groups, and environmentally-oriented games and activities for children! We will have softly played live music, water stations, and food trucks. This is a free, family-friendly event.

The 2024 Earth Day theme will be Planet vs Plastics calls to advocate for widespread awareness of the health risks of plastics, rapidly phase out all single-use plastics, urgently push for a strong UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution, and demand an end to fast fashion according to the US [earthday.org](https://www.earthday.org). SEA will try to eliminate all single-use plastics from the event including asking exhibitors and guests to forego plastic at the event and, hopefully, in their everyday lives.



If you'd like to volunteer to help at this Earth Day event or would like more information about being a exhibitor, please contact David Ledger at [david@ecoshasta.org](mailto:david@ecoshasta.org). If you would like to be an exhibitor, please remember that we will not have single-use plastic at this event and will limit all plastic in general.

Please keep in mind exhibitor booths are limited to nonprofits and similar groups only. There will not be commercial opportunities for booths at this event.

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## Shade Tree Planting a Success So Far!



*Photo by Doug Mandel*

Two successful Saturdays in October with work by many volunteers, putting in a lot of time and energy led to many shade trees being planted in the front yards of Redding residents. This was nearly a year in the making and with a grant from The Bower Charitable Foundation, SEA and volunteers have successfully started the process of building Redding's tree canopy and helping homeowners create habitat for wildlife and eventually save them money on their energy bills.

Over two weekends we had many volunteers from the community and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) helping SEA dig holes for the trees, plant the trees properly, and brace the trees! SEA President, David Ledger, led the challenge to ensure everything was done to ensure proper placement of trees, and having utilities mark underground lines to ensure that we wouldn't harm any underground sewer lines, water lines, cable TV, etc. when digging the holes.



All of the trees will eventually provide ample shade for their homes, cooling their homes in summer, reducing the heat island effect, and sequestering carbon. A special thanks goes out to SEA members Yojiro Sadohara, Terry Swanson, Kathy Grissom, Derle Gilliam, and Doug Mandel for helping with the grunt work and the young CCC guys showing all of us up. Rico Montenegro, an experienced arborist provided the “how to” of all the planting. And a special thank you to McEntire Landscaping who donated the planted trees!

A huge thank you again to all of the volunteers, the homeowners, The Bower Charitable Foundation, and McEntire Landscaping for helping this come to fruition!

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## Memorial for Doug Craig

A Celebration of the Life of Doug Craig will be held in the Social Hall of the First United Methodist Church, on Saturday, November 18, from 1 to 3 p.m. Many of you know Doug for his many years of educating the public about the danger of climate change. He was one of the earliest and most outspoken persons in the area on this subject. He hosted a local radio show on the subject and conducted many talks and forums. He was also a psychologist and a great humanitarian. He was honored by SEA as an Environmental Champion for his work.

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## Join Us on Meetup and Our Social Media!



*Image by master1305 on Freepik*

Whether through [our newsletter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [our new Meetup group](#), SEA hopes to keep you informed and active in your community! If you've not yet followed us or joined our Meetup group, we highly encourage you to do so and join us for one of our free monthly outings!

And if you know anyone who may be interested in SEA and our offerings, please encourage them to sign up for this newsletter or follow our social media!

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# Trip Report: Kum Bay Xerel Field Trip



By David Ledger

Photo by Doug Mandel

For the Kum Bay field trip, SEA and CNPS teamed up with the Wintu Audubon Society for an unofficial joint field trip. George Horn led the birding part of the field trip while David Ledger focused on native and non-native plants. We had 14 people on this easy three-mile walk on fairly level ground.

This trail begins next to I-5 on a paved City of Redding Trail that curves around to meet the Sacramento River and escapes the sounds of the freeway traffic. The City trail is paved and runs for .7 miles and then meets Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land where the trail is faint but the blackberries and other plants have been pruned back from the soft earthen trail. It was near here where we met the highlight of the field trip, three adult Bald Eagles circling together overhead! Both sides of the river on the BLM section have natural vegetation bringing not only eagles and other raptors, but also a Great Egret, Blue Heron, Kingfisher, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, and many other birds. Near the end of our walk in the ancient riverplain were two circling Red-tailed Hawks who eventually perched on two separate dead snags, another indication of the importance of dead trees and living to an oak woodland. Other dead trees showed evidence of use by birds for nesting, food from dwelling insects and storage of acorns.

Among the many plants, there were a few northern black walnuts (*Juglans hindsii*), skunk brush (*Rhus aromatica*), hop tree (*Pelea crenulata*) black, sandbar and arroyo willow (*Salix ssp.*) and an uncommon plant identified for us by naturalist Barbara Peck was Wright buckwheat (*Eriogonum wrightii*) with the common naked buckwheat (*E. nudum*) prolific on the trail.



Walking on the earthen trail through the old floodplain with many giant valley oaks shading us was a relaxing experience. As close as we were to civilization, it was quiet, with many different native shrubs and trees and assorted birds and squirrels. Preserving important riparian areas is very important not only for many species of birds and other animals on land but also for the various salmon runs, steelhead trout, and other riverine species. This is why SEA, Wintu Audubon, CNPS, Sierra Club, and many other organizations are concerned about preserving all of our riparian areas, especially along the Sacramento River.

If you want to see this beautiful riparian area, I encourage you to go beyond the paved trail and see if you too appreciate this area left in its natural beauty and why we need to preserve more of our beautiful riparian areas.

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## Hawes Ranch Goes to Temporary Defeat Due to Lack of Quorum

The proposed re-zoning of agricultural land at the Hawes Ranch amusement park project was temporarily set back due to a lack of a quorum at the Board of Supervisors meeting on October 3rd. Supervisors Rickert, Crye, and Jones recused themselves from voting due to conflicts of interest. This left only Supervisors Kelstrom and Garman to vote which is not a quorum so the project and the zoning change could not be approved leaving Hawes Ranch and the opponents in limbo. Until there are different supervisors without a conflict of interest, the project cannot be voted on to get a yes or no vote. This was certainly celebrated by the many neighbors in the area who are opposed to the continued expansion of the amusement park area the county refers to as “agritainment.”

Agricultural-themed events at the Nash Ranch on Old Oregon Trail including corn mazes and pumpkin harvests have not generated the same opposition. However, this facility is apparently operating within its use permit and does not have amplified entertainment and amusement rides.

This farm harvest-oriented project has grown over the last 10 years with multiple violations of its Use Permit and zoning including the installation of a number of carnival rides including a Ferris wheel and rock concerts. Had this passed, all unpermitted uses would have been allowed except for building code, health and safety, and fire code violations. Many area residents oppose this project because of the noise, lights, and traffic events at the facility create in an area zoned rural residential and agriculture.

Like the recently approved gun range in Millville Plains, the new zoning would have been “commercial recreation” which has a wide variety of allowed uses in many rural areas disrupting what residents thought was a quiet rural area when they bought homes near both projects.

Neighbors have recently complained about a wedding and event venue directly on the Sacramento River on an adjacent parcel of land owned by the Hawes family that evidently included unpermitted grading in the floodplain. The county recently ordered the facility to stop this unpermitted activity to cease following complaints to the Board of Supervisors. Code enforcement is investigating the apparent unpermitted grading in the floodplain.



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## Millville Gun Range Passes with a 3-to-1 Vote



*Photo by David Ledger, Millville Plains a few miles east of gun range site.*

The Highland Plains Shooting Range proposed by Supervisor Patrick Jones in the eastern Millville Plains passed on a 3 to 1 vote on October 24 following a packed five-hour contentious meeting. The supervisors approved a zoning change to Commercial Recreation (C-R), the same zoning change proposed for the Hawes Ranch amusement center.

The gun range will be on a small section of a 157-acre parcel but will have a large effect on the surrounding environment and the neighbors in this rural area. It is located several miles west of Parkville Road just north of Dersch Road in an area over vernal pools and wetlands with the eastern portion containing Bear Creek, a salmon spawning creek. The project will include a pistol range, shotgun range, and a high-powered rifle range with onsite camping for RV's and travel trailers, a clubhouse, and shooting contests with up to 500 participants. It will be open 5 days per week from 8 am to 8 pm depending on the season.

SEA submitted a detailed written statement opposing the project primarily focused on the Biological Survey although other aspects of the project will have serious negative impacts on wildlife and people in the area.

Plant surveys under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) require certain protocols such as visiting a project site several times during the blooming season. A plant survey was done on January 21

and February 18 when the plants would not be blooming. After a requirement by the Planning Department, a third survey was done on May 26, after 29 days of no rain and several days of 100-degree temperatures, which is another failure to follow CEQA protocols and failure to conduct a plant survey during the blooming period. Naturally, no rare, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species were found. The consultant Steven Kerns even admitted that almost all of the plants were “brown.”

Marily Woodhouse Director of Defiance Canyon Raptor Rescue, a licensed raptor rescue and rehabilitation specialist, submitted a long report about the close vicinity of eagles to the proposed gun range and the distress it would cause them (For a copy of Marily’s letter with detailed information on eagles in our area, [go the link here](#)). Terry Lhuillier, head of Friends of the Redding Eagles also submitted a letter of opposition because of nearby Bald Eagle nests.

For the final vote, Patrick Jones had to recuse himself but Tim Garman, Keven Crye, and Chris Kelstrom all voted yes. Mary Rickert was the sole “no” vote.

The Commercial Recreation zoning regulation allows almost any development that can be tagged recreation to be developed in rural areas, adversely affecting residents of the area by noise, traffic, lights, and degradation of wildlife habitats. It is unfair to affected residents who specifically moved to these areas because of the solitude, quiet, and beauty of certain rural areas, all to be destroyed for commercial profit.

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## Establishing the Jenny Creek Trail



There is currently a trail in the late planning stage that would roughly follow Jenny Creek in the Sunset Terrace neighborhood running from TR Woods Park on Royal Oaks, traversing through the City of Redding-owned open space between the homes on Royal Oaks Drive on the northwest and Sunset Drive, Pioneer and Overhill Drives to the southeast. The proposed trail will connect with a wide concrete trail running from a service road

at the end of Overhill Drive that crosses Jenny Creek and ultimately connects to the Sacramento River Trail at the ½ mile point from the Diestelhorst Bridge parking lot.

According to Travis Menne, the new Director of Redding Community Services, the final plans for the trail will be made public in November. The trail will be paved, most likely concrete, 12 feet wide, and will be lighted. Menne said it would not go near the riparian area of Jenny Creek but above the creek in the blue oak woodland of the open space. Using Google Maps, for a trail that wide it appears that a considerable number of blue oaks will be removed, but with the final trail map not yet available to the public this is speculation. There is already a hand-dug trail running from near the end of Royal Oaks Drive to the Sacramento River Trail, complete with a bench and it does not appear that a single native oak tree was removed building this trail.

SEA was contacted by some residents of the surrounding neighborhood who are opposed to the trail, however until a final map and details are released, we cannot take a position on it, although we did give them some insight into the planning process and CEQA. The Trails and Bikeways Council of Redding has long advocated for a trail from the Mary Lake Subdivision to Jenny Creek and has built a gravel trail on a short section upstream of Mary Lake without removing a native tree. This short section is a tiny oasis of wildlife in the neighborhood.

SEA will be hosting a hike of this area on Nov. 8th at 9:30 a.m. You can find more information on this field trip by [clicking here](#).

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## What Happened to US Waste to Energy?

Last spring Shasta Environmental Alliance (SEA) got word that a company called US Waste to Energy (USWTE) was in escrow with the City of Redding to purchase a property in the Stillwater Business Park. USWTE advertises itself as using “green technology” to convert plastic and tires to jet fuel. It sounds “too good to be true,” getting rid of plastic pollution and old tires and converting them to something useful (fuel).

However, several community members contacted SEA with doubts about the veracity of the claim of “green technology” and concerns about potentially harmful environmental impacts to the surrounding residences and the community at large. Thus, SEA, community members, and representatives from other concerned groups began a search for information about USWTE and the processes they use. Internet searches were performed and public record requests (according to the California Public Records Act) were submitted to the Governor’s GoBiz office and California CalRecycle agency.

Briefly, here is what was learned about the process: USWTE proposed to use a process called pyrolysis to break down the plastic and/or tires to produce oil. Pyrolysis is a process of heating a substance to a high temperature in the absence of oxygen, resulting in the breakdown of the components, but not their combustion. In the case of plastics, pyrolysis produces both burnable oil and burnable gases. Those gases would then be burned to provide the electricity input for further pyrolysis and the oil would be sold and burned as jet fuel.



What could go wrong with Plastic to Oil? Such a plant operating in Redding could have several negative environmental impacts that would impact the community:

- **Truck traffic would increase:** Since Redding is not a large metropolitan area, it could not provide the necessary quantities of waste plastic and old tires nor use the jet fuel produced, thus truck traffic (with its negative environmental impacts—air pollution, noise, greenhouse gas emissions) to bring waste plastic/tires to the plant and transport products out would be extensive.
- **Toxic emissions could result:** Many plastics and tires contain toxic components, and heating them to high temperatures has the potential to produce even more toxic chemicals—could these possibly be released in the exhaust of the gases burned to produce the heat for pyrolysis? How would it release into the surrounding communities of potentially toxic emissions be prevented?
- **Greenhouse gases would be produced:** Plastics are made primarily from fossil fuels. Thus, although the company claims its process is “green”, in reality, the majority of the mass of waste plastic ultimately would be converted to carbon dioxide. Add to that the burning of fossil fuels by the required truck traffic and there would be a large carbon footprint.

The public records requests showed that the company was having problems recruiting investors/obtaining loans to fund the construction of the proposed plants. **We recently confirmed with the City of Redding that the property has not sold and the City is no longer in escrow with USWTE.**

SEA supports the recycling of plastics and recognizes that this is a developing technology. We cannot support the recycling of plastics with an unproven process by a company with no track record that would create much more greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants especially if the resulting oil had to be further reprocessed by transporting it to an oil refinery 200 miles away. Furthermore, research SEA has done about USWTE did not find any similar successful operations by this company.

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**Please consider a donation to SEA!**

You can go to [ecoshasta.org](https://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**

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# Thank you to our donors!

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