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January 2023 Newsletter

As we begin a new year, we begin a new way of getting you important SEA information and news! Please explore our brand-new newsletter format!

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News You Should Know About

Thank you to our donors!



Contact David Ledger at David@ecoshasta.org for more information or to sign up

January 14 @ 9:30 a.m. -
BLM Francis Berg Trail Hike

January 25 @ 9:30 a.m. -
South Fork Mountain Road Hike

February 4 @ 9:30 a.m. -
Whiskeytown Shasta Divide Ridge Trail Hike

Shade Tree Giveaway Interest Form

Now Available on the Website!

As mentioned in December's newsletter, SEA is excited to announce that we've received a grant from The Bower Charitable Foundation to plant 50 free shade trees in the front yards of 50 residents in the City of Redding during 2023!

Residents wanting a free, front yard shade tree will need to fill out an interest form and commit and agree to water the tree for the first three years to ensure the planted tree will be able to adequately root into the ground and stabilize for future growth. We will have a pre-selected grouping of trees, including some native ones.

Trees will be supplied for free and planted by SEA volunteers and the help of the homeowners receiving them in the fall of 2023. If you would like to volunteer to help plant these shade trees, please fill out the [Contact Form](#).

Come Celebrate Earth Day April 22nd!



Time to celebrate Earth Day in a whole new way! SEA is teaming up with other local environmental groups to bring you an Earth Day Celebration on Saturday, April 22, 2023, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Caldwell Park. Help us celebrate our environment at this special event and at participating organizations' events throughout April!

You may remember the wonderful Whole Earth and Watershed Festival (WEWF), which so many have enjoyed for 20+ years. With the hard-working founder and brains behind this successful event, Peggy Rebol, retiring, SEA will now continue the legacy of celebrating our planet!

The event will be held in Caldwell Park and will concentrate on groups specifically working towards protecting our environment with a heavy emphasis on children, so schools will be a part of this event. We will also be linking related field trips, films, classes, and talks about environmental issues during the month of April to make this more than just a one-day event.

If you're a North State environmental group, school, or agency that would like to participate in the Earth Day Celebration contact David Ledger at david@ecoshasta.org for more information. We will post updates on our Facebook page at: facebook.com/ShastaEnvironmentalAlliance

December Oak Tree Seedling Planting



Photos by Doug Mandel and Lisa Ross

SEA was so lucky to have seven volunteers come out and plant 20 oak seedlings in Oregon Gulch on December 17, 2022! We were able to get these one-foot-tall seedlings planted swiftly to start to help sequester greenhouse gases and also to reforest the immediate area.

Tree plantings are a great way to connect with each other, help our environment, and establish a bond with our land in a way unlike any other. If you're interested in helping us with future tree plantings, please keep an eye out for future events on our calendar link or on our social media accounts ([@ShastaEnvironmentalAlliance](#))!

Tree Ordinance Committee Update

The newly-formed City of Redding Tree Management Ordinance Update Committee held two meetings in December. The first meeting was set to organize, elect officers, and determine the committee's purpose, and in the second, Jeremy Pagan, Development Services Director, provided committee members an overview of the current City ordinance, policies, and several recent projects. Planning Manager Lily Toy is expected to be back in January when we should be taking a deep dive into the ordinance. While it is hard to confirm at this point, most members of the committee seem to recognize the need and be in favor of mitigation for the removal of native trees.

These meetings are open to the public and attendees are invited to make statements during an open comment period at the end of each meeting. Rebeca Ladron de Guevara, President of Wintu Audubon Society, made an impactful statement in support of an ordinance that will preserve Redding's trees; however, there have been no other speakers taking advantage of this opportunity.

If you would like to attend a meeting, and especially if you would like to make a statement supporting SEA's position regarding the preservation of our native trees, the next one is Monday, January 9, at 5:30 pm at the Community Room next to the City Council Chambers. Additional meetings are scheduled for February and March; [check our website for dates](#). We would appreciate your attendance and support!



Photo by David Ledger - San Luis Obispo

BLM Fire Treatments on Westside Trail

Commentary by David Ledger

*Did you ever see a Robin weep
When leaves begin to fall
That means he's lost the will to live
I'm so lonesome I could cry*
(“I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry” by Hank Williams, 1949)

On a December 9th hike up the Westside Trail, I came across crews clearing vegetation on a parcel of BLM land cutting all shrubs; all toyon, coffeeberry, buckeye, re-sprouting oaks - everything that was living, even in the riparian areas. Only a few dead snags were left standing. When I got home, I called two ecologists at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), one of whom went out that day and talked to the contract crews and had them stop cutting in riparian areas. Later they met with the BLM fire specialist who agreed to have the crews set back 75 feet from all riparian areas and leave the remaining 10% of the toyon shrubs. They also had the crews keep out of the area SEA had planted and spent three years watering oak tree seedlings.

It still looks really devastating up there now and the word has been spreading through various mountain bikers and hikers on the trail. BLM does not own all of the lands around the Westside Trail, as some is owned by the McConnell Foundation and individuals and the work is only on BLM land.

This area had a severe burn following the Carr Fire. Because I hike this trail often, I noticed that the first year there were no American Robins on the hillsides after the Fire. The second year, a few flocks of 20 or so birds, the third year flocks of 100, and, before this recent clearing, there were most likely several thousand chirping all along the trail as you hiked to the top. Now, however, food sources and nesting sites have been eliminated for many birds and small mammals. Without the canopy cover, the hillsides will be hotter, the grasses that grow more susceptible to burning, and could potentially yield a more rapid spread with wind should a fire occur.



Photos by David Ledger

(cont...)

One of the dilemmas that agencies, whether cities, counties, states, and federal have is that, if they cut too much vegetation, they won't be criticized for it. If there is a natural woodland fire that spreads in a woodland urban interface, they will be condemned for it. While trees are the least likely to burn in a fire unless it is extreme, agencies are often commended for removing them. Trees were removed along the Sacramento River Trail near the river for "fire safety" and many plants were sprayed with herbicides. Along Highway 44, Cal Fire did a good job thinning smaller trees that could be ladder fuels, but they also took out many larger fire-resistant trees up to 30 inches in diameter and more that could be sold for lumber. Ironically, in many sections, just beyond Cal Fire's 150-foot setbacks sit thick single-age young trees growing in former clear-cuts which can result in an extreme hot burn if the understory perennial and annual grass on Cal Fire dries out from increased sunlight in formerly shaded areas and ignites from a tossed cigarette or other sources.

Fortunately, the toyon on the Westside hillsides will grow back from the roots as it can live up to 200 years and is very adaptable to fire. An immediate and unfortunate effect of this clearing is that robins and other birds will have to find new winter food in an area that hasn't been managed for fire. Thanks to two BLM ecologists for preventing an even worse situation for wildlife.

Redding City Council Votes to Apply for Grant to Update South City Park

During a December 6th city council meeting, the majority of council members voted to move forward with applying for the Outdoor Recreational Legacy Partnership grant that will financially aid in the revitalization of South City Park. SEA president, David Ledger, spoke in support of the update to that park at the meeting, noting that updating the park will help to preserve most of the trees that would have otherwise been removed if the area were to be turned into multiple baseball fields, as proposed in the fall of 2022 by another organization.

With the revamp of South City Park, residents can look forward to a concept design that includes a dog area, a water play area, new pickleball courts, bocce ball courts, a playground, a youth zone, and walking paths. Updated lighting and additional safety features will also be added to ensure it's a safe space to recreate in.

Now that the city council has approved this update, the city will apply for a grant to begin following through with the proposed updates.

To learn more about the revamp of South City Park and updates around it, please visit:

<https://cityofredding.civilspace.io/en/projects/south-city-park-redevelopment-plan>

Whiskeytown Annual Pass Will Get You Into Four Nearby Parks Starting January 1st

Starting January 1, 2023, four National Park Service sites in the North State/Southern Oregon have agreed to honor each other's annual passes to be used at the other parks, allowing visitors unlimited entry to all four parks during the pass year. The four parks included in this agreement are Whiskeytown, Crater Lake, Lava Beds, and Lassen Volcanic.

The cost for an annual pass to all four parks will be \$55 per year, the current amount for a Whiskeytown-Lassen Volcanic annual pass. For now, the purchaser will purchase a pass for one of the specific parks, but come 2024, a single multi-park pass will be created.



For more information, visit the National Park Service site at:

<https://home.nps.gov/whis/learn/news/whiskeytown-lassen-volcanic-crater-lake-lava-beds-enter-into-agreement-for-annual-passes.htm>

Plastics to Oil Plant Proposal for Redding

The City of Redding has a 10-acre parcel at Stillwater Business Park in escrow to US Waste to Energy (USWTE) to convert recycled waste plastic into oil. This is done through a process called pyrolysis which heats the plastic to a high temperature to the point where it is then converted to oil, a basic hydrocarbon. The plastic is not burned but is broken down through heat into the oil.

Shasta Environmental Alliance (SEA) was approached by three concerned residents of the area about the possible pollution that could be generated by the process. Due to impurities in the plastics, there could be toxic byproducts that would need to be filtered to prevent being released into the air. Our research did not find any currently operating plant that USWTE (founded in 2019) has completed, so it is difficult to yet determine what the effect is on air pollution and the environment.

Getting rid of plastic waste is a worldwide problem and it would be beneficial if a generally non-polluting process could be developed. However, this method of "recycling" does raise a question as to how many diesel trucks will be bringing in plastic and taking out tank loads of oil every day and the amount of pollution that would produce. The company has stated that they may wish to buy more land at Stillwater later to expand their operations.

Until we have more data, SEA has not taken a position on this issue. A plant like this will require going through a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review in the future. We just want to keep the public informed of potential environmental issues in our area.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!

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\$250 to \$499

Don & Laurie Burk, Bea Currie, Barbara Featherstone, Lisa Ross & Ray Pfister, Peter Waller, Shasta Chapter of CNPS, Wintu Audubon, Shasta Group of Sierra Club.

\$500 to \$999

Becky Bestwick, Mark Martinek, Karen Little

\$1000 & Up

Chris Harvey, Bob and Diane Madgic

**We couldn't do this work without your support!
Please consider donating to SEA today!**

You can go to ecoshasta.org to donate!
If you prefer to send a check, our mailing address is:

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