

KFOI Radio - Shasta Environmental Alliance Program Oct. 5, 2018

David Ledger: Good afternoon. My name is David Ledger reporting today on KFOI Radio's Shasta Environmental Alliance Program. This is a weekly program that starts every Friday afternoon at 1:00 PM. Today, after our news stories, we will hear from Dan Greaney, president of Wintu Audubon. Next week we will have Ron Stork from Friends of the River to talk about the Bureau of Reclamation plans to raise Shasta Dam.

Shasta Environmental Alliance is a nonprofit organization which has 14 supporting groups. You can see our website at ecoshasta.org, and we have a Facebook page too at facebook.com/shastaenvironmentalalliance.

Redding City Council Candidates Forum

Shasta Environmental Alliance held a Redding City Council candidates forum on Monday evening to listen to the five candidates who are competing for three open council seats. We had about 120 people in attendance. The candidates were Mayor Kristen Schrader, council member Francie Sullivan, Eric Rezner (part-owner of Dutch Bros. Coffee outlets in the greater Redding area with her husband), Redding attorney Michael Acquisto (who also started the Sundial Film Festival), and Shasta College instructor James Crockett. Peggy Rebol was the moderator for the forum.

The candidates were asked questions they probably didn't get at other forums, such as climate change, preserving Redding's oak trees, solar energy, the proposed Costco, electric cars and trucks for city vehicles, preserving open space, and urban sprawl—as well as the more common questions at other forums such as crime, homelessness, and hiring more police and firefighters.

All candidates put in a good performance. However, Schrader and Sullivan had an advantage, having served on the Redding City Council for a number of years, and so they were more knowledgeable about the inner workings of the city. While all the candidates would make good council members, not all would be in agreement with SEA's mission and vision. Being a nonprofit group, we will not be endorsing any of the candidates.

KRCR Channel 7 Television did a fairly in-depth story on the forum, and Mauro Oliveira broadcast the entire forum live for KFOI Radio. Thank you to all of the volunteers and organizations who supported this forum. This was our way of letting future City Council members hear about the concerns of Shasta Environmental Alliance. Co-sponsoring groups included KFOI Radio, KQVM Radio, Wintu Audubon, North State Climate Action, Trails and Bikeways Council of Greater Redding, Friends of Redding Trails, the Shasta Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, Friends of Oregon Gulch, Redding Parks and Trails Foundation, the Shasta Group of the Sierra Club, the Streams and Greenways Alliance, and the Whole Earth and Watershed Festival.

If you would like to hear the forum because you were unable to attend, you can go to kfoiradio.org, go to their website, and just flip down on the front page—that will be where you can replay the forum.

Upcoming Events

Over Troubled Water Documentary Film: That will be today at 6:30 PM. *Over Troubled Water* is an excellent documentary film about water wars and the threats to the Sacramento River, the Sacramento Bay, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta from water diversions. Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, executive director of Restore the Delta, which produced the documentary, will be interviewed for the showing. Restore the Delta is a grassroots campaign of residents and organizations committed to restoring the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta so that fisheries and farming can thrive. There will also be a short video interview with Adam Scow, who is the California director at Food & Water Watch, and he will also give his opinion on Proposition 3. This film is presented by the Whole Earth & Watershed Festival, SEA, and KFOI Radio. Once again, that will be shown this evening at 6:30 at the First United Methodist Church at the corner of East and South Street. Admission is free, but donations will be accepted.

Redding Community Creek Cleanup for 2018: That is tomorrow, Saturday, October 6, starting at 8:00 AM. Redding Community Services will once again have their annual Community Creek Cleanup. This year it will be at Henderson Open Space behind the old Raley's on Hartnell. They will be meeting at the corner of Henderson Road and Parkview Street on the east side of the river. Every year this event brings out hundreds of people to pick up trash and remove invasive plants. Bring your own water bottle, wear closed-toe shoes, long pants, a hat, and sunscreen. The city will provide gloves, buckets, garden tools, and safety goggles. You will have to register and sign a waiver. For more details and to register, go to shastacreeks.com (that's shastacreeks plural dot com). When you sign in under organizations, please check "Other" and write in **Shasta Environmental Alliance** so we get credit. This is a good time to do your part in keeping our open spaces clean, getting rid of invasive plants, and having fun at the same time. Due to a foot injury, I will be doing as little walking as possible, but lots of supervising. For more information, call Redding Parks and Recreation at 225-4095 or go to shastacreeks.com. If you forget to register beforehand, just show up and they will have waiver forms there that you can sign. SEA will have our banner there, so look for us.

California Native Plant Society Field Trip: Another event is the California Native Plant Society's field trip called *Native Plant Responses Following Fires* on October 13th. It will start with a 30-minute PowerPoint presentation and talk by myself, David Ledger, about how native plants in our area have evolved and adapted to fire, and how they respond to fire. Then we will take a drive to several areas to see how fires burn differently depending on the plant community and geology. We will also take short walks at several places to see how the plants are responding. Meet at the Community Room in the Holiday Market at Placer Street and Buena Ventura Boulevard at 9:00 AM. This is limited to 20 people, so reserve a space by emailing myself, David Ledger, at dledger@sbcglobal.net or you can go to the shastacnps.org website. Considering our

warming climate, carpooling will be strongly encouraged to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and also because of limited parking along the road areas where we will be stopping.

Second Saturday Bird Walk: The Second Saturday Bird Walk for Wintu Audubon will also be held the same day, October 13th, starting at 8:00 AM. This bird walk will be at Shasta College and led by Connie Word and Linda Aldrich. If you want to go, meet at the college's North parking lot at 8:00 AM to join this half-day event. They will explore the trees on the campus, open fields, and also along Stillwater Creek, looking for local resident birds and migrants. Wintu Audubon walks are open to the public. For more information, call 223-5341.

Environmental Issues & Local Planning

Tierra Robles Subdivision: Next up is the Tierra Robles subdivision. There is currently a proposal to build a 166-unit subdivision on some 700 acres in the Bella Vista area between Boyle Road and Old Alturas Road, just west of Deschutes Road up on the bluffs. The Shasta County Planning Department is finishing up the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Once that is released, residents will have a 40-day comment period available. Then it will go to the Planning Commission for a vote, and if they approve it, it will go to the Board of Supervisors for the zoning change approval.

A group of citizens who live in the Bella Vista area have formed a group to oppose the development called *Protect Against Tierra Robles Overdevelopment*, and they made that word up to come up with the acronym PATROL. They are opposed to it because it will disrupt their rural lifestyle, and they feel zoning changes will lead to what they call "hopscotch development." It will increase traffic and use more of the limited water supplies from the Bella Vista Water District, which has had to severely reduce water supplies to customers during drought years. If this is approved, they feel it will result in further subdivisions of land in the area, and they also question the safety of a proposed community wastewater treatment plant. PATROL now has a website where you can get current information and sign up for their alerts for when the final EIR comes out, as well as meetings on the issue. Their new website is shastapatrol.org.

Redding Reforestation Volunteers: Volunteers are needed for Redding's REO program on Tuesday, October 9th at 1:00 PM. We will need a few volunteers for the City of Redding's REO program. What we will be doing at this session is sorting out several hundred pounds of acorns that have been donated to the city. We will be treating them with a light solution of bleach, rinsing them, sorting them, putting them in bags, and they will later be put in pots for planting next fall. If you would like to help, email ecoshasta@gmail.com. Once again, that's ecoshasta@gmail.com. This is a City of Redding program, but Shasta Environmental Alliance is supporting it.

Redding City Budget and Subsidies: Speaking of development, I want to take you to an issue facing the Redding City Council and its limited budget, which came up at the September 5th meeting. Some time ago, the City of Redding hired four police officers

and three firefighters with a grant that terminates in July 2019. To keep these positions open, the city needs to come up with \$800,000 for one year by July 2019, or they will lose those positions and will have to close down one fire station. The dilemma is: where do they get the money?

At the September 5th council meeting, Redding City Manager Barry Tippin presented the council with five alternatives. The first two are part of Redding Development Services Department. One is permits, which are subsidized by \$500,000 per year. For example, if you were going to get a new roof on your house, you would go into the planning department and get a permit. Real estate development is subsidized by \$1 million a year. To clarify, that subsidy includes when someone goes into the planning department to ask questions about a subdivision and it takes up staff time. Most of that subsidy goes to real estate developers and is paid by the taxpayer.

The city also subsidizes the Parks and Recreation Department by \$1 million per year. They try to set fees so that all income levels can participate in baseball and soccer programs, or use the plunge during the hot summer months. There are many people who do not have air conditioning or have swamp coolers that don't work well in the hot summer, and this provides an inexpensive way for a poor family to take their kids. Cutting that program would cut out a lot of lower-income individuals from enjoying the Parks and Recreation Department.

The Redding Library is subsidized by \$800,000 from the City of Redding and \$1,200,000 by Shasta County. It has a \$750,000 "poison pill" if the city were to pull out. At the September 5th meeting, there were many people supporting the library, so that option was pulled off the table.

The fifth alternative is the Shasta Cascade Wonderland Association, which receives \$1,100,000 per year out of \$5 million collected in hotel taxes. If you stay at a hotel or motel, they tax you some 10%. Out of that \$5 million, \$1.1 million goes to Shasta Cascade Wonderland, and they have also donated \$145,000 to pay for one police officer position.

So the issue is where will the city take the money to fund these four police officer and three firefighter positions? This is my personal opinion here: as the planning department subsidizes the wealthiest individuals in the City of Redding, I believe that is where the \$800,000 should be taken out of. Thank you.

Interview with Dan Greaney (Wintu Audubon Society)

David Ledger: Next we have Dan Greaney, who is the president of Wintu Audubon Society. Dan has worked in education throughout his life, teaching for many years in outdoor science education and classroom English and history with middle school students. Now he is semi-retired, working with CSU Chico in its reading program. He and his wife raised their two daughters in Redding, and he is a lifelong outdoorsman.

Wintu Audubon is the local chapter of the National Audubon Society and a supporting organization of Shasta Environmental Alliance. Welcome to KFOI Radio, Dan.

Dan Greaney: Thank you, David. It's good to be here.

David Ledger: Great. Can you tell our listeners a bit about the National Audubon Society, its mission, and some of the major things it's working on?

Dan Greaney: Sure. The National Audubon Society started up as state organizations in the late 1800s. At that time, relatively early in the Industrial Revolution, people were moving to cities, but they still had a much richer connection to the environment than we have in our routine urbanized lives today. What people saw was that in the millinery trade for women's hats, birds and waterfowl were being killed off—egrets in particular—to get those nice plumes for hats. So they started trying to protect them. The state groups organized together in 1905 and became the National Audubon Society. Five years earlier, the Christmas Bird Counts had begun, and by 1918, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act was signed by President Wilson. It was a time when people were closer to the environment than many of us are today.

Over the decades since, I think in my youth, the Audubon Society was kind of considered a "coffee table" sort of conservation organization. They were always famous for their beautiful photography and the magazine that comes out monthly. But they always had that conservation flavor, primarily rooted in education. More recently, in the last four years, the national organization did a substantial study on climate change and how it can be expected to affect North American birds. They found that out of 588 terrestrial species studied, 314 of them—a substantial majority—would lose at least half of their seasonal range in the lifetime of our children. So that's a huge thing, and the organization has become more than just a coffee table organization. Some would object to that early characterization, too.

David Ledger: Well, now let's go to the local Wintu chapter that you're president of. What area does it cover and how many members do you have?

Dan Greaney: The national organization has over half a million members in North America and some 500 chapters. We are one of the smaller chapters, with about 450 members. Our group draws its membership roughly from Shasta and Trinity counties.

David Ledger: Can you tell us a little about your board? I've always been impressed by it. How many members do you have, and how do you guys get along and do things?

Dan Greaney: We have 13 regular assigned, titled positions on the board—president, vice president, treasurer, and so on. This includes all of our committee chairs, like education, conservation, and internal operations like membership, finance, and treasurer. We are a completely volunteer organization, and we try to divvy out the jobs as much as we can so they are manageable for people. In addition to those 13 positions, we try to get at least four directors-at-large. Those folks are frequently either

new to the board and don't have a specific assignment yet, giving them a chance to sub in and learn various operations, or they are people who have retired from formal leadership positions within the chapter. Both cases are really helpful. We had a resignation from the board recently because people get busy, and fortunately, someone from that pool of directors-at-large was able to step up and fill those roles.

David Ledger: So that's 17 members on a board out of 450 members total. That's quite a bit. A lot of nonprofits have trouble getting people on their board. What do you attribute getting so many board members to?

Dan Greaney: I kind of walked into a good situation and inherited it. Partly, we have people who care, and we try to design the jobs so they are manageable. The work is meaningful. If you're on the education committee, that's our outreach and the programs we offer. If you're running our monthly programs, these are important jobs to the operation of Wintu Audubon. It's about respecting input, too. We are not in lockstep; different views come out, and we try to respect all those views to come forward with the best programs we can offer.

David Ledger: What kind of projects do you currently have going?

Dan Greaney: I would root those in our committees. With my background in education, I jumped on the education piece when I first became active after my children were grown. I helped beef up our youth and beginner walks. Now that I've moved over to the presidency, the folks who took it over have improved it again into a "family beginner walk." It takes place the first Saturday of every month through the school year. It's a great way for a family to get out with their children. Really little children might not be able to manage binoculars yet, but they like getting out on the walk. We supply the binoculars and the field guides.

We've also got our conservation program, which has been very active, partly through working with your outfit, the Shasta Environmental Alliance, and recently the North State Climate Action group.

David Ledger: Can you explain what the North State Climate Action Group is?

Dan Greaney: It originated out of the First United Methodist Church here in town and involved a couple handfuls of individuals who have an interest in mitigating and reducing our local emissions of greenhouse gases that result in the climate change we are experiencing as heat, drought, and fire. We started meeting back in July before the Carr Fire blew up. At that point, we opted to hold a forum on September 8th rather than a march. We had about 130 folks show up, and as part of that, we developed a climate action plea for which we are still gathering signatures.

David Ledger: And what does this climate action plea say?

Dan Greaney: It basically asks our local officials at the city, county, state, and federal levels to take action on climate change. Listening to the candidates at the City Council forum you mentioned earlier, it seemed to me that some were fairly knowledgeable on climate change and some weren't. Honestly, anybody who wishes to take a leadership position in government or business really ought to take the time to learn about climate change because it affects our lives and our future hugely, as we saw with the Carr Fire in particular.

Because Wintu Audubon has a talented and dedicated webmaster, we hosted the Climate Action group's plea online so people could sign it. If people go to win2audubon.org, they can click on the green button to sign. I would also encourage people to scroll down from the plea; we have a brief, to-the-point history of climate action, how it works, and what its effects are. It's a very approachable way of learning the basics.

David Ledger: As I recall when I signed the petition, it pops up, you sign, and then you get an email to verify that you're actually not a robot, and then your name goes on the petition.

Dan Greaney: That's correct. You'll get an email saying "Are you really you?" and you have to confirm it before you're officially signed up. We've been taking signatures both on the website and on paper at various events.

David Ledger: Earlier you mentioned the Christmas Bird Count. What is it, and what does it show you? Why do you count birds every year?

Dan Greaney: The Christmas Bird Count started back in 1900, so we're coming up on our 119th one this year. There are now something on the order of 2,500 count circles worldwide. A count circle is an established area 15 miles in diameter, and the effort is to survey and count every bird and every species within that circle during a 20-day window—10 days on either side of Christmas. First of all, it's just kind of fun trying to catch all these birds and count them up. Second, it is informative. We talk about citizen science, and building a database over 100 years lets you see general trends from a large amount of data.

David Ledger: What trends do you see locally?

Dan Greaney: Recently, we had a substantial die-off of Yellow-billed Magpies, which is a species that lives only here in California. They got hit hard with West Nile virus. Jays, crows, and magpies in that family were especially hard hit. What we see in these kinds of catastrophes is that the numbers drop drastically and then come back, but they return to a lower baseline level. At this point, we are still at that lower level with the Yellow-billed Magpies.

David Ledger: Are they a threatened or endangered species, or one of concern?

Dan Greaney: I can't tell you their exact legal status, but I can tell you that around here, the best places to see them are down at Anderson River Park and around Coutras Park. They are limited in range, which automatically poses difficulties for them.

I also wanted to mention the Breeding Bird Survey, which began in our area around 1967 or 1968. It's less famous than the Christmas Bird Count and involves fewer people, but it is more scientifically scripted and used by statisticians to calculate what's going on with bird populations. Unfortunately, it shows that since the late 1960s, we've had about a 50% die-off of our songbirds around the nation, including here.

David Ledger: Is that climate change or all kinds of things like chemicals?

Dan Greaney: It's multiple things. Growing up down in the Bay Area and driving up the valley as a kid, it felt like there was a hawk on every telephone pole. Now you just don't see as many. Farmers are reasonably working to maximize their produce and have gotten more effective at applying pesticides that kill off insects so they don't eat the food. But those insects then aren't there for the birds to eat either, so they die off. Farmers have also gotten better at farming all the way up to the fence line rather than leaving hedgerows, so hedgerow birds disappear. If you kill off the mice, snakes, and insects, the next step affects the hawks because they don't have food.

Feral cats are another factor; they kill billions of birds nationwide each year. And climate change is the up-and-coming monster, based on the statistics National Audubon found.

David Ledger: I've always been a little jealous when I set up booths at the Whole Earth and Watershed Festival or the Salmon Festival because there's always a big crowd of kids around the Wintu Audubon booth. What do you do to attract all these kids?

Dan Greaney: We have a lot of activities and a lot of volunteers, which helps. As far as the kids go, the activity that draws them in for repeat performances is making quail calls. It's a fun little thing made with rubber bands and clothespins that makes a quail sound when the kids blow into them. You'll see them at the Return of the Salmon Festival in a couple of weeks and the Whole Earth and Watershed Festival in the spring.

At the Whole Earth and Watershed Festival, they gave us a large area at the maker tent the last couple of years because we attracted so many people. We were building birdhouses with the kids and adults. We are a volunteer-based chapter, and the board member who recently resigned was fundamental in getting that going. He worked with a local high school woodshop to do all the pre-cutting on the boards. Hopefully, we can continue that project.

David Ledger: I want to finish up with one last question. I remember you mentioning a local seminar or school for teachers around the North State that is funded by the timber industry. They educate teachers about logging and the importance of making lumber to build houses, but you found there wasn't really an environmental aspect to it, and they allowed you to come speak to the teachers?

Dan Greaney: Well, I couldn't say I didn't find an environmental aspect to it, as I wasn't involved at a level to see everything. But they did invite me to present, and my approach was to look at what a forest provides for birds. You have the forest floor with litter and duff that supports sparrows, towhees, and quail—ground birds that scratch around for dinner and make homes on the floor. You have the understory of brush and young trees for nuthatches, warblers, and titmice. Going up the tree trunks, you have various woodpeckers, and up high in the canopy, you have other warblers, chickadees, and kinglets. Different birds take advantage of different parts of a forest. They didn't ask me back this year, so I don't know about their current status.

It's an interesting problem regarding forest management and the competing interests of timber, fire concerns, public health, tourism impacts, and wildlife impacts. Historically, fires would knock down segments of trees, and a mosaic pattern might be the best approach, but I still have a lot to learn on that.

David Ledger: We're coming to the end of our program, but before we go, is there anything you'd like to add?

Dan Greaney: I would definitely like to invite people to come to our Audubon programs. Our monthly programs are the second Tuesday of each month. We feature a variety of presentations—sometimes photographs of local birds, trips to South America, or educational programs about fire management and its impact on wildlife. I'd also like to invite people to our outings because they are just fun, whether it's our family walk on the first Saturday or any of our other walks. People can find all of our schedules at win2audubon.org. You're all invited.

David Ledger: Dan, I want to thank you for coming to KFOI Radio and telling us about the Wintu Audubon Society, your amazing board of directors, and your enthusiastic volunteers.

Dan Greaney: Thank you, David.

David Ledger: This has been David Ledger with KFOI Radio's Shasta Environmental Alliance program. Next week, we hope to have on Ron Stork, associate director of Friends of the River, and he will explain the current plans of the Bureau of Reclamation to raise the height of Shasta Dam. Thank you for listening.