

## **KFOI Radio – Shasta Environmental Alliance Program Dec. 6. 2018**

Today on KFOI Radio's Shasta Environmental Alliance Program. Shasta Environmental Alliance, or SEA, is a nonprofit organization which has 14 supporting groups. You can see our website at [ecoshasta.org](http://ecoshasta.org), and we have a Facebook page at [facebook.com/shastaenvironmentalalliance](https://facebook.com/shastaenvironmentalalliance). We also have a newsletter we send out, and if you would like to receive it, send your request to [ecoshasta@gmail.com](mailto:ecoshasta@gmail.com).

Today we have with us **Larry Glass**, who is Board President and Executive Director of the Arcata-based **North Coast Environmental Center**, or NEC. The North Coast Environmental Center is a coalition of a number of groups including Humboldt Baykeeper, Environmental Protection Information Center (or EPIC), Friends of the Eel River, and chapters of the local Sierra Club, Audubon, and California Native Plant Society, as well as two at-large members on their board.

Larry has been an environmental activist since the first Earth Day in 1970. He owned his own business for 40 years and was a Eureka City Council member from 2006 to 2010. He has served on the NEC Board for 40 years in various capacities. He is also president of Trinity County's **Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment**, or SAFE as it's known. This is Trinity County's only environmental organization. The NEC was founded in 1971 and has an office located in Arcata. They have had a paid staff and a few Humboldt State University interns for many years.

### **The History and Structure of the NEC**

They have been at the forefront of the environmental movement in Humboldt County, organizing around various issues ranging from Redwood Summer demonstrations against Pacific Lumber in the 1990s to the annual Coastal Cleanup Day, which is now a statewide and international event. The success of NEC over the years provides a good learning example for groups such as Shasta Environmental Alliance, which is why we are featuring them on our show today. Welcome to KFOI Radio, Larry.

**Larry Glass:** Oh, thanks for having me.

**Interviewer:** You're welcome. First question: can you explain a little about the, you know, the genesis of North Coast Environmental Center? How it started and how you got it together and held it together?

**Larry Glass:** Alright, well, I was around for that, but I wasn't a participating member at the formation. But basically, you had a number of small conservation-oriented groups that were meeting regularly. But they weren't communicating very well with each other, sometimes duplicating each other's efforts. So the concept was to form some sort of a hub or an umbrella group that sort of brought all these smaller groups together and got them communicating with each other. So that was the original impetus.

**Interviewer:** Did you incorporate in 1971 then?

**Larry Glass:** No, I think the incorporation came a little bit later; it was just sort of loose-knit in the beginning. We would meet in the back of a business called Adventures Edge.

**Interviewer:** OK, is that business still there, by the way?

**Larry Glass:** They are still around.

**Interviewer:** Alright, great. Your group, the way it's organized—and I think this was how it was at the start—is you have for your board members representatives from each supporting organization, and then you have a couple board members at-large, is that correct?

**Larry Glass:** Right. Like I said, it started out being sort of a hub for the various groups to communicate with each other, and then as time went by, we realized that running a larger organization like that was putting a lot of stress on representatives from these other groups to participate in this sort of very active board. So we decided to add at-large members. And so now we have about a half-a-dozen at-large members that sort of pick up the slack for some of the folks from the bigger groups that don't have a whole lot of extra time to be doing the work that they need to do for the NEC.

## **EcoNews and Community Education**

**Interviewer:** The NEC has published a newspaper, *EcoNews*, and I don't think that started pretty early in its formation—it comes out a number of times a year. I guess now it's six times a year. How has that worked out as far as education, getting more volunteers and members?

**Larry Glass:** I think it's kind of one of the bedrock functions of the NEC is getting the word out. So it used to be, you know, from the very beginning, it used to be 11 times a year, and we kept that up until about five or six years ago. But you know, print is getting more expensive to do as a media, and we've expanded onto the web like everybody else has. We have a webpage now, but we still do the printed version because there's still a lot of people that appreciate getting that and being able to read it at their leisure and not have to be sitting in front of their computer to do it. So we do that six times a year. It's been a great educational tool, a way of communicating with the general public, and we certainly want to continue to do it as long as we're able to.

**Interviewer:** I saw one of your newspapers a good 20 years ago and it just had a lot of great information in it. And I must confess today on this radio program—not today, but this current year—I have read your... I'm actually a member of the NEC, and I have used some of your articles in there and kind of expanded on them and maybe just related them to Shasta County. Now, how can people see that or find that online?

**Larry Glass:** Oh, I should have been ready for this question. Hold on.

**Interviewer:** That's alright. While I'm looking up the answer to that—and I'll give you the exact web address—they could probably just go to *EcoNews* dot... just Google *EcoNews*, I could imagine.

**Larry Glass:** More thinking, if you go to [www.yournec.org](http://www.yournec.org). That's Y-O-U-R-N-E-C dot org. That will take you to our webpage.

**Interviewer:** Alright, and *EcoNews*—most of the member organizations run their own news. They have a separate section, and looking through it over the years, it'll run from one to four pages. I think sometimes Audubon has four pages in there; I might be wrong on that. How has that worked out as far as keeping each group on course as far as sending in their stuff by the deadline and its popularity as far as readers?

**Larry Glass:** Well, one thing that keeps them on track about getting their stuff in is they pay for that. Oh, I see. So the groups that have their own page, they pay for the page, and Audubon, who has four pages, pays for four pages. So they're pretty diligent about getting their copy in because they're paying.

**Interviewer:** You just gave me a couple of good ideas for Shasta Environmental Alliance. Now, how many people put together... and you know, when you get all your stories, how many people put together *EcoNews*?

**Larry Glass:** Well, that's a good question. There's an *EcoNews* committee that's made up of about six people, but they're the ones that organize the stories and the topics and whatnot ahead of time. Then you have the various people that contribute to writing, and we have an editor, and then we have a lot of proofreaders that are involved—most of the staff gets roped into doing proofreading as well. It's about, I guess overall, maybe there's 15 or 16 folks in that stew, I would say, to various degrees.

**Interviewer:** I'll say this: that you do a really good job on that and great articles.

## **Coastal Cleanup and Office Relocation**

I want to go back to something that I actually kind of talked about on this radio program, and that's the Coastal Cleanup. Can you tell us... I think that was largely started by NEC or they took it over, and how that developed and grew?

**Larry Glass:** Yeah. There was a fellow that wrote a grant; he had an idea for getting a grant to do beach cleanups. And at the time, our *EcoNews* editor, a fellow named Sid Dornitz—he needed to do something other than just producing *EcoNews*, which really didn't pay him any money, but we saw with this grant that we could fund Sid to do the work. So sometime in the early 70s, we started paying him to organize what initially was called a "beach cleanup" and then became "Coastal Cleanup". And then over the years, we pitched it to the California Coastal Commission. They adopted it and made it a statewide endeavor. And then that caught fire and became like a nationwide endeavor, and now it's an international concept.

Once a year, conservation groups all over the world get together on different days in different countries. A lot of them do it around Earth Day, but others do it at other times of the year. We do ours in the fall. Yeah, it's been a huge success, and it's something we point to with pride. Every year we collect an amazing amount of junk off the beaches, everything from tires to cigarette butts.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I've seen your count and some of the articles about the Coastal Cleanup in your newspaper, and truly fascinating. I really have to commend your organization for the work and worldwide expansion of this Coastal Cleanup. You have a permanent office on I Street and Sammons Boulevard in Arcata, across from Richard's Goat Brewery, which sounds like a brewery you would find in Arcata.

**Larry Glass:** It's actually right next door. Richard's Goat is an eclectic sort of bar, not your average kind of bar. It's very art-oriented and very sophisticated, hence the name Richard's Goat. I mean, don't ask me to explain that, but it's a really cool place. Anyway, we're right next door to it right now.

**Interviewer:** Who is your office staff? Do you have student interns or volunteers or employees?

**Larry Glass:** We have a mix. We've got paid staff, we've got student interns, and we've got people like me that are strictly volunteers. So it's a mix.

**Interviewer:** Now, how important is a storefront office for your organization?

**Larry Glass:** It's a big deal because we had a storefront property that we actually owned on 9th Street in Arcata, and in the early 2000s, unfortunately, it burned down.

**Interviewer:** Oh wow.

**Larry Glass:** And it was a real tragedy for us. We got insurance money for it, but honestly, in the city of Arcata, the amount of money—thank God for it—it just wasn't enough to be able to rebuild. Plus, it turned out that the property wound up being contaminated. It had been a dry cleaners before we ever had it, and the fire exposed the contamination. So we've been in this lengthy process with the state of California getting that site cleaned up.

But in the meantime, we had to move to other locations. And one of the locations we moved to was in this building called the Greenway building, which was kind of off the beaten track; we were upstairs and sort of out of public view. And while the rent was cheap and we shared that space with a lot of other environmental groups, it really was kind of a disaster for us PR-wise because we just basically disappeared from public view. And that wasn't a good thing. So it's been great to be back on a public street again where we can visually be seen.

**Interviewer:** OK, so that visual and physical availability is really important then?

**Larry Glass:** Oh yeah. We never got drop-ins at the Greenway location, but we get drop-ins all the time now. We're very visible; Sammons is a highly traveled boulevard. And you know, it's actually a state highway; it's 255. So we get a lot of traffic by there, and we're right on the corner so you can see us easily. So it's good; it's really good to have that visibility.

## **Political Involvement and Community Forums**

**Interviewer:** Well, that's good to know. That's good to know because interviewing you here is giving me ideas for Shasta Environmental Alliance, but I know that's a big task as far as staffing an office. Now, how politically active is the NEC today? I know you were elected to Eureka City Council in 2006 and you served until 2010, so this is kind of a two-part question: How politically active are you today, and do you have any support from politicians in the area?

**Larry Glass:** Well, we have to bifurcate that. You know, we're a nonprofit, 501(c)(3). We can't campaign for candidates or do anything like that. But we can be involved in educating the public. As we were in the last county-wide elections in Humboldt County, we participated in candidates' nights and asked environmental questions of the candidates. We can do that, but we can't be actively involved in a political campaign.

When I served on the Eureka City Council, there were times where I had to recuse myself from decisions that would have affected the NEC. Oh, I see. I was the first "closeted" environmentalist that's ever served on this Eureka City Council. Fortunately today, though, with the "blue wave" sweeping over Humboldt County as well as the rest of the country, we have almost an entirely progressive City Council and mayor now in the city of Eureka.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's fantastic. What about the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors?

**Larry Glass:** Yeah, that's a different story. The Humboldt County Supervisors is a mix still. We've got a couple of supervisors, Mike Wilson and newly elected—hasn't taken office yet, but will at the first of the year—Steve Madrone, who are strong supporters of the environment. The other supervisors... one of them is just blatantly anti-environmental, his name is Rex Bohn. And then we have two that sometimes they're with us and sometimes they're not.

**Interviewer:** And that's a lot better than here in Shasta County, which is a pretty conservative area.

**Larry Glass:** Yeah, I'd never seen a Trump bumper sticker until I drove over to Redding.

**Interviewer:** Oh, really? OK. Yes, I think this area went for Trump by 65%. Now, what value did you see as far as co-sponsoring that forum, because we actually had one here

and I would be interested in your input? Was it worth the time and effort as far as having that forum?

**Larry Glass:** Oh, I think it absolutely was. I think it was on several different levels. I think it was good because we were in a coalition with a bunch of other social and political activist groups, so they got to meet and hear about the NEC during the process. The public got to watch it and they got to hear our environmental-based questions. In both of those candidate forums that we took place—yeah, actually three of them that we did over a period of time—we had done one for the supervisors and then two for the City Council and mayor because there were just so many candidates, we had to divide that up into two different ones.

**Interviewer:** How large was the audience that showed up for those?

**Larry Glass:** We had it at the Eureka Labor Temple and it was standing room only. It's not a giant venue, but you know, we packed it. Plus, it was broadcast live over a community radio station up here called KMUD Live. And then it was also videotaped and run on the public access channel numerous times.

**Interviewer:** That sounds fantastic. Great education job.

**Larry Glass:** And it's really good for that. You get your question out there and the candidates have to answer it, and then people get to watch it at their leisure if they couldn't make it to the actual event.

## **Environmental Issues and Challenges**

**Interviewer:** Now, interest in the environmental movement has had its kind of ups and downs over the years. I don't know, have you seen that, or does that happen in Humboldt County? I know probably when you had the Redwood Summers, you had a lot of activism. What's your... because you've been doing this for 40 years, have you seen ups and downs or just pretty much steady?

**Larry Glass:** You know, and I could take it back 40 years ago—what got me involved was when the helicopters were flying over the National Forest spraying herbicide. That got me radicalized. And there's always events like that that grab people's attention and get them activated. Redwood Summer was certainly one that got a segment of the population aggravated and upset. Right now, I would say it's climate change that's got people riveted; it seems that that's got a broad cross-section of attention out there.

**Interviewer:** Related to this, what are the most important environmental issues that you're working on right now?

**Larry Glass:** Well, we've got a bill that our Congressman Jared Huffman has introduced now, and I understand US Senator Kamala Harris is going to be introducing a companion piece in the Senate. That is the **Northwest California Wilderness**

**Recreation and Working Forest Bill.** It's got a wilderness component to it, it's got wild and scenic rivers, and it's got a fire forestry component. We have this whole South Fork Mad River restoration area in the bill that will be doing roadside shaded fuel breaks throughout all that area, which is a key thing to do to prevent the kind of runaway urban and wildfires that just happened in Paradise.

With roadside shaded fuel breaks, you have a point for the firefighters to construct control lines and try and knock the fire down when it reaches the roadway.

**Interviewer:** And where is this? Is it currently in the legislative process?

**Larry Glass:** Well, it was introduced and, of course, we're now at the end of the legislative season for this year in Washington, so it'll have to be reintroduced again next year. It wasn't getting much traction because of who was controlling the House. And now that the control of the House is dramatically shifting, I believe that the bill will begin to move forward and start going through committees. You never know with these type of bills, sometimes they get Republican support even now.

**Interviewer:** Is that just the Pacific Northwest that covers, or all of Northern California?

**Larry Glass:** It covers basically Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity, and Mendocino. I don't think there's anything in Sonoma, but basically Jared Huffman's district.

## **Engaging the Younger Generation**

**Interviewer:** Shasta County has an older population than Humboldt County, and we don't have a... well, we have a four-year university here, but it is a religious one, and most of the people that are involved in the environmental movement here in Shasta County tend to be quite older. How is the interest in the environmental movement with the younger generation in Humboldt County?

**Larry Glass:** Well, that's a phenomenon happening all over the country because the last generation of "joiners" were the baby boomers. After that, generations have been less inclined to join movements or organizations. But what we're seeing right now is with college-age students and people of that generation, they're very concerned about climate change and they want to get active and do something. Climate change is kind of a focus for younger generations. They are concerned about what that future looks like.

**Interviewer:** With your group, I've noticed there are some—because I'm a member of a number of groups over in Humboldt County, and one is Friends of the Dunes—and I noticed that some like them haven't joined your organization. Is there anything you attribute to that, or do they just want to stay away from anything political?

**Larry Glass:** I think you just identified a matter. They get grant funding; they work with state agencies on occasion. NEC and its member groups have been known to litigate

with state and federal agencies. And so some groups, like land trusts, they have to be kind of conservative in how they approach their public image.

## **Ocean Night and SAFE**

**Interviewer:** I want to bring up one thing that you have over there—I've never been to it, but you have what is called **Ocean Night**. I wonder if you can explain what that is and what the enthusiasm is around that?

**Larry Glass:** Well, Ocean Night is not ours anymore. We participated with it for a while; we had a work-study student named Delia who was also a member of Surfrider, and it's really sort of their deal. But we worked with them on it for a number of years. It happened at the Arcata Lounge there and they'd have movies that they would show, predominantly surf movies or ocean-themed movies. As a kind of get-together, half social, half educational, the Surfrider people and the surfers liked that opportunity to socialize and talk about the issues of concern to them with the ocean.

**Interviewer:** Now I want to get to something that's not really NEC, but it's closely related because you are a member of **SAFE**, which is Safe Alternatives for our Forest Environment, and it is in Trinity County. Probably few people in Shasta County know about this; you were the president of that group.

**Larry Glass:** Yeah, and I'm the executive director as well. We've been around since the mid-70s. We started out as a group in opposition to forestry application of pesticides because they were flying helicopters and spraying the forests with that unchecked. As we educated ourselves and became active on that issue, we became more and more forestry interested. We realized that the need to spray was being generated by their desire to clear-cut. So we started campaigning to educate the public about how devastating it was to the forests to be clear-cutting them all the time.

And of course, now we're seeing what kind of fire danger that creates as well. We've been together for a long time and are very active in the county. Lately, of course, we've got the whole cannabis issue that we've become embroiled in because we're not happy with the way that the cannabis legalization has worked out for the environment. The excuse that was used by a lot of people to legalize was, "Oh, you know, there's all this environmental destruction going on, let's legalize it and put an end to that." Well, that's not the way it's working out. The environmental destruction continues, and it's legal. So it's real concerning to us, and we're fighting hard over that aspect of things right now in the forest.

**Interviewer:** OK, I've heard from some people from Hayfork that have been concerned about neighbors that have big grows and some of the detrimental effects come over into their property.

**Larry Glass:** Oh, yeah. I mean, almost all these grows in the forest are just sucking the nearby creek dry in the middle of the summertime. And so everybody's being affected,

including the fish and all the animals and wildlife that rely on that water. You've got these cartel grows on public lands and then you have these expansive illegal grows on private lands. At one point, they had estimated there was about 5,000 illegal grows in Trinity County and then up to 15,000 in Humboldt County. So that's a serious impact to the forest.

## **Adopt-A-Block and Local Cleanup Efforts**

**Interviewer:** I want to jump back to the North Coast Environmental Center. These are kind of some little neat things I think you're doing based on your newspaper and visits to your Arcata office. The groups have been involved in many issues, such as one I saw in the last newspaper: cleaning up poop in the Marsh area and other areas. People will walk their dogs and not clean up the poop, or some will clean it up in a bag and then leave it on the trail.

**Larry Glass:** Yeah, there's that. But what I'd like to tell you about is the one that I think got a little more participation, and that is the amount of **cigarette butts** being dropped on the streets of Arcata. We have piloted this program called **Adopt-A-Block**. We get people in their neighborhood where they work, live, or go to school to adopt that block and make sure that they're picking up these cigarette butts because these cigarette butts do not biodegrade. They float and go right on into the bay eventually and into the ocean. And so when we're doing Coastal Cleanup, guess what we're finding all over the beach? Cigarette butts. They're washing from city streets through the storm drains into our waters. Having people adopt the blocks and pick these cigarette butts up before they get into the watercourses is a huge thing.

**Interviewer:** And now on this adopter program, do you have it set? Do they walk around the block or go back and forth on both sides?

**Larry Glass:** It's flexible. You determine the area you're going to be responsible for, and we put it on our bigger map that we have at the office. Then people report back to us on their success. We've done some interesting promotional things around it—we had an artist that made sculptures out of cigarette butts that were picked up. We had a great egret that she made that got a lot of attention.

**Interviewer:** I remember that. I think you give people the little pickers so they don't have to bend over.

**Larry Glass:** Right, we've got those grabbers, hand-operated. They extend about 3 feet so you can just walk along and pick it up. You'd want to have gloves on if you were picking up cigarette butts anyway.

## **Feral Cats and Final Advice**

**Interviewer:** That sounds like a great program. Have you done anything as far as feral cats? We have a lot of feral cats and people feeding them here in Redding.

**Larry Glass:** It has been an issue in the past. Audubon Society was working hard on that one for a number of years, and I think there's been some success at reducing the amount of feral cats out there. I think the problem was worse about five years ago than it is today. I think people are being more responsible about getting their pets spayed and neutered. That's critical to that feral cat problem.

**Interviewer:** Is there any advice or words of wisdom you have learned over the years that you would have for Shasta Environmental Alliance and similar groups?

**Larry Glass:** Perseverance and consistency—those are your building blocks. You just keep going. It's like starting a new business—people kind of see it, but after you've been there for three or four years, they start taking you serious. So I'd say perseverance is important, and then outreach and being consistent in your message.

**Interviewer:** I think you're really right on that perseverance. People are watching and they say they're going to donate and then like 3 months later they finally do because we are still there.

**Larry Glass:** Oh, yeah. And because the NEC has been there so long and we've got such a long track record, people are a lot more comfortable with donating to a known entity like that.

**Interviewer:** Once again, can you give the website address? It's very impressive.

**Larry Glass:** [yournec.org](http://yournec.org).

**Interviewer:** You have been listening to an interview with Larry Glass, Executive Director of the North Coast Environmental Center. This is KFOI Radio, Shasta Environmental Alliance Program. Thank you for listening to KFOI Radio.