

Stewardship - Education - Advocacy



Shasta Environmental Alliance

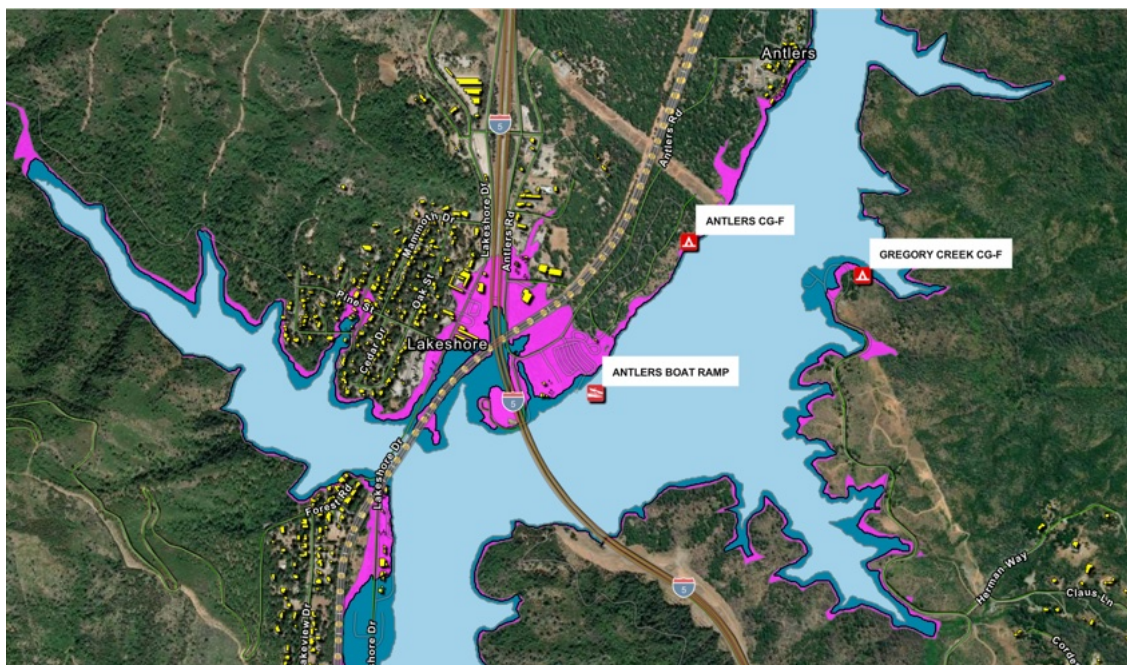


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April Newsletter

What's New

Raising Shasta Dam



We've updated our [Raising Shasta Dam](#) webpage with a new interactive map to show how the reservoir would change if the dam is raised. The current full pool is shown in light blue, while the proposed higher full pool is shown in darker blue. The magenta line marks the additional area that could be taken or impacted by the project, extending beyond the water's edge to account for shoreline changes and operational needs. [Check it out!](#)

Know Your Watershed

Species of the Month:

North American Beaver (*Castorcanadensis*)



To celebrate National Beaver Day on April 7, let's talk about one of my new favorite species: the North American beaver! Beavers are the largest rodent in the United States (growing two to three feet, not including their tails) with webbed feet for swimming and long flat black tails. Their tails help them stay balanced when carrying logs and are used to warn the beaver colony of danger by slapping it against the water (very scary). Beavers live in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and marshes. They are most famous for their dam building, although they don't actually live in the dams they build, but a separate "lodge" made of sticks with super-secret

To be completely honest with you, being from just outside of LA, I had never seen a beaver (outside of a zoo and the cartoon variety) until I was in my mid-twenties. So they were a bit of a mystery until I started working in areas where restoration practitioners were desperately trying to lure beavers back into stream habitats. Historically, beavers used to be in nearly every stream in North America, but due to the fur trade and their being a bit of a nuisance (with their damn dam building), many of them were eradicated from California streams.

But little did we know that beavers are actually a keystone species, meaning they fill a critically important role in maintaining the ecosystem for the other species. In fact, many species struggle once beavers have been removed from an ecosystem. Their dams not only create habitat for many species (looking at you, salmon) but the dams also improve water quality by not only filtering contaminants but by slowing water flow and allowing for pollutants, sediment, and excess nutrients to settle in the water column. Beavers are so important to stream health that a very popular restoration technique is to build beaver dam structures (aka Beaver Dam Analogs or BDAs) and add them to degraded streams to restore the habitat. These BDAs slow water, create habitat for fish, hold sediment, allow riparian species to thrive, add complexity to streams, and combat stream incision (along with a lot more stuff I can't think of). Teams of engineers and scientists go out to these beaver-less streams and design and create structures that beavers used to do for free-ninety-free.

Luckily, we have learned from our evil beaver-hating ways; significantly more effort is being made into monitoring beaver populations in California. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife has created the Beaver Restoration Program, a partnership with government and non-government agencies to help understand beaver distribution and implement beaver-assisted restoration projects. It also reintroduces beavers to areas where they once lived and assists with translocating nuisance beaver to a different area. Overall, I see a bright future for beavers in California as we learn to appreciate beavers more; after all, they are doing what we pay engineers to do for free!

References: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Beaver>

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California Poppy, *Eschscholzia californica*



California Poppies by Ren Redlich

The featured species this month has officially represented California for 103 years! It was designated as the State flower in 1903 after Botanist Sara Plummer Lemmon fought for its designation. The other monikers of *Eschscholzia californica*: Golden Poppy, California's Sunlight, and Cup of Gold, all invoke a "feeling" of California. The warmth and wealth represented by the color "gold" serve as a selling point for the Golden State.

This plant can grow as both an annual and as an herbaceous perennial. Rather than relying on their seeds, in the right conditions, poppies will send nutrients into their roots and regrow from the power stored there. The best time to see California poppies blooming in our county is March – September. They are drought tolerant and thrive on roadsides and areas of disturbance.

They are also self-seeding, which means they spread without any participation on our part. This is due to a unique feature called explosive dehiscence. The petals of the poppy drop and reveal the fruit of the plant, which dries out and then "pops," ejecting its seed up to six feet away. The word "poppy" is derived from the Latin word "papaver" (represented by their Family name, Papaveraceae), an onomatopoeic word imitative of rattling seed pods. Because you know the seed pod will eventually dry and

Now, I know what you might be thinking... "Isn't it illegal to pick California poppies?" Well, yes and no. The fact that they are the state flower adds nothing to the legality around picking poppies. The law prohibits damaging, removing, or selling plants from property that a person does not own, including federal land, state land, and along public roads. However, this law applies to every plant, not just poppies. You are free to gather poppies or seed from your own land, or with the permission of the landowner! But keep in mind that the misinformation of picking poppies being illegal likely began as a way to protect the plant. I know many Californian children (myself included) who were terrified of being arrested for picking poppies, and therefore, left them alone!

Fun Facts:

- California poppies can be identified by a structure called a torus, a disk-like ring at the base of the petals where they meet the stem.
- The flower buds are enclosed by two sepals, sometimes called a "dunce cap," which is pushed off as the four petals open.
- They follow a circadian rhythm called nyctinasty, opening in sunlight and closing at night or during cloudy, cold, or windy weather.
- The Spanish called the poppy "Dormidera," meaning "to fall asleep." Because the flowers close at night, they can also serve as temporary shelter for bees, which may rest inside the closed petals.



California Poppy and Bee by Ren Redlich

In The Field

Upcoming Events

~EVENT REMINDER~
The Earth Day Festival is this weekend!
Saturday, April 18
at Caldwell Park
From 11AM - 4PM



Join the 2026 City Nature Challenge

Celebrate Biodiversity in Shasta County

From **April 24** through **April 27**, 2026, find and photograph plants, animals, fungi, and any other wildlife anywhere in Shasta County using the [iNaturalist](#) app to contribute to the City Nature Challenge.

The City Nature Challenge (CNC) is an annual four-day international bioblitz that invites people around the world to document wildlife in their neighborhoods using

contributing valuable data that helps scientists and communities better understand and protect nature globally. What began in 2016 as a friendly competition between the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the California Academy of Sciences has since grown into a collaborative international event where cities both compete and work together to find species, collect observations, and strengthen community connections to nature.

This is the 2nd year Shasta county has participated in the City the Nature challenge. Observations are made and submitted by using the user-friendly and free app and platform [iNaturalist](#). Any iNaturalist observations that are made within Shasta County during the CNC timeframe will automatically be added to [Shasta County's CNC iNaturalist project](#) and contribute to our overall species observations and number of participants. Participate on your own or find an event on the Shasta County CNC iNaturalist Project page.

You don't need to be an experienced naturalist to participate, just curious about the nature around you! Whether you're spotting a bird on your morning walk, identifying wildflowers in your neighborhood, or simply taking the time to observe what's living right outside your door, every observation counts. Join us in celebrating the incredible biodiversity of Shasta County and be part of a global community working together to better understand and protect our natural world.

Download iNaturalist, get outside, and start exploring—we can't wait to see what you discover!



Shasta County's City Nature Challenge

CNC Events Details

City Nature Challenge
Shasta County

Contribute to Community Science by documenting biodiversity in your city while learning how to identify new species!

For Event Details Scan Here

APRIL 24-27
Taking part is easy!
Download the **iNaturalist** app to your smart phone or tablet

City Nature Challenge
Shasta County

Taking part is easy!
Download the **iNaturalist** app to your smart phone or tablet

APRIL 24-27 Visit: ecoshasta.org/calendar for Event Details

12 Sunday	Naturalist Hike & iNat Training Sloppy Joe Trail 9am - 12pm	Pre-Challenge Training: Learn how to use the iNaturalist app in real time on this naturalist-led wildflower hike
15 Wednesday	iNaturalist 101 Shasta Bike Depot 6pm - 7pm	Pre-Challenge Training: Learn the ins-and-outs of the iNaturalist app before the Challenge begins!
23 Thursday	iNaturalist 101 Pourboys Tappyard 5pm - 8pm	Pre-Challenge Training: Last chance to get iNaturalist training in before the Challenge begins!
24 Friday	Nothing / Light-sheeting Horsetown- Clear Creek Preserve 9am - 11am	Bring to light the night creepy-crawlers and fluttering friends by adding your moth & insect observations

Wildlife Picture

Any plant, animal, or any evidence of life found in your county

Be sure to note the location of the critter or plant

Upload your observation to iNaturalist by April 28-May 10

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE IS ORGANIZED BY

25 Saturday	Watershield Trail Packers Bay Road, Lakehead 2pm - 4pm	Plants are great for sharing a hot temperature across in Northern Shasta County, and spot a few endemic species along the way!
26 Sunday	Whiskeytown Bioblitz Crystal Creek Water Ditch Trail 9am - 12pm	Traverse a local trail and encounter the wild plant and animal diversity of Shasta County
27 Monday	Wilderness Walk Cloverdale Loop Trail 10am - 12pm	Explore the outdoors while observing the local flora and fauna common to the wilderness around you

CITY NATURE CHALLENGE IS ORGANIZED BY

SEA's Participating CNC Events

You're Invited
TO THE
Moth Party

**FRIDAY
APRIL
24th**

9PM-11PM

RSVP ONLY

Participate in this Community Science Event:

- Download iNaturalist
- Join the Shasta County City Nature Challenge
- Photograph the insects that land on the lit sheet
- Record Observations

— YOUR HOSTS —

Nothing / Lightsheeting City Nature Challenge

Date: Friday, April 24, 2026

Time: 9pm - 11pm

Where: [Horsetown-Clear Creek Preserve](#)

RSVP is Required to Attend This Event: Sign Up [HERE](#)

You're invited to the Moth Party! What is a moth party? Well, if you shine a bright light at a white sheet... this is heaven for moths and other insects. This strategy makes it easier for us to photograph creatures that are usually fluttering about, making for blurry pictures.

Our Goal:

Attract and photograph moths and other insect species to record for the [Shasta County City Nature Challenge](#).

What is the City Nature Challenge?:

Each year, various counties and cities participate in recording observations

person to look at nature around them and report back on what they see. Do you need to be a scientist or an expert to take part in this Challenge? Absolutely not! All you need is a phone, the iNaturalist app, and curiosity.

Why a Moth Party?

When you think of "Pollinators" you probably picture colorful butterflies or buzzing bees. But did you know that on a global scale, there are twice as many species of pollinating moths as there are bees, and six times as many pollinating moth species as butterflies? While most creatures are asleep, moths work the night-shift, which is why they are often overlooked. If this didn't convince you, they are also very cute and fuzzy and nice to look at!

*Note: this event will be held in a more remote location than the light-polluted city center in order to encourage a more successful turnout of insects.

For any questions, contact ren@ecoshasta.org.

Whiskeytown Bioblitz / City Nature Challenge

Date: Sunday, April 26, 2026

Time: 9am-12pm

(Carpool meeting time is 8:15am at the Grocery Outlet on Eureka Way)

Where: Crystal Creek Water Ditch Trail

Sign Up [HERE](#)

*****Please note that trailhead parking is limited so we are organizing a carpool.*****



year's [Shasta County City Nature Challenge project](#) at Whiskeytown National Recreation Area! Join SEA naturalists Juliet Malik and Ren Redlich along with guest naturalist Ross Schaefer on April 26 for a fun community activity in which we will contribute to the documentation of our region's amazing biodiversity.

What:

The City Nature Challenge is an annual four-day international bioblitz that invites people around the world to document wildlife in their region. The event is organized globally by the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County and the California Academy of Sciences, with local partners leading efforts in their communities. This is Shasta County's second year participating and is co-organized by Point Blue Conservation Science, Western Shasta Resource Conservation District, and Shasta Environmental Alliance.

Why:

Participating in CNC events provides valuable data that helps scientists and communities better understand and protect nature globally. Plus, it is a fun activity that provides the opportunity for community connection and learning about local biodiversity.

How:

We will be conducting an iNaturalist bioblitz, a community science activity in which participants document as many species as possible within a specified location and time frame. Observations are made and submitted by using the user-friendly app and platform [iNaturalist](#).

Who:

Anyone! All that is needed is a mobile phone with the iNaturalist app downloaded onto it.

To Participate:

- Sign up [HERE](#)
- Download iNaturalist onto your mobile phone and create an account.
- Familiarize yourself with how iNaturalist works. Check out this [page](#) for tutorials.

If you cannot attend this event, you can still contribute to the project by submitting iNaturalist observations within Shasta County during April 24-27, 2026. Your observations will automatically be recorded in the Shasta County 2026 CNC project. For any questions email juliet@ecoshasta.org.

April 26, 2026 - There Is No Planet B Book Club

Our exploration of Ayana Elizabeth Johnson's *What If We Get It Right?* continues on April 26 from 2pm-4pm!

Join us for conversations about what's possible, biophilia, nature as teacher, reworking food systems, design justice, and surely much more. To receive meeting details and additional resources please join our TINPB book club contact [list](#) or contact juliet@ecoshasta.org.



Phillip Brothers Mill Tour

Date: May 31, 2026

Where: Mt. Shasta Mall, near Chase Bank parking lot for carpooling

Sign up: [HERE](#)

Cost: \$15 per person (Children are free)

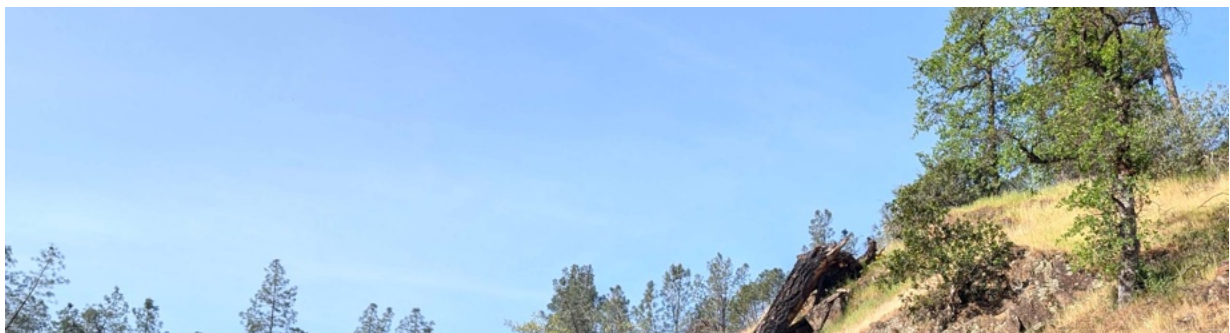
We hope you'll join us for a very special field trip to tour the last fully steam-powered sawmill in the United States located right here in Shasta County! The Phillip Brothers Mill, located in Oak Run, has been operating since 1897 and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It sits on over 900 acres of timberland that has been placed in a conservation easement with the Pacific Forest Trust to ensure this property remains protected and sustainably managed in perpetuity.

The tour will be conducted by the mill's manager, Gregg Hendrix, who has been part of this family owned and operated business since he was a child. Gregg will guide us through the operation from the mill pond through the first cuts of the logs to the finished products of custom-cut lumber and wooden boxes. It will take about 2 hours and we will have an opportunity to purchase some of their box factory products. Afterwards, we can eat lunch before heading back. Please wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a lunch or snack.

To join this tour you **MUST** fill out this [form](#) as we are limiting this field trip to 30 people. We will meet at Mt. Shasta Mall near Chase Bank to carpool and caravan to the mill. You may prepay via [PayPal](#) or bring cash or check the morning of. The full amount of the fee goes to the Phillips Brothers Mill, but we would greatly appreciate any amount above that price to support our mission to protect our local environment through stewardship, education, and advocacy.

For any questions, email juliet@ecoshasta.org

Upper Salt Creek Trip Report





by **Juliet Malik**

Getting together with a group of curious nature-loving people and talking about the literal sexiness of wildflowers and pollinators was a wonderful way to celebrate the first weekend of spring. For our group of 15, the mid-March heatwave had loosened its grip, giving way to pleasant temperatures in the 70s and everyone was in a good mood to search for native flowering plants along Upper Salt Creek.

Before hitting the trail, we reviewed why plants make flowers. Essentially, flowers are plants' way of advertising to their pollinating companions – bumblebees, other native bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, moths, beetles, hover flies, and bats –that they are ready for some reproduction action. As a reward for moving pollen from plant to plant, most flowers provide sweet nourishing nectar to the venturing insect, bird, or mammal. Some flowers even have UV nectar guides we humans cannot see to bring the pollinator directly to the goods- some pretty nifty specialization!

The focus of the day's hike was **native** wildflowers and **native** pollinators because they need each other and they need our attention. These mutually beneficial, reciprocal partnerships have been forged for 130 million years –a sort of evolutionary Match.com. These beautifully functional relationships are threatened throughout California due to extensive pesticide use and encroachment on native plant turf by non-native invasive plant species, making it difficult for these “meant-to-be-togethers” to change their profile status to “in a relationship.”

The design of these ancient pairings can be witnessed simply by noticing how the different colors and shapes of flowers correlate to specific types of pollinators. Bees are down to visit blue/purple and yellow flowers because they cannot see

come in clusters or have an easy landing pad. Hummingbirds are smitten with tubular red, orange, and pink flowers.

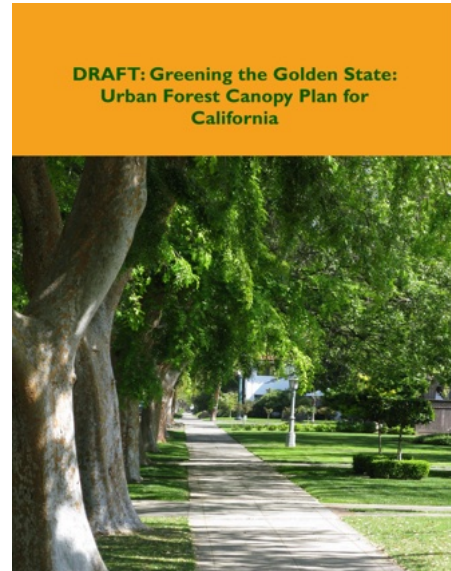
The Upper Salt Creek showcased abundant examples for each color category. We admired the many blue/purple blooms of blue dicks (*Dipterostemon capitatus*), nightshade (*Solanum sp.*), blue skull caps (*Scutellaria tuberosa*), and lupine (*Lupinus sp.*), accompanied by swaths of yellow flowers including Western buttercups (*Ranunculus occidentalis*), fiddlenecks (*Amsinckia sp.*), American yellowrocket (*Barbarea orthoceras*), foothill desert-parsley (*Lomatium utriculatum*), mule ears (*Wyethia sp.*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), and tufted poppy (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*). Woven throughout were many plants featuring white or cream-colored blooms; namely white brodiaea (*Tritileia hyacinthina*), popcorn flower (*Plagiobothrys sp.*), manroot (*Marah sp.*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneatus*). And for team red and pink, we noticed warrior plume (*Pedicularis densiflora*), foothill shooting stars (*primula hendersonii*), and purple sanicle (*Sanicula bipinnatifida*).

After mugging for the camera on one of this trail's bridges, we headed back to the parking lot enjoying each other's conversation. While many environmental issues we face today leave individuals feeling helpless, the plight of native plants and pollinators has fairly accessible solutions: Plant more native plants, remove invasives, and lay off the pesticides. It's even more joyful and beneficial if your neighbors join you to create a wildlife corridor. Happy spring!



[Calls to Action](#)

California's Urban Forest Plan



Cal Fire's Urban Forest Plan Is Open for Comment.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection has [published a draft plan](#) to expand the urban tree canopy statewide by 10% before 2035. Public comments are open through April 30. For Shasta County residents, the plan has significant gaps that deserve attention before the comment period closes.

Trees are public health infrastructure. Mature trees reduce surface and air temperatures, lower energy demand, manage stormwater, and filter pollutants from local waterways. In a community that regularly sees summer temperatures above 115 degrees, the cooling benefit of a healthy urban tree canopy is not incidental; it is one of the most cost-effective climate adaptation tools available.

The target is for a 10% increase statewide with no adjustment for where a community starts. A community starting at 8% canopy and a community starting at 40% receive the same goal. For a city like Redding, that target will not produce the same result as it will for coastal communities with significantly higher existing coverage.

Developers are removing mature native trees and replacing them with ornamental species that deliver none of the same ecological or cooling benefits. Where replacement

mechanisms needed to address it.

The plan's planting framework was designed for dense urban environments and does not account for WUI communities, where defensible space requirements and lot patterns make parcel-level canopy targets difficult to meet. Homeowners are removing healthy trees to retain insurance coverage because insurers are treating trees as a fire threat based on aerial imagery alone, with no assessment of actual condition or risk. The plan provides no guidance on which tree species are appropriate for high fire severity zones where climate-adapted, fire-resistant species are needed.

Local input matters here. The draft plan acknowledges challenges like wildfire risk, development pressure, and insurance-driven tree removal, but how those are handled is still up for debate. Comments from communities like ours help determine whether funding is targeted where it's actually needed, whether large trees are protected, and whether policies reflect real conditions on the ground.

How to comment

The state is using a short online survey. You can answer as much or as little as you want.

[Survey Link](#)

A step-by-step guide walks you through each question and includes optional language you can use or adapt:

[👉 Help Document](#)

Deadline: April 30 at 5:00 PM.

This is one of the few chances to influence the plan before it's finalized. A few minutes of input can go a long way.

Be a Voice for the Environment

Do you care deeply about protecting our local environment and the wildlife, forests, rivers, and public lands that make it special? Join our board and help guide advocacy efforts that shape land use, conserve natural habitats, and preserve spaces for recreation and enjoyment. Bring your ideas, energy, and passion to make a real difference for the environment and your community.

Ready to get involved? [Fill out our interest form here.](#)

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