



Shasta Environmental Alliance

August Newsletter

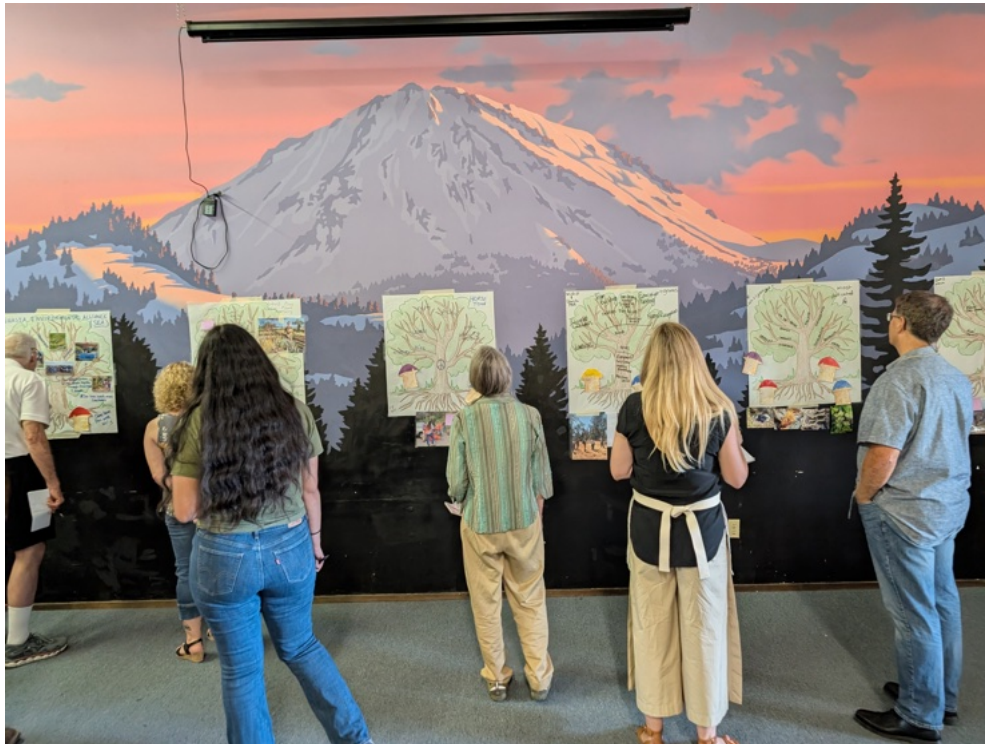


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Moving Forward Together: An Evening of Connection and Reflection

A group of thirty-three individuals representing sixteen eco-minded organizations recently gathered together to discuss possible pathways towards more interconnection, collaboration and mutual support. Juliet Malik of Shasta Environmental Alliance and Heather Bortolussi of Western Shasta Resource Conservation District teamed up with Dr. Holly White-Wolfe, a recently certified

The evening opened with food, conversation and a compelling land acknowledgement from Jonathon Freeman of Native Roots Network. He spoke of the practice of modern land acknowledgments as a way to attempt to reduce the erasure of Indigenous people—along with their knowledge and experiences at the hands of settler-colonialism—from history and the landscape.

He further noted that in Indigenous culture a land acknowledgement is an agreed upon practice between different Native tribes in which they defer to the practices of the hosting tribe when visiting their lands. He called upon the group to remember that ethic as we collectively work to protect, conserve, and restore our local environment by promoting a responsible and reciprocal relationship to the earth.

In planning this event Heather, Holly and Juliet set out to create an event that facilitated connection and relationship building, the necessary first steps to collective solution finding. Holly developed a beautiful framework for individual and group reflection based on the mushroom-mycelium-tree relationship of forests and woodlands —we are all nature nerds after all. Juliet created a take-home zine (a mini booklet) for each guest to guide them through the steps of the reflection process and Heather hand drew and colored over 15 large trees. Heather also recruited RCD volunteers to make colorful mushrooms for the evening's project.

After introductions, the group began the activity of imagining the mushrooms as our individual roles, the trees as our organizations, and the mycelium (the underground fungal threads that make up the vegetative body of mushrooms) as the connective network between organizations. We used the analogy to help identify where we are thriving and where we are struggling. We learned about other organizations and began to realize how much we all have in common, even though our organizations approach environmental work through different lenses and with different focal points. The group completed the first three steps of the reflection process and will be invited to participate in a future event. In the fall, we'll explore the mycelial web (resources and relationships) and cultivating nutrients (collaboration) to continue to grow our collective connections.

The feedback from the event was overwhelmingly positive. Survey results from 22 respondents suggest: Participants feel **highly encouraged** that their organization's needs can be met through continued collaboration and mutual sharing of resources (ideas, knowledge, talent, volunteers, event planning, etc.) When asked what resonated most, one survey respondent said, "The fact that others who may or may not align on everything with me share a desire to care for our environment. 'Healing' - I think we all need this."

Any other environmentally focused non-profits or groups that wish to participate in the next event or get more information can reach out to juliet@ecoshasta.org.

For community members who wish to get more involved in supporting our local environment, there is a wealth of opportunity across many organizations, covering a wide array of topics. We encourage you to explore this list of organizations to find the right fit for your interests:

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- list of participating organizations:
- [Beautify Shasta](#)
 - [Ghost Pine Native Plant Nursery](#)
 - [Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve](#)
 - [Native Roots Network](#)
 - [North State Climate Action](#)
 - [Point Blue Conservation Science](#)
 - [Shasta Chapter California Native Plant Society](#)
 - [Shasta Environmental Alliance](#)
 - [Siskiyou Community Alliance](#)
 - [Shasta Living Streets](#)
 - [Solar Punk Studio](#)
 - [Trails and Bikeways Council](#)
 - [TurtleBay Nursery and Botanical Gardens](#)
 - [UC Climate Stewards and California Naturalist Programs](#)
 - [UC Master Gardeners Shasta County](#)
 - [We Advocate Through Environmental Review \(WATER\)](#)
 - [Western Shasta Resource Conservation District](#)
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Spring Hill Trail Trip Report

An Outing of Connection and Curiosity

by Juliet Malik

The June 29th hike up Spring Hill Trail in Mt. Shasta was a delightful escape from hot Redding temperatures. Our group of nine hikers was met with clear blue skies, warm sunshine and a parking lot rimmed with sweet peas, California poppies and abundant alfalfa covered with purple flowers—a plant easily identified by Bonnie who grew up raising cattle. This enchanting display was buzzing with pollinators of various types.

Before heading up the hill into the cool shade of the mixed conifer forest featuring California

morning. The responses were mixed with gratitude and humor and set a welcoming tone to a first time SEA hiker, Kyle, and an international guest visiting from Jordan named Maria. She was in Redding for a few weeks visiting her sister and found herself in need of some local nature and social activity. While enjoying the forest and mountain scenery, she taught us about the natural environment of her home country, and by the end of the hike she had made fast friends and exchanged contact information with several of the other hikers.

There was no particular educational theme to this hike, other than choosing an ambling pace because our focus was less about the destination and more about getting curious about our surroundings. The trail has a great deal of plant biodiversity, and we stopped to look at the abundant antelope bitterbrush and some rather enormous berries on a green manzanita shrub. We wondered why they seemed exceptionally large. We admired the towering sugar pines with their large cones drooping from the ends of the branches like ornaments. Sugar pines are the tallest and largest pine in the pine genus and their cones can be up to two feet long. Unfortunately, there weren't many wildflowers to be seen along the main trail which may have been due to the bulldozer activity in May to fight a small fire on the northwest side of the hill.

A particularly nice feature of this trail are its several vista point benches, some offering spectacular views of Mt. Shasta, and others, sweeping views of Strawberry Valley and the Trinity Mountains. The views are a bit obscured at the top of the hill, but we did enjoy crowding around a picnic table fully shaded by a large canyon live oak to enjoy a snack and some lively conversation. The hilltop is abundant with established bitter cherry shrubs as well as many new seedlings that were emerging in the bulldozer tracks from the fire-fighting efforts—a reminder of this plant's resiliency and its value in habitat restoration.

For the return trip, we took the Rocky Point loop trail that offered a host of different plants since it skirts around the conifers and is more open and shrubby. We noticed abundant Hartweg's wild ginger, Solomon's plume, spreading dogbane, snowbrush ceanothus, and MaryAnn and Holly pointed out ripe thimbleberry, which some of the group enjoyed eating. This trail reconnects to the main trail via a section through some wonderful rock formations and outcroppings. We stopped to admire the view from these geological formations (some of us brave enough to peer over the edge) and acknowledged that we were traversing upon a dynamic volcanic landscape that has seen many changes since the emergence of Mt. Shasta some 300,000 years ago. Spring Hill itself is the result of flank eruptions from the volcano and is referred to as either a satellite or parasitic cone.

Throughout the hike, Brigitte was our humorous and intrepid scout, as she is not much for standing still too long. We usually caught up to her at the various vista points, but on the return trip she waited for us in the middle of the trail to tell us about the large snake that crossed her path and pointed to the track it left behind. While not able to fully identify the snake based on Brigitte's description, we were certain that it wasn't a rattlesnake having lacked the very crucial feature of a rattle. Some of us were jealous to have missed the sighting, but the early bird gets the worm as they say.

Everyone made it back to the parking lot with ease, a good sign of a successful outing. We said our goodbyes and departed for separate post-hike excursions—some to lunch and others

Events Resume in September!

In September we will be celebrating **California Biodiversity Week** (<https://www.californianature.ca.gov/>) (Sept. 6- Sept 14) with an iNaturalist Bioblitz walk. Stay tuned for more details.

Also be sure to save the date for **National Public Lands Day** (<https://www.blm.gov/national-public-lands-day>) , September 27, 2025.

Information on how you can participate will be coming soon!

Trip Report: Nature Journaling at Manzanita Lake

“Paying attention is a form of reciprocity with the living world, receiving the gifts with open eyes and open heart.” –Robin Wall Kimmerer



The co-hosted nature journaling event between Shasta Environmental Alliance and Western Shasta RCD on Sunday, July 20th was without a doubt a very special day. Heather Bortolussi, a Grizzly Corp Fellow who works for WSRCD joyfully led our group of 16 (plus a passer-by who joined in) through the finer points of connecting to the natural world through the practice of recording what can be noticed, questioned, and imagined when we slow down enough to pay close attention. Capturing these observations in a nature journal through drawings, words, symbols, numbers and/or color palettes does many wonderful things. It lights up our hippocampus, brings us joy and increases our memory retention! Who doesn't want more of that?

While some of us may resist artistic expression because of limiting beliefs about our art skills

bolstered the group's confidence by laying out three irrefutable truths for the day: "We are all artists, we are all naturalists and the world loves us." We each took these truths and headed out, either alone, with a friend, or with family into the forest surrounding Manzanita Lake to fill our notebooks with drawings and words of wonder and imagination.

What might a casual observer have noticed about our group that day? They might have noticed a mother and son spending quality time together in a shared activity, or witnessed two friends sharing a fallen log and some art supplies in the mountain sunshine. They could have observed a seasoned naturalist capturing the artistry of the landscape and jotting down metaphors for life, or perhaps they beheld a small family offering their young son a different way to experience the outdoors. They might also have noticed how this activity equally served the introverted and extroverted members of the group by offering time for both solitude and community. Perhaps they may have even reflected on the possibility of their own need to slow down to pay attention to the details of their surrounding environment.

As the journaling part of our time came to a close, we gathered once more as a group to eat lunch and share our observations. Together we created a momentary art gallery of landscapes, illustrations, observational notes and poetic expression. It was a day of relaxation, connection and restoration that concluded with us taking a short walk to an enormous Jeffrey pine to inhale its sweet vanilla scent—a true reminder that the world does indeed love us with its continuous gifts. As we move through our lives, perhaps with a bit more awareness, how might we return that love?

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