



Butte Environmental Council

Educating and advocating for the land, air and water

Butte Environmental Council e-News *Your Environmental Sentinel*

2012

December

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Dear Robyn,

Holiday Greetings From BEC!



Photo: Suzi Enders, Magalia, 2008.

We're wishing for lots of rain and snow for the holidays--

Hanukkah, Christmas, Ramadan, Kwaanza, New Year's, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and any other holidays that fall between now and mid-April. We've been pretty good this year, too; perhaps we'll even get that wet winter we're fervently hankering after.

And **we've worked hard in 2012**. High points include:

- Getting the Humboldt Community Gardens up and running; huge thanks to the Garden Committee and intern Tim O'Neal, who did such a fantastic job as Garden Coordinator;
- Continuing to represent environmental concerns with city and County government (Zoning Plan, Climate Action Plan, development proposals);
- BEC's role helping to plan and implement the first Feather River Cleanup in Oroville;
- The completion of The California Wellness Foundation-funded dioxin testing on backyard chicken eggs in south Oroville;
- Good turnouts and good times at our two event "mainstays," the Endangered Species Faire and the Bidwell Parks & Chico Creek Clean-up;

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- Watchdogging the co-generation plant in south Oroville to ensure that they clean up all the toxic waste ash they want to leave in the Northern Sacramento Valley;
- Continuing to build strong relationships with other environmental activists and organizations in Butte County and the surrounding region.

We're already excited about the work that we're planning for 2013. Thanks for being part of this journey with us. Stick with us--it's gonna be interesting in the months ahead.

Help Create Our 2013 Procession of the Species!

By Susan Tchudi, BEC Member

Are you passionate about endangered species? Do you mourn the loss of natural habitat and its creatures? The Procession of the Species is designed to make a statement about our concerns and to invite our community--young and old--to be involved in beautiful, creative art reflecting what we value. This is the third year we're participating in Endangered Species Faire, the **first Saturday in May**.



We're looking for puppeteers or people who would like to learn puppet-making to help us create--in paper mache and recycled materials--puppets, masks, and costumes to represent endangered species--everything from ladybugs to elephants--to participate in an inspiring parade.

We need people to build puppets (we'll teach you how), to help us teach puppet making to children, to make costumes, to volunteer at the event, to create music. We will celebrate the creatures we love and demonstrate the risk they face.

We are also forming a women's dance team, which will also participate in the parade.

And we need materials:

- fabric
- paint
- glue
- masking tape or duct tape
- wire (either spool or mesh)
- cardboard
- bamboo poles, dowels, or PVC pipe
- sponsorships or monetary donations that help us buy supplies

Finally, we need willing hands to help us make next year's Procession of the Species our best ever.

If you are interested in helping--in any way--with the Procession of the Species or if you have any questions, please contact **Susan**

Fracking the Buttes

Article By Chris Nelson, BEC Member

My current focus is preventing clear-cutting on private lands, and protecting our north state water. But in the last few weeks the [Unis'to'ten First Nation people](#) are in the forefront of my mind. The Unis'to'ten hosted an Action Camp in Canada that I attended with several others last summer. The Camp focused on defending Unis'to'ten (unceded) territory from the proposed "Carbon Corridor" which would shatter the ecosystem the Unis'to'ten depend on for their lifeways, as well as teaching others how to defend their own ecosystems from similar peril.



Fast-forward to last Wednesday, Dec. 12th. **Seven of us from Chico demonstrated at a BLM lease sale of 1800 acres of public land which was auctioned off for oil and gas fracking;** for news coverage see [commondreams](#) and [examiner](#). The cost per acre was about \$2.50, which seems mighty cheap for land that will be permanently ruined with toxic fracking chemicals for any other purpose.

What began as learning about a distant problem in New York and Pennsylvania via the film "Gasland" has come home. Now lands in the Sutter-Buttes are being fracked. It appears from the [Frack Focus website](#) that there are even fracking wells along the Sacramento River. The Venaco company owns the wells in this area, which are for oil, not gas.

This water, the upland water recharge areas, this air, this valley and foothills are the body and life of our home. It is what we must protect with the same vigor and discipline as the Unis'to'ten who continue their implacable vigilance against the oil and gas industry's depredations.

The energy extractive industries are playing for profit; but we are dead serious about protecting what remains and keeping global climate change from its worst-case scenario--which is the outcome if forests continue to be logged and tar-sands oils refined.

This is a call to activism which none of us can afford to ignore.



Venaco Gas Well at Sutter Buttes

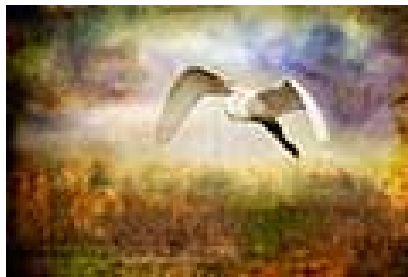
Snow Goose Registration Opens



The 14th Annual Snow Goose Festival of the Pacific Flyway is open for registration! From the [website](#):

*We are so pleased to bring you two very special guests...Chico's own **Roger Lederer** and **Carol Burr**, retired Chico State Professors, author and illustrator of "**Birds of Bidwell Park**". Their keynote presentation will be "**The Amazing in the Familiar: Surprising Facts about Common Birds.**"*

The Festival, which runs from **Thursday, Jan 24th to Sunday, January 27**, features **over 60 field trips** during the four-day event, many of which are **new** this year. Festival headquarters are at the **Chico Family Masonic Center, 1110 W. East Ave.**



Enjoy bird and habitat artwork at the **Avenue 9 Gallery and Art Guild, 180 E. 9th Ave. The opening reception on Friday Jan. 25 from 5-8 PM** will offer refreshments, live music, and a no-host bar.

Painting from Pam House, part of the Avenue 9 show

This marvelous festival is a fantastic, fun way to learn more about our "upstairs neighbors," the migrating (and resident) waterfowl that make the Northern Sacramento Valley such an amazing place to live. If you thrill to the music of traveling honkers as the wintry evening skies grow dark, come learn and play with all of us at the Snow Goose Festival!

AquAlliance Conference a Success

This intensive, two-day conference featured speakers from a multiplicity of disciplines, backgrounds, regions and agencies for a full list see [here](#)). Several BEC representatives were in attendance including Executive Director Robyn DiFalco, Water Advocacy consultant Carol Perkins, Board members Grace Marvin and John Scott, interns Travis Downing and Lindsey McDonnell, and staff Julia Murphy.

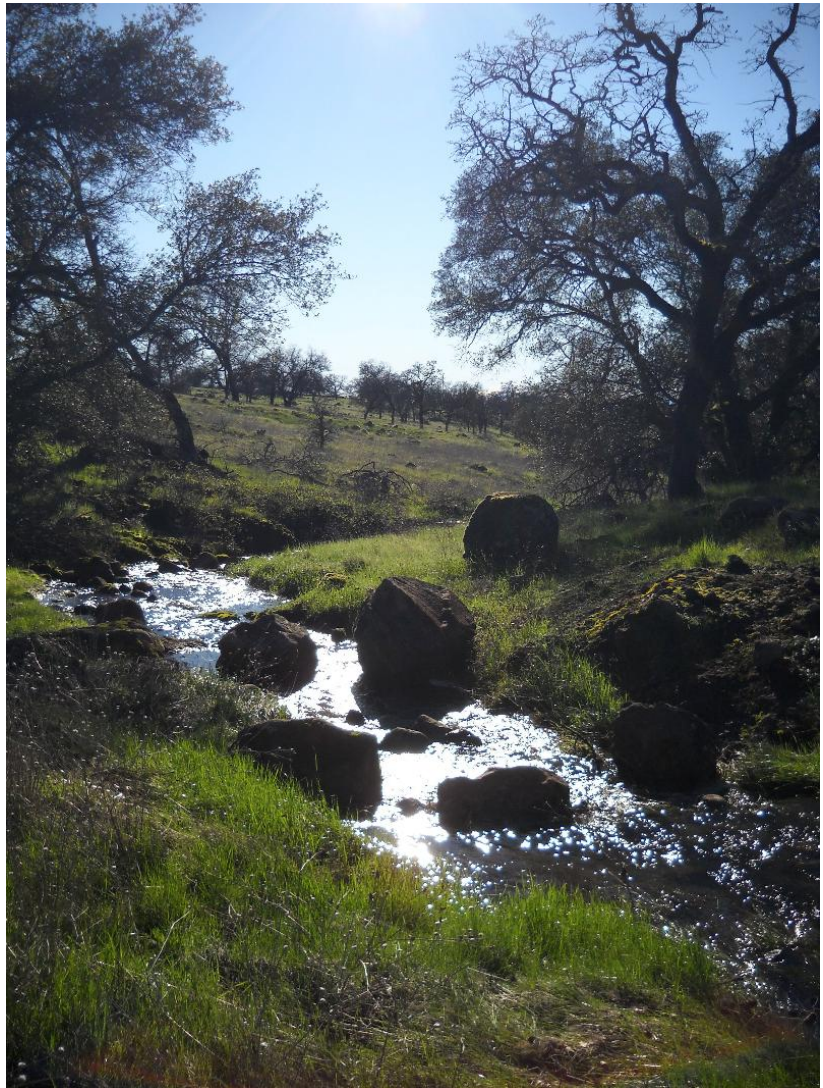
Common themes that ran through the presentations were:

1. the importance of uncompromised science in creating best practices and policies;
2. the systematic and dangerous reliance on "paper water" (i.e., water promised in contract, in a hypothetical water budget, but not in actual fact),
3. The importance of the Public Trust Doctrine in implementing a legal framework for sustainable water use and allocation;
4. the decline of riparian, groundwater, and estuarine (salt/freshwater) systems and species, particularly in the Owens Valley, San Joaquin/Sacramento Valley(s) and the San Francisco Delta;
5. the ease with which environmental water agreements often are disregarded by agencies bowing to political and economic pressures;

6. and the critical importance of educating communities on the threat of enormous water sales/exports. This is particularly alarming in light of projected changes in the form of decreasing Sierra snowpack, see [here](#).

Though the "dispatches from the front" were often disheartening, the solidarity and admiration between water warriors was uplifting. If one single message could be distilled, it is that **2013 is the year when we will either ruin California's struggling rivers and watersheds...or rescue them.**

Now is the time to join the fight. We must protect our home so that the generations to come can also take joy in the snow goose, the salmon, and the river otter; the oaks, the vernal pools, the ephemeral streams in all their brief and shining beauty. To allow all this life to be snuffed out for the benefit of a small band of powerful mercenaries is too sad to contemplate. **We must act together to save what we love.**



Ephemeral Stream, Old 32 (2008)

Accepting Your Article Submissions

This month's e-newsletter features a couple articles submitted from active BEC members. We invite your article submissions (from organizations or individuals) for future issues of BEC's Environmental Sentinel which reaches a pretty broad audience in our community.

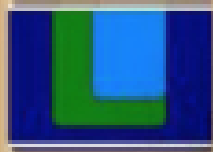
Got an event coming up that you're proud of? Working on a local issue that you want to educate the community about? Or maybe you just have a superstar volunteer that you want to recognize in a wider forum. Whatever you have going on, BEC would love to highlight your organization's work in 150 words or less, in our monthly e-newsletter, the Environmental Sentinel.

Articles received by the 10th day of each month will be considered for that month's edition; late submissions will be considered for the following month. Email submissions to [Julia Murphy](#).

Thank you again for your continued support of BEC's efforts. Your input or participation is always welcome. Simply reply to this email to tell me what's on your mind.

Robyn DiFalco

Executive Director
Butte Environmental Council



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