



Butte Environmental Council

Educating and advocating for the land, air and water

Butte Environmental Council e-News *Your Environmental Sentinel*

July 2013

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Dear Robyn,

Membership support is the heartwood of the BEC tree, our vital living core. That's why we share opportunities for you to participate through our website, calendar, and our newsletters. Show your support today with easy and secure [online membership renewal](#).

Public Hearing: Zoning Amendments Raise Red Flags

The Planning Commission will consider **Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance** on **July 25, 2013 at 1:00 pm** at a **Public Hearing**. We at BEC have several concerns and will be speaking at the public hearing. This Hearing is open to the public and we encourage you to attend the hearing and provide comments. This is the public's first and last opportunity to engage in the process; if approved at the Planning Commission, these amendments is anticipated to go to the Board of Supervisors for a vote on August 27.

BEC has been involved in the Zoning and Amendments discussions throughout the General Plan process. Once the zoning ordinance is in place, it may be amended up to four times a year.

In this round of amendments, BEC is particularly concerned about **a proposal to reduce the open space requirements** for planned unit developments (PUD's) from 50% to 40%.

The concept of "clustered housing developments" in unincorporated areas of the county is already objectionable because it is in contrast to the General Plan goals of focusing development in existing urban areas. Reducing the open space requirement only makes PUD's that much objectionable.

We are also concerned about a precedent-setting, potential **threat to the Chico Greenline** from its west side, in which non-agricultural enterprises would be allowed on Ag Zoned properties in a way that would negatively impact true ag and residences. BEC is supporting a neighborhood coalition of residents who are

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speaking out to protect the greenline and prevent this slippery slope.

Some details of the story are presented in the Chico News and Review's recent article of 7/18, "[Neighborhood Feud.](#)" In this case, the cry of "Not In My Backyard" should be considered "Not in Chico's Backyard!" BEC will work hard to prevent this loophole that would weaken the Greenline.

BEC will be attending the Public Hearing; if you'd like to carpool let us know. Call **891-6424** or email staff@becnet.org.

Written comments may be provided to Dan Breedon, Principal Planner, at dbreedon@buttecounty.net or mailed to 7 County Center Drive, Oroville, CA 95965.

Water Transfers in the Northern Sacramento Valley

By Carol Perkins, BEC Water Advocacy Consultant

Another dry year? The State of California has declared this as a 'near' record-low year in precipitation and runoff. Under these natural conditions, the Governor issued an executive order to [streamline water transfers](#) to assist the agricultural industry. **Oh really?**

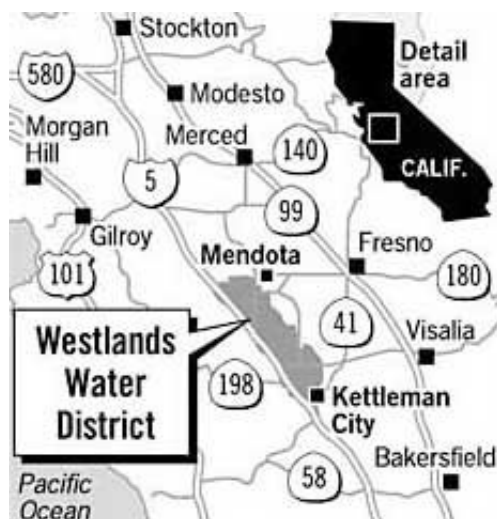
This year, the State is asking water districts to give up their surface water allocations and in some cases, to **pump groundwater instead.**

Alarming, many small transfers are proposed for this region, and while BEC is following all, we focused our resources on a few strategies we hoped would put an end to the **double-dipping.**

The BEC Board of Directors is considering how to best respond, and all options are on the table, including the potential for litigation.

BEC is pleased to see our County Supervisors publicly opposing out-of-region transfers that involve groundwater pumping. But, we question why the County failed to comment on the transfer of water from Concow Reservoir by the Thermalito Water & Sewer District. Even relatively small transfers like this one are alarming because they set precedent for future transfers and could have devastating effects for those in our watershed.

Residents in the Concow area are organizing to oppose this transfer. BEC working with Concow residents to explore strategies and will continue to actively watchdog the many proposed transfers emerging this summer.



Concow Resident Speaks Out on Concow Reservoir Water Sale

By Joni Stellar

On my first visit to our new property, the pools and large rocks near the bridge across Concow Creek beckoned... I was already in absolute LOVE with its peaceful lush cool beauty. Though our property lies another mile plus up the hill, 'our swimmin' hole' is one of the best perks of living here. The other perks await upstream a short meander, at Second Hole, Third Hole, and more holes.

Timeless afternoons in the cool shade and cold waters, playing with my grandkids and others: jump, splash, float, lay about like otters on the rocks, catch crawdads and fishes, smile at dragonflies, butterflies, damselflies, laugh at silly dog and human antics....



Swimming in Concow Creek

Unfathomable that this glorious lifeline for life, both wild and tame, this refuge amidst hot, dry, burned-out hillsides, could be gone. Emptied of liquid, sold south for money. Are the joys and lives lost even considered?

We residents were not informed of the proposed sale of most of the water out of Concow Lake, the source of the water we love so dearly. We all drink well or bottled water, yet we count on this cooling creek water to save us from the ravages of heat - and to renew our aquifers. Many feed families from these waters.

Why should we be any less-considered water users under the law? Why are we worth less than those seeking to purchase our excellent waters to replace their poisoned, fracked-up water in Kern County?

Anyone wishing to help Save Concow Creek, contact me, Joni Stellar, at jonistellar@yahoo.com.



Dioxin Meeting a Success

On Wednesday, July 17, BEC staff met with members of the Community Advisory Board (CAB), a group of people that live and/or work in Oroville and have expertise or capacity to contribute to the upcoming Public Forum on Dioxin and research project.

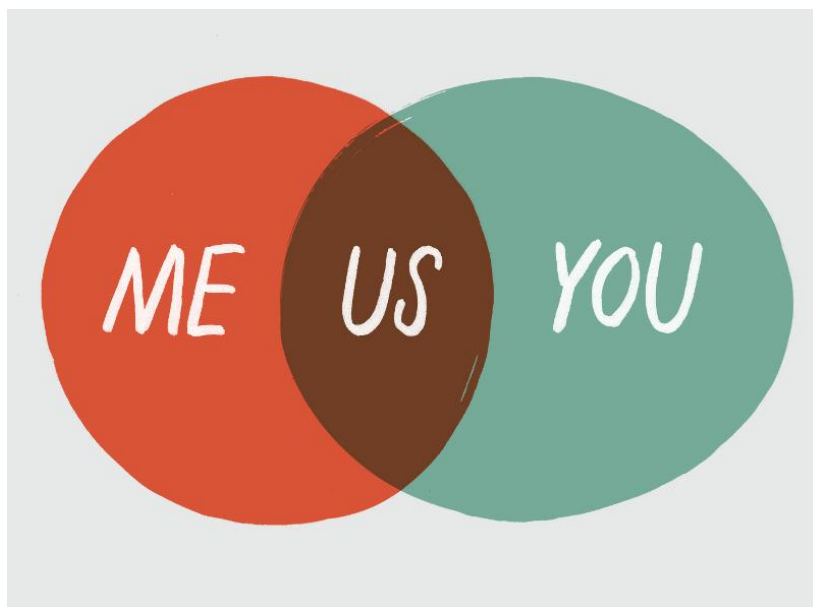
The CAB so far consists of members from

- Butte County Air Quality Management District,
- Butte County Environmental Health,
- the California Health Collaborative,
- Oroville Boys and Girls Club,
- and the Oroville Democratic Club.

The Forum is scheduled for **Wednesday, July 31** at the **Public Library in Oroville, 1820 Mitchell Ave.** We've got an event on [Facebook](#) with more details.

Board discussions covered potential test strategies and the need to be very clear on known and potential dioxin sources, both industrial and domestic (the latter being primarily barrel burning, a significant source of dioxin).

Advisory Board members identified what they could contribute to the Forum, and outreach to the community in general. Everybody learned something as we shared our specific expertise relating to the larger issue of dioxin in Oroville. **Huge BEC thanks to all of the CAB members who attended the meeting; your generosity and your time is a real gift.**



This Community Advisory Board is open to Oroville residents and people who serve the Oroville community. If you are interested in participating on the Board, please print and send the [Community Advisory Board sign-up sheet.](#)

Upcoming Events

Wine Not, Indeed? Check out this wine list for our **Wine Tasting, July 25.** Impress your friends and neighbors with your extensive wine knowledge, starting with these noble vintages...



Last Thursday of the Month

Wine Tasting

Thursday, July 25 | 5-7pm
The Crystal Room
968 East Ave (next to Quackers)
 Tickets \$5
 Wine supplied by Grocery Outlet – Chico

2009 Organic Mendocino Chardonnay
 2007 Buena Vista Carneros Chardonnay
 2010 California Woodbridge by Robert Mondavi Shiraz-Rose
 2009 Sonoma County Santerra Red
 2007 Napa Valley Mystery Blend by Beaver Creek
 2006 Mulas Family Vineyards Carneros Syrah

A fundraiser for:

Join the event on [Facebook](#) and invite your friends -- it's going to be a lot of fun, and we're looking forward to it!

And: the **Feather River Clean-Up** is this Saturday, **July 27th** from **7:30 am to 11:30 am**. Come and participate in a few hours of work for a great cause. Join the event on [Facebook](#) to let us know you're coming...or just show up!

The Feather River, and the Oroville parks that it runs through, are some of Oroville's great and enduring treasures. To show love for the River is to show love for the community, so join us out there and let's keep



the...
...flowing!

Shasta Dam: No Dam Bigger, Thanks!

The plan to raise Shasta Dam has met with resistance from...well,



Beautiful *Endangered Species Faire* images courtesy of Alan Schechter. Thank you Alan-- your eye is top-notch!

For more great pics from this event, [visit BEC's Facebook page](#).

anyone that doesn't want to **sell 77% of Shasta's water to south-of-Delta interests** (for more on that, see this [Friends of the River factsheet](#)).

BEC Board of Directors member Grace Marvin attended the only local public workshop on the proposed Shasta Dam raise in Redding on July 16th. Grace commented on the lack of a cost-benefit analysis for the "No Action alternative", a required feature of the Draft [Environmental Impact Statement \(DEIS\)](#).

We're encouraging all north state residents to submit comments during the public comment period, through Sept 26. You can submit comments easily online and can borrow directly from the factsheet provided above which addresses many of the concerns people have about a dam raise. From the section titled "Lower Sacramento River:"

*The dam raise/reservoir expansion will **modify flows** in the lower Sacramento River, with **potentially significant impacts** on the river's **riparian ecosystem** and **protected wildlife species** that depend on that ecosystem. The Bureau (of Reclamation) proposes a **rough sketch** of an Adaptive Management **Plan** to **mitigate** these impacts, but provides **little information** on how the Plan will be **implemented**, how the needs of water contracts will be weighed against **ecosystem flow needs**, and what **guarantees** will be provided to ensure that these significant impacts are truly mitigated to **less than significant levels**."*



We need another 18 feet, folks...Not quite big enough.

The proposed dam raise would negatively affect our region's hydrology, including the federally protected Wild & Scenic McCloud River. It would also further flood the cultural sites and land of the not-federally-protected [Winnemem Wintu](#), the indigenous people originally displaced (and never compensated) by the original construction of Shasta Dam.

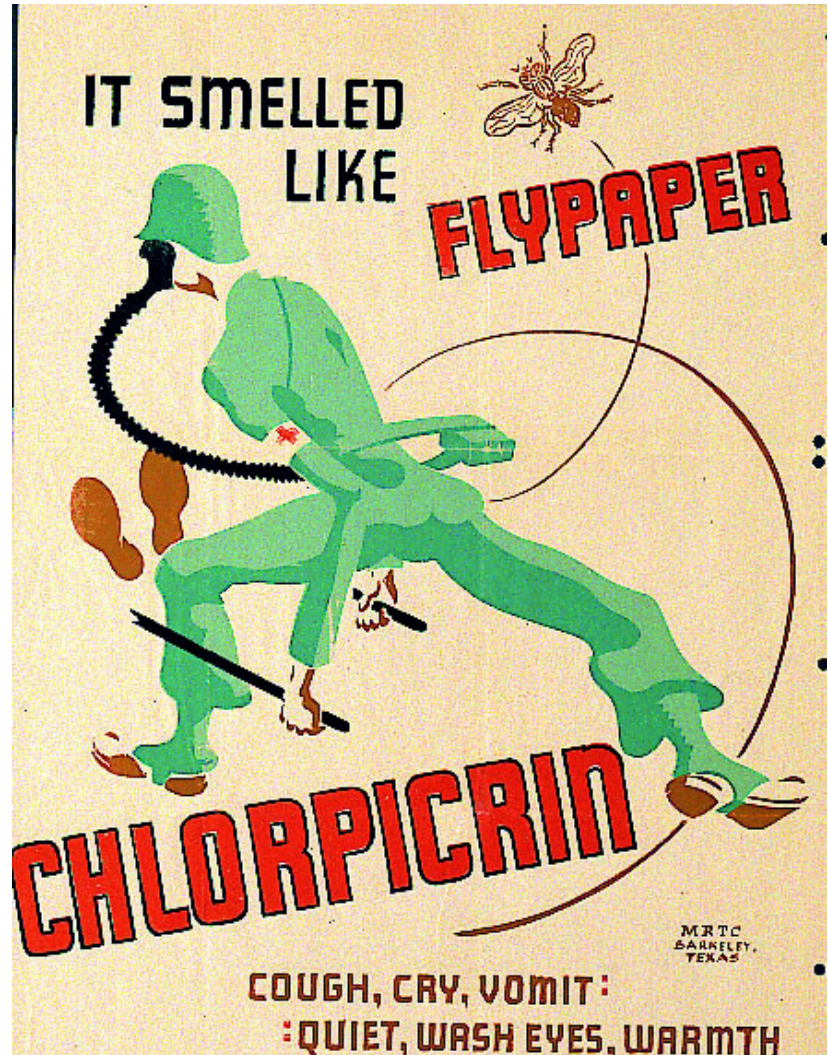
The deadline for [public comment](#) on the Bureau of Reclamation's Dam Raise EIS is **September 26**. Read the Friends of the River [factsheet](#) on their concerns with the DEIS. There will also be additional Bureau of Reclamation workshops at the beginning of September. See the [Friends of the River website](#) for more information.

BEC Signs On to Pesticide Reform Letter

The [Californians for Pesticide Reform](#) coalition sent a letter to the Department of Pesticide Regulation calling for stronger regulation on the cancer-causing pesticide **chloropicrin**. As a member of the Coalition,

BEC was proud to add our name to the letter.

Chloropicrin was originally used in **chemical warfare** , and currently is used to control pests in the soil for strawberries and other root crops. The chemical is produced by the reaction of combining nitromethane with sodium hypochlorite. Human physical reactions to exposure are weeping and vomiting.



Honestly, one feels like weeping and vomiting just writing about this stuff.

BEC continues to support the work of the Coalition, and advocate for least-harmful methods of pest control, both in agriculture and on our own **homes and gardens**.

Save the Date(s):

Wild & Scenic Film Festival 9/14

Bidwell Park & Chico Creeks Clean-Up 9/21

Oroville Salmon Festival 9/28

BEC Car-Free Day 10/6

BEC Anniversary Gala 10/19

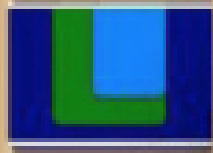
Thank you again for your continued support of BEC's efforts. Your

input or participation is always welcome. Simply reply to this email to tell me what's on your mind.

Hope to see you at our upcoming events. Together we can accomplish what is impossible alone.

Robyn DiFalco

Executive Director
Butte Environmental Council



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