

KFOI Radio - Shasta Environmental Alliance Program Aug. 31, 2018

David Ledger: Afternoon. My name is David Ledger, reporting today on KFOI Radio's Shasta Environmental Alliance Program. This is a weekly program that starts every Friday at 1:00 PM. Currently, the show is 15 minutes long, but next week we are going to have a half-hour section. With me today is Mauro Oliviera, the producer, but he'll be in the background adjusting the sound and also whatever he's doing over there at the controls.

Shasta Environmental Alliance is a nonprofit organization which has 14 supporting groups. You can see their website at ecoshasta.org. We now have a Facebook page that looks really professional. It was just launched a few days ago and it was designed by Stacey Alexander, who did an excellent job on it. She has a beautiful cover photo and she has photos of some of the events of our supporting organizations.

Environmental Analysis: Plastic Bag Ban Impact Data

David Ledger: Here's the question of the day: the plastic bag ban, is it doing any good? According to an article in EcoNews by Madison Peters, it is. EcoNews is the newspaper of the Arcata-based North Coast Environmental Center, or NEC.

Peters reports that the Coastal Cleanup Day in Humboldt County in 2017 found 72% less plastic bags than in 2010, and it accounted for less than 1 1/2% of the items of litter that they recovered. The city of Arcata banned plastic bags in 2014, contributing to the drop in plastic bag litter. The LA Times reports that a study of a 2017 coastal cleanup at Southern California state beaches found that these bags accounted for 3.1% of the litter collected, and that's down from 7.4% in 2010—a drop of about 60%.

The Coastal Cleanup in Humboldt County has been organized to pick up trash and litter on the beaches and bays of the county for almost 40 years, and the NEC has been organizing it since 1979. Last year, they had 600 volunteers participating in the cleanup. This year's event will be on September 15th, and so if you're in that area and want to participate, I'm sure it's a lot of fun.

A single-use plastic bag ban was passed in California in a referendum in 2016. The plastic bags now used in most stores are 2 1/2 mils thick and they are considered multiple-use bags; those are the thick bags that you can buy for ten cents and they are reusable for quite a few times. The other bags were 1/2 mil or less in thickness. Proposition 67 to ban plastic bags passed by 53% of the vote statewide. In Humboldt County, it passed by 60% of the vote, in San Francisco by 74%, and in Marin County by about the same margin. In Shasta County, the ban was badly defeated, getting only 35% of the vote, and in Modoc County only 27% of the people voted yes.

According to earthday.org, a number of municipalities and countries, including Kenya, Australia, Chile, the United Kingdom, and China have instituted plastic bag bans of varying degrees in their countries. The United Kingdom since 2015 has eliminated 80% of the plastic bags, and China eliminated 66% of the single-use bags. In China, there were so many of them floating around in the litter of the countryside, they called it the "White Snow." Wikipedia lists many countries in Africa and South America with bans on plastic bags. In the Indian state of Sikkim,

not only did they ban single-use plastic bags, they banned plastic drinking bottles in government meetings or functions and all polystyrene food containers for the entire state.

And these bans were instituted for many reasons. One, of course, is litter—a big item. They were found in fields and streams in many cities, clogging up storm drains. There are now huge islands of plastic and other trash found in various oceans of the world, such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, not to mention our rivers, lakes, and streams. When plastic sits in these floating islands, it begins to disintegrate into very small particles, which are then eaten by small plankton thinking that it is food. Just like mercury in seafood, the plastic moves up the food chain to where it accumulates in the food web. So now when you buy that can of tuna, not only are you getting a little bit of mercury, but also plastic.

Another reason that the bans were put in place was that plastic is deadly to animals of the sea if they eat the plastic thinking it is food. A fairly recent European Commission study on the impact of litter on the North Sea wildlife found that some 90% of the birds examined had plastic in their stomachs. Animals can also get tangled up in these plastic bags, or a fish can get caught inside and not get out. A pilot whale died near Thailand and an autopsy revealed 80 plastic bags in its stomach. From the pictures of the whale after the autopsy, they had the bags spread out on a table and they appeared to be 40-gallon or maybe 55-gallon bags, and they weighed 18 lbs in total. Thailand has only this year started to address their serious litter problem from plastic bags.

The plastic bag ban has been effective. Litter has been reduced worldwide, including our California coast. The problem is that bags take many years to disintegrate in the environment and the plastic doesn't go away, it just turns into smaller pieces. We have many more years of effort worldwide to further reduce the problem, including getting all countries on the bandwagon to ban these single-use plastic bags, but we're certainly making a start.

Upcoming Stewardship & Preservation Initiatives

Redding Community Creek Cleanup

- **Date/Time:** Saturday, October 6th from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM
- **Location:** Henderson Open Space (Behind the old Raley's on Hartnell Ave., along the Sacramento River, south of the Cypress Street Bridge on the east side of the river)
- **Activities:** Trash removal and invasive plant abatement.
- **Registration Website:** shastacreek.com (Under organizations, select "Other" and write in **Shasta Environmental Alliance**).
- **Required Gear:** Water bottle, heavy shoes, long pants, hat, sunscreen. (Gloves, buckets, tools, and safety goggles provided by the city).

David Ledger: Speaking of cleaning up plastic bags, the Redding Community Creek Cleanup of 2018 will be held Saturday, October 6th from 8:00 to noon. This annual cleanup is managed by Redding Community Services, and that's the Parks and Recreation Department. This year they're having the community cleanup at Henderson Open Space behind the old Raley's on Hartnell Ave. For those of you who are new to Redding, this is along the Sacramento River just south of the Cypress Street Bridge on the east side of the river.

Each year this event brings out hundreds of people. What they will be doing there will include picking up trash and also removing invasive plants. Now this area has had a massive invasive plant removal in years earlier, but you need to go back after several years and continue to clean up the plants that are growing. So bring your water bottle, heavy shoes, long pants, hat, and sunscreen. The city will provide gloves, buckets, garden tools, and safety goggles. You will have to register and sign a waiver. To register, you can go to shastacreek.com and that is Shasta Works plural when you sign in. When you sign in under organizations, please check "Other" and write in Shasta Environmental Alliance so we get the credit—unless, of course, there's a certain group you're involved with and want to give them credit. So this is a good time to do your part in helping to clean up our open space and get rid of invasive plants and also these despicable plastic bags.

Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve Profile & National Public Lands Day

- **Location:** 27 acres on the south side of Clear Creek Road, 7 miles west of Hwy. 273 at the Clear Creek Bridge.
- **Stewardship Event:** National Public Lands Day on Saturday, September 29th.
- **Activities:** Trail repair due to fire break bulldozer damage, litter/trash cleanup along the BLM Clear Creek Greenway.
- **Website:** horsetownclearcreekpreserve.org

David Ledger: Kind of related is the Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve. Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve is a nonprofit organization and it is a SEA supporter that we're featuring today. We also have a number of photos of their outings on our Facebook page.

The preserve is located on 27 acres of land on the south side of Clear Creek Road, 7 miles west of Hwy. 273 at the Clear Creek Bridge. Its name comes from an old mining town that used to exist on the opposite side of the creek called Horsetown. The Horsetown Preserve was founded in 1991 by Doctor Eugene Clark, a Redding dermatologist, and the start of this group had an interesting beginning. The land came up for sale and Doctor Clark mentioned it to a patient of his—that would be Leah McConnell, who founded the McConnell Foundation with her husband Carl. And she said that she would buy it for him and wrote a check to the Shasta Historical Society, who kept it in trust until the Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve was established and had a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, and then the title was transferred.

After establishing a board from 12 organizations, Dr. Clark started lobbying the Bureau of Land Management to restore the creek to its natural state from many decades of mining, both placer and dredge mining. And he wanted to bring back the salmon and also to see trails along the creek that the public could enjoy. Over the years, BLM did extensive restoration on the Clear Creek Corridor, leveling off the cobbles so that the creek wasn't channelized so it could wander naturally, providing more habitat for salmon. Considering that Whiskeytown Dam blocks a lot of the flow, this restoration did a lot of good. They planted hundreds, if not thousands, of willows, as well as riparian trees, and now migrating salmon and steelhead have returned to the creek. Western Shasta Conservation Resource District had the contract to plant the trees and shrubs.

The preserve has a great education program. They have every spring 10 educational field trips and 8 fall ones every year. And they have stuff like identifying plants or the ecology of the area, the insects that are in the stream. Someone leads one on birds, another person on butterflies, so they provide a lot of education to the public.

The Creek Fire, which was started by an arsonist earlier this year—and that's not the Carr Fire—has left the place needing a lot of trail work, primarily caused by damage of bulldozers cutting fire breaks. However, National Public Lands Day is on Saturday, September 29th, and they could list trail repair on the preserve, as well as litter and trash pickup on adjacent trails and the BLM Clear Creek Greenway. They expect about 50 people, and each person can choose which job they want to do. For instance, some people might want to do trail work and others might want something a little bit lighter and do litter pickup. Lisa Ross, secretary of Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve, said after a contentious start, they now have a great working relationship with BLM. They were nominated and awarded the Making a Difference Award by the Secretary of the Interior in 2016, and that's an award that was given only to eight recipients in the nation. And if you have more questions about the Horsetown Clear Creek Preserve, you can go to their website, horsetownclearcreekpreserve.org.

Upcoming Forums & Next Week Preview

Redding City Council Candidate Forum

- **Date/Time:** Monday, October 1st at 6:00 PM
- **Location:** First United Methodist Church (East and South Streets, Redding)
- **Sponsors:** Shasta Environmental Alliance, Whole Earth and Watershed Festival, KFOI Radio.

David Ledger: Now, I'd like to bring up something that's just kind of like breaking news only because I'm involved in it: the Redding City Council's candidate forum. The Shasta Environmental Alliance with co-sponsors Whole Earth Watershed Festival and KFOI Radio will be holding the candidates forum for Redding City Council candidates on Monday, October 1st at the First United Methodist Church at East and South St. in Redding at 6:00 PM. The forum will be based on the format of the League of Women Voters and we won't be endorsing any candidates. The only difference between this forum and other ones, such as maybe the chamber has, will be that it will be a different audience and different questions will be asked. Two years ago, California Native Plant Society had a similar forum with similar groups supporting it. We had about 200 people show up.

Next Week's Program Preview: BLM Timber Harvest Analysis

David Ledger: Now I want to tell you what next week's program is going to be about. Part of it will be questioning is the BLM converting its forest practices to clear-cuts. And we will be comparing two timber harvests or projects on BLM land near the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument. One was done in 2014 and one is proposed for 2018 to '19. The importance of this is to know what is happening. Are they changing their practices? Because BLM has a lot of land in

the area and there are environmental groups up in the Ashland area that are opposing this proposed sale of timber now.

Reminder: Rise for Climate

- **Date/Time:** Saturday, September 8th at 2:00 PM
- **Location:** First United Methodist Church (East and South Streets)
- **Speakers:** Doug Craig (local climate change activist), Chris Cooper (Channel 12 weather reporter), and Dan Sclan (Shasta College professor).

David Ledger: And then, just in the reminder, North State Rise for Climate will be having an event on September 8th at the First United Methodist Church, and that's at East and South St. starting at 2:00 PM. They have a number of great speakers and they're all going to be giving short talks, so you're not going to be bored by somebody droning on. Doug Craig, who is a noted local climate change activist, will be speaking, as well as Channel 12 weather reporter Chris Cooper, and Dan Sclan, a Shasta College professor.

Thank you very much. This has been KFOI's Shasta Environmental Alliance program.