

KFOI Radio - Shasta Environmental Alliance Program Sep. 7, 2018

David Ledger: Good 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 and this is the first time that the show has been 30 minutes, shall I say? Environmental Alliance is a nonprofit organization which has 14 supporting groups and you can see our website at ecoshasta.org and we have a Facebook page at facebook.com/shastaenvironmentalalliance.

Regional Trail Conditions Update

David Ledger: I'm going to start out with a few different stories and one is an update that I think a lot of people will be interested in and that is Redding trails. Many City of Redding trails and BLM trails are now open, according to a map released by Travis Meaney of Redding Community Services.

The Sacramento River Trail, of course, and the Buena Ventura Connector and trails on the West side of Keswick Dam and up to Shasta Dam are generally all closed. However, the Mule Ridge Complex, the West Side Trail Complex, and the Swayze Recreation Area trails are all open. But in various states of repair, some trails on the east side of Keswick Dam just north of Quartz Hill Rd. are open. All of Whiskeytown trails are closed except for a small trail at the visitor center parking lot which goes down to the lake. And this is a short trail, but it is actually a great trail if you wanna see some different native plants.

Here is part of a message that Travis sent to various trail groups, and I'm going to paraphrase what he said:

"These trails are open, referring to the City of Redding trails, but that does not mean they will be the same. For this reason, we have a few requests of you at this time. Please take great care to stay on the trail. This is crucial. Stepping off the trail or taking your mountain bike off the trail onto slopes can increase erosion. Please be cautious as some trails have changed and new lines created by bulldozers. Wayfinding signs may not be present in many areas so bring a map or know your route. Lastly, please be patient and respect the trail closures—they are for your safety. Use this time to explore new areas to ride if your favorite trail is closed."

International Vulture Awareness Day & Raptor Rescue

David Ledger: Now I've got something way off subject and that is International Vulture Awareness Day, and you might be wondering why I'm bringing that up, but International Vulture Awareness Day was last weekend and I just happened to see that on the Wintu Audubon website. And worldwide, various groups try to bring awareness to vultures and their importance in the ecosystem. Their website is at vultureday.org.

Now in California, we have two different species. The first one is a Turkey vulture, which many of you see soaring around gracefully riding on the thermals, or circling around closer to the ground looking for carrion or eating roadkill along our roadways. These birds weigh up to 5 lbs and have a wingspan of up to six feet. Yes, Turkey vultures do find their food by smell. This was

confirmed by Union Oil in 1938. To find leaks in their gas lines, they pumped in the strong-smelling organic chemical mercaptan, and when they found Turkey vultures circling over their gas lines, they knew they had a gas leak and where it was located. That chemical is released as carcasses decompose. One study of Turkey vultures found that it took three days for them to find 70 of 74 dead chickens, both in the open and those chickens that they hid. The older the chicken was, the faster it was found, regardless of whether it was hidden or not, but the vultures did prefer the fresh chickens.

The cousin of the Turkey vulture is the California Condor, which lives mainly in central California, although there is a population in Arizona, and it lives in the Coast Range of Central to Southern California. It has a wingspan of up to 9 1/2 feet. At one time, there were only 27 left. However, through capture and selective breeding, there are now 439 living condors—that's both captive and living in the wild. While still an endangered species, these beautiful and graceful birds in flight may look ugly when you see them on the ground, but they are an important part of the ecosystem. They eat all of the dead animals in our environment, reducing the stench of dying animals, cleaning up the quote "trash" and keeping down disease, according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Vultures appear to have excellent immune systems, which gives them the ability to feed on carcasses without contracting botulism, anthrax, cholera, or salmonella.

And that brings us to why our planned guest, Muriel Woodhouse of Battle Creek, which I mentioned last week, is not here with us today, as she also does Raptor rescue and rehabilitation. Now just the other day she took in an injured young Turkey vulture that was found in the middle of the road and also someone saw a bald eagle get hit by a semi-truck on the freeway. And so she has to watch those all day and just could not come down here to do an interview.

Now speaking of birds, Wintu Audubon will be holding a field trip at Shasta College on Saturday, October 13th at 8:00 AM. Meet in the north parking lot at the college. The reason I'm bringing up this particular field trip is Wintu Audubon does have a lot of field trips, usually two every month or more, and Shasta College is great to view birds because they're somewhat acclimated to people and they don't immediately fly away when a beginner like myself is still trying to locate it through binoculars. So expect to see a lot of woodpeckers, especially acorn woodpeckers, because the college is populated by many oak trees. For more information, call Linda Aldrich at 223-5341. Now, I've been on a birding trip with Linda before and she's very good because she speaks out the names of the birds loudly and you can hear and you remember what that bird is. Connie Word will also be assisting. While some people think of bird watchers as just interested in seeing birds and writing the bird down in their lifelong bird list, they are much more than that because they realize acutely the importance of the environment to the health and population of birds. They are not only avid birders, but avid environmentalists. For more information, go to their website at wintuaudubon.org.

Bureau of Land Management Forestry Practices & Interior Secretary Scrutiny

David Ledger: Now I'm going to go to something I briefly touched on last week, and unfortunately, I'm not going to be able to finish that story this week. And the question was, is BLM converting its forest practices to clear-cuts? The Cascade-Siskiyou Wildlands, which is an environmental organization in Oregon, and also the Rogue Valley Audubon, is claiming that a

proposed Bureau of Land Management timber sale near Ashland, OR is threatening habitat of the Great Grey Owl. An article in the latest issue of EcoNews titled "BLM targets ancient forests on public lands threatening owls" addressed this issue. The land in question is near Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument, which extends a little bit into California. It is called the Griffith Half Moons Bureau of Land Management timber sale.

Is the BLM changing its timber harvests from selective thinning to clear-cutting? I talked to Luke Brandy, a forester from Medford, OR—that would be the Medford OR BLM office—and he said the rules were established in 2016 during the Obama administration. It wasn't something new established during the Trump administration. However, Cascade-Siskiyou Wildlands claims that BLM is labeling a clear-cut as a regenerative sale, and so they say that in reality, the proposed sale is a clear-cut.

And a new story today that just came out on CNN states that Ryan Zinke, who is the Secretary of the Interior—which is over the Bureau of Land Management—that Zinke is holding secret private meetings with information kept from the public. Now I myself personally am speculating that Zinke is most likely meeting with special interests of mining, gas and oil exploration, logging, grazing, and real estate speculators. Here I'm going to read several sentences from the CNN story directly:

"Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke held nearly 50 official meetings in May and June that, in sharp contrast to previous months, were so vaguely described on his official calendar that the public is unable to tell what he was doing or with whom he was meeting. For example, on June 11th, according to his calendar, Zinke's morning consisted of a quote 'videotaping' and quote 'external meeting', then two back-to-back internal briefings, followed by an quote 'external meeting'. After a midday break, Zinke held an external call sandwiched between two quote 'external meetings' followed by another external call. The only names listed are those of the staffers."

"Hack and Squirt" Forestry Practices & Community Testimony

David Ledger: "Hack and Squirt"—this is a term applied to forestry practices employed by some logging companies when they have a timber harvest plan, which has to be approved by the California Board of Forestry. It usually requires leaving a certain number of oak trees, and these are usually black oaks on the clear-cuts. As oaks are an important source of food for many forest animals—squirrels, birds, deer, mice, voles, and sometimes even bears use the acorns as a source of food. And of course, that goes along the whole food web. Oak trees, perhaps three to five in a group, are left standing following a clear-cut to provide important habitat and food for animals.

However, oak trees take up space, nutrients, and water that could be used by conifers to make lumber. This is where Hack and Squirt comes in. Logging companies will send employees to the clear-cuts and hack a series of parallel cuts around the circumference of the tree. Then they will squirt a small pool of herbicide into each hacked cut. It will soon kill the oak tree and, of course, a source of food for animals. This also stops the oak tree, which has roots spreading well beyond their drip line, from taking water and nutrients that can be used by timber trees. When the oak trees fall, marketable timber, primarily Douglas fir and ponderosa pine, can move in. This practice is fairly common and is a legal loophole allowed by the California Board of Forestry.

A member of the Big Bend community group Forest Water Protection Alliance told me of a concern members of his group had. Now Big Bend, for those of you new to the area, is located north of Round Mountain just off of Hwy. 299. Now there is—or should I say was—a forest primarily of black oak trees on Hogback Mountain that was killed by the hack and squirt method to make way for planting conifers. Now I'm going to let someone who is here today, Maria Oliveira, give us a little bit of insight into that area.

Maria Oliveira: My name is Maria Oliveira and I'm the fiscal agent for the group in Big Bend. And years ago from my place in Montgomery Creek, looking to the West, we have beautiful rolling hills, always in green. And then there was this one that suddenly just got Gray. Over the period throughout the summer. And I called a good friend of mine who lived there forever and was in the logging industry when he was younger and is now an avid environmentalist because of the history around here and what he's experienced and seen with his own eyes over the years... is now a staunch environmentalist.

Well, anyway, he came over and he saw what I was seeing, so he said, "That's Hogback Mountain." So he went over there and he took pictures and he came back, and what we had now seen was an entirely Gray top of a mountain sticking out with all these other Green Mountains around it. And he came back with pictures of what was predominantly 4 cuts per tree—one in each direction—and a serious, deep wound where they were injecting something. And we later heard from one source—and we, you know, we weren't able to validate that source—but we heard that it was arsenic-based. And we did hear from many sources after that, though, that as the oak trees were dying, they would suck that poison up all the way into their leaves. And those leaves would drop on the ground and create a barrier around the leaf fall where nothing would grow. And no doubt the animals that depended on the acorns were well aware of that, you know, which would be the deer and the squirrel predominantly.

We learned from that that they were using this hack and squirt, and they've been doing it throughout the industry since, and now that is what they do in cuts everywhere. In Northern California, Sierra Pacific Industries is responsible for those hacking squirts.

I also want to mention too that we have seen many times the crews that go out and do the spraying. They go out in the morning with brand new looking, you know, vinyl clothing, and then by the end of the day, they're covered in it. And I'm also understanding that a lot of times they're using immigrant labor and they move them around very quickly. So they're in one area one day and then they're many, many miles away the next, so they're hard to keep track of—the squirting and the way that they use the glyphosate and other... I think they call it 2DD, 2D, or another spray that they use. Have you heard of that one? I think it might be 2,4-D.

David Ledger: That's it.

Maria Oliveira: 2,4-D, yeah, another serious poison. Those crews are running around, and we suspect that they're not as aware of what they're doing as they should be because the law says they have to be able to read the labels. So if they are not English-reading folk and the labels are not in Spanish, then we may have a serious violation. But again, we don't ever have the

opportunity to question them because they're moving them around so rapidly. It's easy to find timber crews, but it's so difficult to find a spray crew and any kind of data on that.

David Ledger: OK, on that sad note, let me bring up a little positive item, and I should say one thing. The reason I brought up the hack and squirt is because environmental companies talk a lot about how much they care about the environment, and they do care about the environment, but mainly to maximize timber production.

Upcoming Events & Announcements

Redding City Council Environmental Forum

- **Date/Time:** Monday, October 1st at 6:00 PM
- **Location:** First United Methodist Church (1825 East St., enter on South St. entrance, 1st floor social hall)
- **Sponsors:** Shasta Environmental Alliance, Whole Earth and Watershed Festival, KFOI Radio, Wintu Audubon, Trails and Bikeways Council of Greater Redding, Shasta Chapter of California Native Plant Society, Friends of Oregon Gulch, N-State Climate Action, Friends of the Redding Trails, Redding Parks and Trails Foundation, and others.

David Ledger: Moving on to something more positive. There is a Redding City Council's forum coming up and I mentioned that a bit last week, but it's really coming together and this important event is sponsored by Shasta Environmental Alliance and many other groups concerned about trails, parks and recreation, open space, riparian areas, climate change, and other environmental issues.

This forum will be similar to the ones that are conducted by the League of Women Voters or the Redding Chamber of Commerce, but no candidates will be favored or endorsed as most of the groups are nonprofits and cannot endorse candidates. The difference will be the audience and the questions asked. I organized one two years ago for the California Native Plant Society and with some of the same supporting organizations. We had about 200 people show up, so this is an important time to show up at this event and let the future leaders of Redding know that there is a large sector of the electorate that is concerned about the environment, not just supporters of real estate development and urban sprawl. For more information go to ecoshasta.org or e-mail us at ecoshasta@gmail.org.

Rise for Climate Action

- **Date/Time:** Saturday, September 8, 2018 (Tomorrow) from 2:00 PM to 3:30 PM
- **Location:** First United Methodist Church
- **Speakers/Performers:** Music by Greg Lawson; short talks by Doug Craig (climate change activist), Chris Cooper (Action News Channel 12 Meteorologist), Dan Scanlan (Shasta College Professor), and David Ledger.

David Ledger: Now here's something that's happening tomorrow. I hope you can make Rise for Climate Action. I mentioned this last time, but we've kind of finalized the program and this is a

worldwide event that many organizations and cities throughout the world are having to ask their government leaders to take serious action to reduce greenhouse gases. And this is also going to be held at the First United Methodist Church. So that is Saturday tomorrow from 2:00 to 3:30 PM. It'll be a fun event. We're going to keep it to an hour and a half so people aren't going to get bored or go to sleep on us. So if you can come to that tomorrow at 2:00, thank you.

California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Monthly Meeting

- **Date/Time:** Thursday, September 20th at 7:00 PM
- **Location:** United Way Building (2280 Benton Drive, near the Senior Citizen Center, Building B)
- **Topic:** California Pitcher Plant (*Darlingtonia californica*) conservation and ecology research presentation by Jamison Chilton, graduate student at Humboldt State University.

David Ledger: OK. Now I'd like to bring up the California Native Plant Society monthly meeting, which is coming up September 20th on a Thursday. And at that meeting there will be a specialist on California Pitcher Plant, or *Darlingtonia californica*, and Jamison Chilton, a grad student at Humboldt State University, will present his current research on *Darlingtonia* conservation and ecology. And for those of you that don't know, *Darlingtonia* or California pitcher plant is—that is a carnivore. Little flies and other insects get into the plant, they fall into a pool of water down there and they can't get out. They're eaten by other bugs that are down there. The bug that got stuck there is going to dissolve, and then the nitrates will go into the plant and it can use those nitrates. So the plant is not only remarkable for its carnivorous habit, but also as a representative of the fragile wetlands it inhabits. You can go to shastacnps.org for more information.

CNPS Field Trip: Plant Responses Following Fires

- **Date/Time:** Saturday, October 13th at 9:00 AM
- **Location:** Meet at the community room inside the Holiday Market (Placer St. and Buena Ventura Blvd.)

David Ledger: And now I'll throw a little pitch for a field trip that I am leading for the California Native Plant Society, and that is it's going to be on plant responses following fires. And that will be Saturday, October 13th. And we're going to meet at the community room in the Holiday shopping center—excuse me, inside the Holiday Market store. And I will give a short talk on how different chaparral plants respond to fire. And then we're going to go out afterwards and we're going to drive to several areas to see how different fires burn and how different plants are responding. Because plants, they're not all dead out there, they're still alive. Even though the top of it looks terrible, the plants are still alive.

CNPS Fall Native Plant Sale

- **Date/Time:** Saturday, October 20th starting at 9:00 AM
- **Location:** Shasta College Farm (Horticulture area)

- **Details:** Native plants at \$7.00 for one-gallon sizes. Contact 515-9247 or visit shastacnps.org.

David Ledger: One final pitch, California Native Plant Society is having a fall native plant sale Saturday, October 20th and that will be at the Shasta College Farm, and that's the horticulture area near the farms. And so that will be starting at 9:00 and prices are \$7.00 for the one-gallon size. And these are all native plants that grow well in this area. If you have any questions, you can call 515-9247 or go to the website shastacnps.org.