

Stewardship - Education - Advocacy

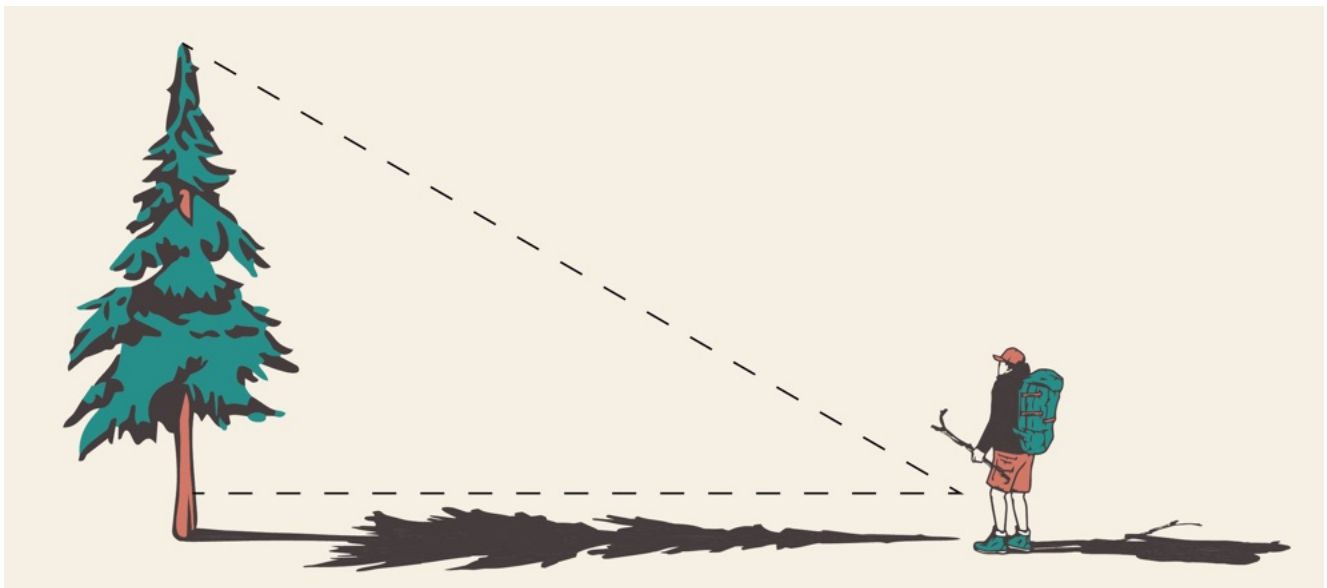


Follow Us!

August Newsletter

What's New

Forests As Classrooms



By Kat Camplin

Out in the Woods:

As kids head back to school this fall, we are reminded that learning doesn't have to stay inside four walls. Northern California's forests, creeks, and oak woodlands are full of opportunities to explore math, science, and ecology through hands-on activities. Whether you're an educator, parent, or community volunteer, these simple lessons can turn a walk outdoors into a memorable learning experience.

>How to Measure a Tree's Height with a Stick

Materials

- A straight stick about as long as your arm

Steps

1. Grip the stick at one end so the entire stick extends above your hand.
2. Hold the stick upright with your arm stretched straight out in front of you.
3. Walk backward until the top of the stick lines up with the top of the tree and your fist lines up with the bottom of the trunk.
4. Stop and pace off the distance from where you are standing back to the tree.

The Result

That distance is the approximate height of the tree.

How It Works

Your fist represents the base of the tree and the tip of the stick represents the top. You are shrinking the whole tree down to stick size and backing up until it fits.

>How to Measure a Tree's Height with Your Shadow

Materials

- Measuring tape or ruler

Steps

1. Measure the person's height.
2. Measure the person's shadow.
3. Measure the tree's shadow.
4. Divide the tree's shadow length by the person's shadow length.

Example

A student is 5 feet tall and has a 4-foot shadow. A tree casts a 60-foot shadow.

- $60 \div 4 = 15$
- $15 \times 5 \text{ feet} = 75 \text{ feet}$

The tree is approximately 75 feet tall.

Connecting Kids with Nature

Connecting classroom lessons to the environment gives students a chance to see how math and science apply beyond the chalkboard. By measuring trees, observing water, and comparing microclimates, students can also develop a deeper understanding of the natural world around them.

Get to Know Your Watershed

Species of the Month: Pacific poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*)



by Ren Redlich

I've never had a poison oak rash. The only plant that I've been able to identify on sight, since I was a toddler, is poison oak. I was raised in Shasta County, in a wild yard about an acre in size, and on the trails and parks of Whiskeytown Lake, Shasta Lake, and beyond. After playing outside, running down a trail, or petting our family dogs, it was always the same routine: get home, don't touch anything, strip down and dump all your clothes in the washing machine, grab the dish soap and take a shower. Shoutout to my mother, who had enough allergic reactions to poison oak to teach me how to avoid it.

Did this instill in me a healthy fear of an extremely common and pervasive shrub/vine? Fear, yes. Healthy? Maybe not... if you too feel distain or disgust for a plant (mostly) minding its business, come with me down this safe virtual tour of poison oak.

Poison oak... what's it good for? Well, if you're not a primate, it's good for food. The toxin, Urushiol, doesn't affect other species like it does humans. The rash results from an immune response where the toxin essentially cuts off communication from your skin cells, creating a reaction to a "foreign invader." Commonly used treatments for either poison oak contact or rash involve an emulsifier that basically bonds to the toxin, which can then be removed.

If you're lucky enough to be a deer or an insect, you might indulge on the leaves and stems of the poison oak plant. If you are a pollinator, the nectar of the greenish-whitish flowers might sustain you. The berries of this plant are feasted upon by many species of birds. While humans avoid the shrub as much as possible, other animals rely on this plant in times of need. On land that has been burned of its trees and plants, some species thrive and grow in this scorched environment. Among these, poison oak can be an important food source for wildlife that remains or returns after the fire. This also applies to landscapes that humans might have access to but avoid because of poison oak growth. If you ever think to yourself, "I want to go here but I can't because there's poison oak and now, I'm mad!" Just think about all the mammals, birds, and insects that are free to do and eat as they please in these spaces that are less frequented by humans. Poison oak thrives in disturbed spaces and allows the land to heal without human interference.

The best way to avoid poison oak is to learn to identify it. The common ID markers are: groups of three leaves on a single stem, round-tipped lobed leaves, green-ish white-ish berries in the summer and fall, no thorns on the stems. The leaves can be green, red, orange, and a mix of those. The leaves are often shiny, but not always. And in the winter, there are no

have someone point it out to you. The more you see it, the more you will recognize it.



A common look-alike is Fragrant Sumac, but note the differences

If you do happen to find yourself in a poison oak patch, there are options. There are name-brand ointments for treating poison oak rash, and even some for stopping the toxin before it affects your skin. But, if you want to try a more natural method and have a little time to concoct this in advance, you can make a poison oak rash remedy from native plants that often grow near poison oak. Soak acorns, manzanita bark or leaves, and mugwort in a jar with water; strain and keep cool in the fridge until needed. The tannins in these plants will draw the oils out of the skin in order to heal the rash. Obviously, this tincture isn't a replacement for medical care, and any rashes should be treated as needed by a medical professional.

I hope that this small detour through poison oak has taught you to pause and contemplate the purpose and ecological role that certain plants play, even if they don't get along with humans.

Upcoming Events

California Biodiversity Day



Hosted by Western Shasta RCD & Shasta Conservation Fund... Celebrate all of California's amazing living things together with crafts and activities, presentations by local organizations, and informational booths.

- Make a bird or bee house!
- Contribute cool observations to iNaturalist!
- Try your hand at becoming a pollinator!
- Learn how YOU can make a difference to protect the species that make our state so special.



California Biodiversity Day NATURE WALK & BIOBLITZ

Date: Sunday, September 13, 2026

Time: 9am to 11am

Where: Nur Pon Open Space -
2502 Henderson Road, Redding

September is right around the corner, so that means California Biodiversity Day is too! This celebratory week is set aside by the California Natural Resource Agency to increase awareness and promote conservation of our state's incredible diversity of the more-than-human life forms that share this land with us.

This is SEA's fourth year hosting a bioblitz for the iNaturalist project "Find 30 Species for CA Biodiversity Day" where we go to a local area and observe and document as many species of wild plants, animals, and

coastal waters by 2030, known as [30x30 California](#).

This activity is open to any level of nature knowledge. If you have curiosity for seeing what lives here and a camera or smart phone, you have the skills needed to participate!

How to join and prepare for the event:

- Register with this [FORM](#) and agree to the waiver. This puts you on our contact list so we can keep you updated in the event we need to make any changes.
- Download the [iNaturalist](#) app onto your phone and create your account.
- If you are new to iNaturalist, explore using the app and check out their [FAQs](#).

About Nur Pon Open Space:

Nur Pon is a public open space park managed by the City of Redding. It was formerly known as Henderson Open Space, but in 2021 was renamed Nur Pon, which means “salmon run” in Winnemem Wintu, in conjunction with the creation of a salmon spawning side channel. The trails are mostly flat with an abundance of shade, and the park features several views of the Sacramento River. Please note that while the park is an off-leash dog park, we kindly ask that with the exception of service animals, you leave your dogs at home, as they may scare off potential wildlife observations.

For any questions please contact juliet@ecoshasta.org





There Is No Planet B Book Club

August 23, 2026

Our exploration of Ayana Elizabeth Johnson's *What If We Get It Right?* wraps up with the last chapter on August 23 from 2:15pm-4pm! Now is the perfect time to jump in, as we'll be starting a new book next month.

Join us for conversations about what's possible, biophilia, nature as teacher, reworking food systems, design justice, and surely much more. To receive meeting details and additional resources please join our TINPB book club contact [list](#) or contact juliet@ecoshasta.org.

Is your Email view of the newsletter clipped?

[View the full message in your browser.](#)

Save the Date:
Redding City Council Candidate Forum
October 1, 2026 at Pilgrim Congregational Church



Image of the City of Redding Candidate Forum Hosted in 2024

candidates that best align with your values by hosting a forum for Redding City Council candidates. The forum will prioritize the candidates positions and feelings about the environmental and climate issues affecting our community. More details to come in our September newsletter.

Land Stewardship Recap

Adopt-A-Swim Beach Program

The Adopt-A-Swim Beach Program was created by Whiskeytown NRA this year, and Shasta Environmental Alliance was proud to participate! We were assigned to East Beach, one of the three designated "Swim Beaches" at the park. The program asked for a community group to clean its designated beach for at least one hour in each summer month: June, July, and August. We'd like to thank all our volunteers who showed up to care for their local area and steward the land they use and recreate on!

In June, we gathered 25 pounds of trash with the help of Community Volunteer Ambassador, Greta, and park ranger Abraham. In July, we really outdid ourselves by picking up 65 pounds of trash! Which hopefully made up for the cancelled clean-up date in August... as per policy, the event had to be cancelled due to poor air quality.

We look forward to getting our beaches sparkly and clean next summer, and we hope we'll see you there!

~To see what your local community is doing to clean up our streets and wild spaces, please visit and contribute to our [Community Cleanup Dashboard](#)





Volunteers: Laura, Ren & Juliet



Juliet Malik weighs one bag of collected trash to add to the total: 65lbs.

Be a Voice for the Environment

Do you care deeply about protecting our local environment and the wildlife, forests, rivers, and public lands that make it special? Join our board and help guide advocacy efforts that shape land use, conserve natural habitats, and preserve spaces for recreation and enjoyment. Bring your ideas, energy, and passion to make a real difference for the environment and your community.

Ready to get involved? [Fill out our interest form here.](#)

Join Us

Forward this Newsletter to a Friend



Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼



Environmental Alliance (SEA). All rights reserved. *|*

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)

[View in your browser](#)