



THE Highlander

May/June 2019

The Rural Bonny Doon Association Newsletter

HAWC Suing UCSC to Halt the Student Housing West Project

UCSC is once again being taken to court by community groups, this time over its plans to build a 150-bed dormitory for students with families, and a new child care center on the East Meadow, located on Hagar Drive at the bottom of the beloved and undeveloped Great Meadow.

On April 17, the local group called Habitat and Watershed Caretakers (HAWC), filed its suit in Superior Court to overturn the UC Regents' March 29 approval of the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project, which is part of the planned Student Housing West Project (SHW). SHW calls for adding 3,000 beds, with the great majority sited on the west side of the main campus, above Cave Gulch.

Separately, the East Meadow Action Committee (EMAC), a group of UCSC faculty, students, alumni, staff and community members that also opposes the proposed construction, has retained local land use attorney William Parkin and is expected to file a similar suit before the April 29 deadline, according to EMAC's Jim Clifford, a UCSC professor emeritus. EMAC has opposed the East Meadow construction from the time it was announced, on the grounds that it overturns a 50-year tradition of environmentally-conscious planning and UCSC's historical commitment to keeping the East Meadow natural. EMAC submitted a petition to the Regents signed by more than 50,000 people, mostly UCSC alumni and other people with ties to the campus.

The East Meadow development is also opposed by the UCSC faculty, the UCSC Foundation, the UCSC Alumni Association, and unanimously by the University's own Design Advisory Board, comprised of 15 prominent architects

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RBDA Public Meeting: History and Hiking in the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve

Wednesday May 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Bonny Doon Elementary School Multipurpose Room
Pine Flat & Ice Cream Grade

Please join us at the upcoming RBDA Public Meeting to learn about the history of the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve on Martin Road, the current status of trails and their use, the "Friends of the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve" community volunteer group and the role of the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, the owner, in Reserve maintenance and preservation. This will be an open forum among friends and neighbors to discuss the past, present and future of the Reserve.

Speakers will include:

Dave Jessen: Dave will provide historical background on Reserve property. He and his wife, Mary Nulph Jessen, were both raised in Bonny Doon and have lived in the middle of the Reserve for nearly 40 years, including before it was designated as a Reserve.

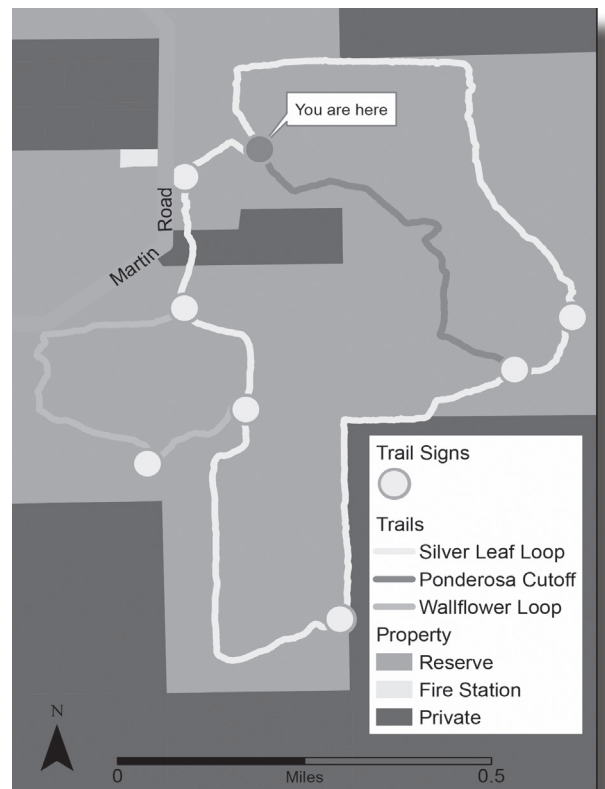
Dawn Mackey: Dawn will discuss volunteer efforts and challenges with the Friends of the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve. Dawn is a Bonny Doon resident of 48 years and one of the main organizers of Friends of the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve group.

Natalia Jessen Flechsig: Born and raised in Bonny Doon, Natalia grew up in the middle of what is now the Reserve and again lives in the middle of it with her family. She has an interest in local history and has been collecting Bonny Doon archives.

Julie Knight: (subject to availability) Bonny Doon resident and Reserve trail expert.

Interested in learning more or volunteering your time to help out at the Reserve? Sign up at the Friends of the Bonny Doon Ecological Reserve email list, by sending your address to BD EcoReserve@gmail.com.

Upcoming work days include two Thursdays, May 9 and May 23, from 10 a.m. to noon.



Preview of new trail signs being developed by the Friends of the BD Ecological Reserve group

PG&E Inspection of Substations Throughout Santa Cruz County is Underway

The RBDA was recently informed by Supervisor Ryan Coonerty's office that PG&E is currently inspecting seven substations in Santa Cruz County as part of their Community Wildfire Safety Program. They will be inspecting transmission structures, distribution poles and substations as additional precautionary measures following the 2017 and 2018 wildfires. This includes three substations in Bonny Doon, the Big Basin substation located along Empire Grade near the CA-Forestry and Fire Protection station, Burns substation near Vick and Empire Grade, and Crusher substation along Bonny Doon Road south of Smith Grade.

Inspections will be conducted through both ground and drone inspections, and by helicopters when needed. Part of their plan includes enhancing defensible space within 100 feet of these substations to help reduce the threat of wildfire and improve access for first responders in the event of a wildfire. This means removing any material that could serve as fuel for a wildfire, per CAL FIRE recommendations and state guidelines, including potentially removing or thinning out trees and brush, and evaluating the risk of fences that may be located along the perimeter of the substation with wooden material or slats.

We have been told that prior to any tree and brush trimming or removal, PG&E will conduct community outreach via neighborhood canvassing, calls or letters. PG&E says they will personally engage property owners to discuss and review the work should vegetation within

the defensible space parameters need removal. Property owner outreach is anticipated to occur about two weeks prior to a targeted start date. Broader community outreach will take place a few days before the vegetation work begins. Drone and helicopter inspections will only occur in the immediate vicinity of the substations, and customers will be notified via media alerts 2 days prior to any drone or helicopter inspections in the County.

Wildfire is one of the gravest threats facing our community, and we are fully in support of sensible measures to create defensible space where possible. In December 2018, Santa Cruz County submitted a formal comment on the rule-making process for Senate Bill (SB) 901, which will address wildfire safety and investor-owned utility wildfire management plans, including vegetation management. In their formal comment, the County strongly argued in favor of enhancing the safety of the distribution system, and criticized the focus on vegetation removal. Despite the County's strong advocacy for focusing efforts on hardening the distribution system, these current "inspections" still appear to have a heavy focus on enhanced vegetation management.

You can direct any questions or concerns to Anna Brooks, our contact at PG&E for Local Public Affairs at Anna.Brooks@pge.com. If you are finding PG&E to be unresponsive, then please escalate your concerns to Supervisor Coonerty's office at (831) 454-2200, ryan.coonerty@santacruzcounty.us.

CEMEX Plant Reuse Charade Continues

On April 16, the Board of Supervisors took another currently meaningless step in the ongoing struggle to repurpose the Davenport cement plant.

One major obstacle to redevelopment is that the Mexican international cement giant CEMEX, which closed the plant in 2010, still owns it and is responsible for cleaning it up after a century of cement production. This will cost millions of dollars, and, since the plant is such an insignificant part of the CEMEX empire, the company doesn't seem to be in too much of a hurry to unload it.

Despite this, the County, with help from private grants, commissioned an expensive study of what might possibly be developed at the site. Unfortunately, any redevelopment is estimated to cost upwards of \$100 million dollars, which would have to come from people who think that investment is worth their while. Davenport residents aren't keen on any of the proposed redevelopment plans, because they will forever alter the tiny town.

At the April 16 meeting, the Supervisors approved a mixed approach that includes lodging, camping, housing, event space and substantial "flex" space for light industrial or retail use. However, to achieve this vision, they need to rezone the property, which can't happen until CEMEX sells it and they secure the considerable funds required for an EIR.

Supervisor Ryan Coonerty says, "This is the beginning of the beginning." This will likely take years, if not decades, to get worked out. Meanwhile, the hulking, contaminated plant, with its massive tower, remains an eyesore on our beautiful North Coast.

Community Responds to Commercial "Bonny Doon Gathering" Music Festival

On Thursday March 21, the RBDA Board learned from a Facebook post on Slice that an organization calling itself Bonny View Entertainment was selling tickets to a two-day commercial music festival, "Bonny View Gathering," to be held Saturday-Sunday March 23-24. The advertisement for the event promised 32 music acts playing continuously all night, camping and food trucks, and it suggested attendees bring their own fire spinning gear for use only in the "designated fire performance zone." The advertisement explained that people who purchased tickets would be sent email the day before the event, telling them the address of the event. It's possible the organizers were trying to keep the event's location secret, because they did not have a permit from the County to hold a commercial music festival.

The Facebook thread had almost 200 posts, many by people concerned about noise and fire hazards. From past experience, the RBDA Board knew that commercial music events do require permits from the County — while private parties do not — so we sent a copy of the event advertisement to County Supervisor Ryan Coonerty and Sheriff Deputy Cesar De Santos. They both responded promptly the next morning, and Deputy De Santos drove up to investigate.

We don't have first-hand reports of what happened next, but we have tried to piece together reports from Deputy De Santos and from neighbors. We have been informed — but could not confirm — that the event was red-tagged, and that the residents held a private party instead of the commercial event. We received conflicting estimates of the party's size, but we are not aware of any complaints about noise.

Deputy De Santos sent the following information by email: "We received no complaints regarding the party to my knowledge. We will respond with appropriate resources in response to any reported incident, such as in this case. The best way to protect a neighborhood is for residents to be vigilant at all times and report any suspicious activity or issues of concern. They can take photos of suspicious people or license plates, if they feel safe to do so, and forward me the information. I can do follow-up and contact the registered owner if necessary. Please note that if immediate assistance is needed, they should call 911. For matters like this event, residents can reach out to me."

You can contact Deputy De Santos at 831-345-4961 (cell) or Cesar.desantos@santacruzcounty.us.

Lawsuit Aims to Halt UCSC Student Housing Project

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chosen by the University.

EMAC is specifically focused on the part of the SHW project slated for the East Meadow, while HAWC's suit has larger objectives. HAWC Chairman Don Stevens says that he strongly favors more student housing on campus, particularly in light of the housing crisis in Santa Cruz that has been greatly exacerbated by continual UCSC growth, but "...the Student Housing West Project opens the campus to piecemeal development and unanalyzed and unapproved growth beyond the current 19,500 student limit as part of UCSC's intention to add 10,000 more students." That additional enrollment is being studied as part of the new 2020-2040 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) that UCSC is working on.

HAWC also objects to the new public-private partnership model, known as P3, on which the SHW project is based. P3 is aimed at saving the UC system money by having private firms finance, design, construct, own, and manage dormitories on UC campuses for a profit. "This sets an ominous precedent by undermining UCSC's public values and the integrity of the entire UC system," Stevens says. EMAC and others have been critical of the proposed East Meadow buildings, calling them poorly designed, shoddy and cheap.

EMAC's Clifford calls the UC Regents "duplicitous" for hiding the details of the East Meadow project in the EIR, and failing to respond to objections raised in public meetings and in writing. HAWC's suit is broader, claiming that there were violations of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in the production of SHW EIR. CEQA requires that the environmental impacts of a project must be compared to a feasible alternative that accomplishes the same goals. "No alternatives were considered to shift some of the proposed student growth to other UC campuses that have adequate carrying capacities, including sufficient water supplies," says Stevens. "The Regents assume that UCSC must be expanded, and keep expanding, to accommodate more and more students on a campus that cannot support that growth." HAWC's attorney Stephan Volker contends that the EIR didn't even consider other sites on the UCSC campus for the East Meadow buildings.

Additionally, HAWC's suit charges that impacts to numerous sensitive and endangered species, including California red-legged frogs, western burrowing owls and golden eagles, were inadequately analyzed, that planned protections for these species is lacking, and that UCSC is attempting to evade the limitations on campus development set forth in the 2005-2020 LRDP and the 2008 Comprehensive Settlement Agreement (CSA). The CSA was created as a result of lawsuits brought by the City, County, and the community groups CLUE, the Coalition for Limiting University Expansion (Stevens was a co-founder) and the RBDA.

Several years ago, HAWC successfully sued to overturn the EIR for the City of Santa Cruz's application to the Local Agency Formation Commission to extend sewer and water service to the North Campus, which effectively ended (for the time being) UCSC's efforts to build nearly 3 million square feet of dormitories, labs, classrooms and offices there.

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RBDA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Yearly dues are \$20/pp or \$15/pp for multiple members at same address.

Memberships expire on Jan. 31 of the next year. *

Number of Members _____ Number of years you are joining or renewing for _____

Multiply years times number of memberships. Checks only, please, made out to RBDA.

Amount enclosed for dues: \$ _____

I also wish to support the RBDA with an additional contribution of \$ _____

Total amount of enclosed check \$ _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail Address(es) _____

I certify that I (we) live or own property in the Bonny Doon Planning District.

Clip out and mail to RBDA, P.O. Box 551, Felton, CA 95018.

Dues mostly go for
printing and mailing
The Highlander,
your voice for keeping
Bonny Doon rural
and natural.

Additional contributions
are gladly accepted and
greatly appreciated!

*Dues paid after Nov. 30
count toward the next year.



THE Highlander

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Bonny Doon's voice in preserving our special quality of life, The Highlander, is mailed free 6 times a year. RBDA Public Meetings are usually held the second Wednesdays of January, March, May, September and November. We encourage you to participate. Send correspondence to The Highlander at the above address.

Access the RBDA on the Internet at:

www.bonnydoon.got.net

E-mail us at:

board@rbda.us

Facebook (RBDA Members Only):

RBDA, Rural Bonny Doon Association

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ADVISORS: Ted Benhari and Marty Demare (former board members)

**Bonny Doon Resident
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

RBDA Public Meeting May 8: Past, Present, Future of the BD Ecological Reserve

Why I Serve - Kendra Turk-Kubo

I have lived in Santa Cruz County on and off (mostly on) for the past 25 years, but when my husband, daughter and I moved to Bonny Doon in 2016, I finally started putting down roots. This sense of home has everything to do with the extremely unique community of Bonny Doon. I loved living in the beautiful San Lorenzo Valley and the quirky town of Santa Cruz. But the rural and almost timeless feeling I experience here is something I quickly came to cherish. We feel fortunate to have been able to relocate our family to Bonny Doon.

Although it can be challenging to find the time, and it's not always easy or fun, I feel strongly about finding ways to serve the community. The RBDA has a rich history, which I continue to learn about despite having served on the board for nearly 2 years. In partnership with other organizations, activists and community members, it's clear to me that the RBDA has contributed in significant ways to preserving the rural and natural character of this small corner of the County. Without community involvement, its



Kendra Turk-Kubo,
RBDA Board Member, Highlander Editor
very likely that Bonny Doon would have been developed much like other areas that were once rural in Santa Cruz County. I serve with the RBDA to play a small role in preserving the state of this mountain community, for my daughter, and all of our future generations of "Battle Mountain" families.

Have You Renewed Your RBDA Membership?

Memberships expired January 31 so if you haven't renewed, please do so! You can find a membership form on page 3. Can't remember whether you are paid up or not? Call Jennifer Joslin at 831-419-7141 or email her at joslinjenn@gmail.com.

Supporting the RBDA isn't just good for us, it's good for you. The more members we have the more accurately we can represent you, and the more seriously public officials will consider our position on issues.

The RBDA is your community organization and your voice at the County Building for the many issues that affect us directly here in the Doon. Our volunteer Board members spend many hours working on the community's behalf.

Thank you in advance for your support! Almost all dues and donations go to publishing and mailing *The Highlander* and rent/insurance at the school for our public meetings.

The RBDA is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization, so donations are not tax deductible. We have that designation because it allows us to legally lobby for laws and regulations that are important to Bonny Doon.