



# Sierra Conservationist Newsletter

October 2024

## GreenWash Alert: Industrial-Scale Biofuel

**After a Decade of Problems** in North Carolina industrial-scale wood pellet production is planned for California. Golden State Natural Resources (GSNR) proposes two wood pellet manufacturing plants – in Tuolumne and Shasta Counties. Planned output is one million tons of wood pellets per year – requiring 1.5 to 2 million tons of forest feedstock. This would increase demand for wood production from state, national and corporate forests – from the Oregon border south throughout the Sierra Nevada, including Placer County.

These wood pellets will be shipped through the port of Stockton, to Asia to burn in converted coal-fired power plants.

GSNR says this will reduce forest fire risk by removing fuel build-up in healthy forests. We'll also hear it can provide good jobs in rural California and will be a "green" energy option like solar and wind.

North Carolina's experience has been very different—wood pellet manufacturing plants provide mostly low wage jobs, are frequently fined for violating air and water pollution standards and accelerate forest clearcuts. And biofuel incineration raises many questions:

- GSNR claims it reduces carbon dioxide that drives climate change. Burning wood pellets for electricity produces more CO<sub>2</sub> than burning coal, oil or gas. Compared to fossil fuels, up to twice the wood pellets must be burned to produce the same electricity.



- Forest fire reduction is claimed. We will be told that logging debris is used to produce the wood pellets. But in North Carolina 70-80% of pellet feedstock consists of whole trees from clearcuts. Post-logging debris that is left on the land is still quite high because it doesn't meet pellet production standards.

- Compared to furniture or plywood, pellets are a low value product – and only clearcutting can produce biofuel feedstock at the lowest possible cost. Even so, unprofitable North Carolina pellet production plants are in bankruptcy to avoid their financial obligations.

- After clearcutting, the land is tilled (like a farm), herbicide is broadcast to eliminate competing plants, 6 inch tall saplings are planted, and pesticide is sprayed over the approximate 50 year life of the plantation—until it is clearcut again.

- Short cycle clearcutting isn't sustainable. Industrial scale tree farms increase erosion and flooding, deplete soil fertility and provide little habitat or recreation. Compared to mature trees, young trees with small canopies provide little carbon sequestration to minimize climate change.

**Industrial-scale biomass incineration, and the intensive forest clearcuts that enable it, are not sustainable and only delay the crucial transition to truly renewable solar and wind.**



## Save the Date for **Pizza Palooza**

— Including —

Wildlife Photographer **Vishal Subramanian**

**October 24  
6 to 8pm**

**\$20 Donation**

**Old Town Pizza  
120 Church St.  
Roseville**



Visit: [sierraclub.org/mother-lode/placer](https://sierraclub.org/mother-lode/placer)

Email: [placersierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:placersierraclub@gmail.com)



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## Native Plants—Basis of Our Ecosystem

**PLACER COUNTY HAS MANY LOVELY PLACES** to hike and enjoy our native flora and fauna. But we can help nature by using native plants in our yards. Fall is the time of year when local nurseries are having native plant sales. Please check out these references, buy some native plants, and enjoy having more beneficial insects, butterflies, and birds in your yard, year after year.

<https://www.sacvalleycnps.org/gardening-resources/>

<https://chapters.cnps.org/redbud/plant-sale/>

<https://arboretum.ucdavis.edu/plant-sales>

There is a lot of construction going on in West Roseville and West Placer County. Wouldn't it be great if housing developments, commercial buildings, and city properties

used more native plants in their designs? Your involvement can help make this happen!

Our Placer Group and the California Native Plant Society are having discussions with Placer County and the City of Roseville to get more native plants into new housing developments and onto city properties.

**Your Involvement  
Can Help Make  
This Happen!**

We need your help to assist with this important project. Engaging in advocacy is a vital part of the Sierra Club's mission. Interested? Then please contact:

[placersierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:placersierraclub@gmail.com)

## Service Opportunities With Our Environmental Partners

**TAKE A BREAK FROM YOUR COMPUTER**, and go play in the dirt! Here are some opportunities to assist with creek cleanups, working with our local partner, the **Dry Creek Conservancy**:

**Sept 28, 2024**

9 am – 12 pm

**Secret Ravine**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/secret-ravine-adopt-a-creek-clean-up-event-sept-28-2024-tickets-1011392441017>

**Oct 19, 2024**

9 am – 12 pm

**Olympus Pointe Park**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/olympus-pointe-park-adopt-a-creek-clean-up-event-oct-19-2024-tickets-1011412320477>



**Nov 9, 2024**

9 am – 12 pm

**Royer / Saugstad Park**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/royer-saugstad-creek-cleanup-event-nov-9-2024-tickets-1011448859767>

**Also check out upcoming events** with the Roseville Urban Forest Foundation (RUFF):  
<https://rosevilletree.org/>

## Intern or Volunteer Opportunity

**PLACER GROUP SEEKS WEBSITE CURATOR** for <https://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/placer> while working remotely. The effort would not exceed a few

hours each month on a flexible time-line.

If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please contact: [placersierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:placersierraclub@gmail.com)

## Local Interfaith Environmental Group

**PLACER EARTH CARE ACTION** (PECA) is involved in a wide array of local environmental action and education projects, including several climate change initiatives. Their latest addition is a campaign called **Beaver Believers**—promoting habitat and species pro-

tections for our furry four legged engineers.

If you would like to learn more, please contact: [placersierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:placersierraclub@gmail.com)

Or visit PECA's very attractive website: <https://www.ppoft.org/peca/>

Visit: [sierraclub.org/mother-lode/placer](https://sierraclub.org/mother-lode/placer)

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## Friends Aiding Wildlife in Nature (FAWN)

**BECOME PART OF LOCAL RE-WILDING**—help FAWN remove derelict rural fencing that endangers our native large mammals and their young—like deer, bobcat, coyote, fox and puma.

FAWN actively identifies, and secures approval of will-

ing landowners—then organizes volunteer service days to remove fences that block, entrap, injure and kill.

Visit their website and scroll to the bottom to volunteer: <https://www.fawn4wildlife.org/>

Or email questions to [FAWN4wildlife@gmail.com](mailto:FAWN4wildlife@gmail.com)

## July's Pizza Palooza = 7 New Members!

**YES YOU CAN** have some more Old Town Pizza! And please have some salad too!

Great turnout at July's Pizza Palooza—where Jim Haufler (Friends of Auburn Ravine) shared how FOAR's decades long campaign returned Chinook salmon and Steelhead spawning runs to Auburn Creek. Jim's motto is **"Keep at it, and raise your expectations!"**

## Rocklin Farmer's Market

**On** September 28, Placer Group's Membership Chair Barry Grimm and Kerry Fantham staffed another Sierra Club booth at **Rocklin Farmer's Market**.

Emphasis was on recruiting new members, plus outreach to folks wanting help with a conservation issue.

Next up, a booth at **Granite Bay Farmer's Market**.

## 1200+ Acre Stormwater Retention Basin

**A LARGE SURGE BASIN** with earthen berms is being designed by the City of Roseville. It will buffer high flow events in Pleasant Grove Creek—caused by the city's 10-fold growth since 1970. Surge basin construction could begin in late 2025. The city will pay for the project, though the beneficiaries are all in rural areas downstream from Roseville's western city limits.

The project area is mostly fallow farm fields with a narrow riparian canopy (mostly Blue Oak) – often only 3 or 4 trees wide along the creek. On the north side of the creek are three contiguous parcels protected by conservation easements held by Placer Land Trust.

Your Placer Group has submitted a detailed proposal to add project design criteria that will protect existing habitat during construction, enhance habitat restoration after construction and integrate a nature center for school programs and families. Our proposal reasoned that for minor additional cost the residents of Roseville could also obtain some benefits. The city's Lead Project Engineer was quite receptive and, on September 10, Placer Group leadership gave him a tour of Effie Yeaw Nature Center on the lower American River in Carmichael, CA.

After a two hour walk, he returned to the office, seemingly impressed, and was subsequently provided with Placer Group's proposal with a three phase timeline for development of the proposed nature center.



**Pleasant Grove Creek**

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## Re-Wilding the Lincoln City Dump?

**PLACER GROUP IS COLLABORATING** with Friends of Auburn Ravine (FOAR) as they explore the possibility of turning the decommissioned and capped Lincoln city dump into a natural area—possibly with a nature center and trail connectivity along heavily forested Auburn Creek.

On July 16, Placer Group’s Chair Harry White, Alba Viera and Barry Grimm toured the site with FOAR’s Jim Haufler and Laura Peters. It’s a **Beautiful opportunity! Let’s do it!**

If you would like to learn more, please contact: [placersierraclub@gmail.com](mailto:placersierraclub@gmail.com).



## Day Hike to Angela, Flora, and Azalea Lakes

**TWENTY ONE ENTHUSIASTIC HIKERS** joined Placer Group’s Outings Co-Chairs Kathy Verrue-Slater and Trish Kness on July 20, for a moderately challenging hike near Donner Summit on a beautiful blue-sky Sierra day. The 4.7 mile Angela, Flora, and Azalea Lakes Loop Trail in Tahoe National Forest starts out on the Pacific Crest Trail. The PCT offers majestic views of granite peaks of the Sierra Crest and Donner Lake below.



The return portion of the loop follows the Donner Summit Trail alongside beautiful Angela, Flora, and Azalea Lakes. The hike started at approximately 7700 ft. elevation with a total elevation gain of 574 feet.

The group stopped to enjoy a snack at Flora Lake and a few took the opportunity to cool off in the water or to simply dangle their feet in the water. Some enjoyed experiencing small fish nibbling at their toes! Definitely not everyone’s cup of tea. The group observed a variety of wildflowers along the way including Tiger Lillys, Spirea, Dwarf Fireweed, and Indian Paintbrush. Come hike with us:

<https://www.meetup.com/sacramento-sierra-club/>

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