



THE

Highlander

May/June 2021

The Rural Bonny Doon Association Newsletter

Grassroots Emergency Communication in Bonny Doon

It looks like we're alone up here, folks. We know all know what it's like to wake up to the smell of smoke and no land line, internet or cell service. Such a scenario will happen again, and because corporate and public utility solutions to our disconnection are not forthcoming, some ingenious Dooners are solving our disconnection problem themselves. In that way we're not alone — we have fantastic neighbors. And those neighbors are organizing home-grown emergency communication networks.

If you attended the RBDA Public Meeting on March, you heard from some of the Dooners who are organizing emergency communication and resource pods. Thanks to Lizanne Jensen, Joan Frey, Dawn Mackey, Dana Powell Russell, Charlotte Milliner and Lisa Schallop for sharing the systems they have built in their slices of heaven.

These leaders are using homegrown ideas and also two established organizing systems - the Map Your Neighborhood model and the Firewise USA certification program. Map Your Neighborhood (mil.wa.gov/map-your-neighborhood) provides a template to connect and account for neighbors in an emergency as well as establish emergency planning practices. The Firewise certification

continued on page 3

Virtual Meeting Participation

Zoom (zoom.us) is a video conferencing platform that is free to use through either a web browser or application, and audio participation is possible through a dial-up connection on your phone. For this meeting, we will be utilizing all the available security features, including password-protection and waiting rooms managed by the host. Please send your e-mail address to meetings@rbda.us to receive the meeting credentials and password. Your email will not be used for any other communication and will not be shared.

RBDA Virtual Public Meeting Perspectives on Living in a Post-Fire Forest

Maya Khosla – Wildlife biologist, writer

Dr. Chad Hanson - Research ecologist

Wednesday, May 12, 7:30 p.m.

Zoom Video Conference Meeting

Please join us at the next RBDA public meeting for a discussion with two researchers with expertise in post-fire forest ecology about how to live responsibly in our post-fire landscape. We are also hoping for an update from the Third District Supervisor Ryan Coonerty's Chief of Staff, Rachel Dann, on the controversial post-fire removal of many of our trees under the guise of Phase II cleanup.

Maya Khosla is a wildlife biologist and writer. Field work grounds her writing: thousands of hours spent in untouched post-fire forests that grow full of life. She is currently working on a film about being fire-wise. Her books include: *All the Fires of Wind and Light*, poetry from Sixteen Rivers Press (2020 PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award); *Keel Bone*, poetry from Bear Star Press (Dorothy Brunsman Poetry Prize); and *Web of Water: Life in Redwood Creek* (Golden Gate Parks Conservancy). Sonoma County Conservation Council selected Maya as one of the 2020 Environmentalists of the Year. She served as the Poet Laureate of Sonoma County (2018-2020), organizing a series of filmed readings to bring Sonoma's communities together after the 2017 fires. Her poems have been featured in documentary films and in many journals.



Dr. Chad Hanson is a research ecologist and the director of the John Muir Project of Earth Island Institute, located in Big Bear City, California. He has a Ph.D. in ecology from the University of California at Davis, with a research focus on fire ecology in conifer forest ecosystems, and he is the co-editor and co-author of the 2015 book *The Ecological Importance of Mixed-Severity Fires: Nature's Phoenix*. He has published dozens of scientific studies and articles in peer-reviewed journals pertaining to forest and fire ecology, and

recently finished a second book, focusing on forest protection to mitigate climate change, and the myths about wildland fire that are impeding progress. Research

continued on page 3

UCSC's New Growth Plan Reveals Major Impacts on Bonny Doon

A new effort has gotten underway to limit UCSC's spread into the undeveloped North Campus, even as the fight to save the East Meadow at the campus's south end reaches a new stage.

The East Meadow Action Committee (EMAC, eastmeadowaction.org), which represents a group of present and former professors and students, is one of two groups fighting the University's efforts to build housing and a childcare facility for students with families at the lower end of the Great Meadow, the pristine stretch of grassland that rises from UCSC's Main Entrance to the arts complex a mile or so above. Also opposed to the development is the community group Habitat and Watershed Caretakers (HAWC), which has successfully defeated UCSC in court in recent years in two other cases involving university growth.

EMAC, represented by prominent Santa Cruz land use attorney Bill Parkin, won its argument in Santa Cruz Superior Court last year that the UC Regents had not properly supplied data to its building committee on the cost of locating the project on alternative sites. The Regents then supplied the construction cost data to the committee, it again approved the East Meadow site, and last month the Regents again rubber-stamped the East Meadow site. EMAC, backed by opinions from the great majority of UCSC's own Design Advisory Board and other architects and planners who have worked for UCSC, wants UCSC to build the project on the campus's already developed west side, where the university is also planning to construct additional student housing as part of its 3,000-bed Student Housing West (SHW) project. "There are far better ways forward for this project that do not include destruction of the East Meadow, and that would allow construction of student housing to begin quickly. The University's obstinacy is causing needless delay," EMAC said in a news release, adding that construction on the west campus site is an "environmentally responsible" alternative.

The HAWC suit, filed by Oakland attorney Stephan Volker, attacks the project in a different way. Its suit claims that the Regents' approval came only after UCSC Chancellor Cynthia Larive assured them that building on



the East Meadow site would be much cheaper and promised that student rents would come in 30% under market. Her promise has been met with a great deal of skepticism by HAWC and other community opponents of the project. Historically, UCSC buildings have been more expensive than those built in Santa Cruz by private developers, despite the fact that the University already owns the land and rents are higher than in town.

The SHW development, including the housing for students with families, is being constructed under UC's new partnership with private developers, which will own and manage the buildings. The design of the East Meadow project has been heavily criticized as cheap and ugly (the buildings will be pre-fabricated), which may allow it to fulfill Chancellor Larive's promise.

HAWC's original suit against the SHW project as a whole contends that it violates the still-in-effect Comprehensive Settlement Agreement of 2008, which brought to an end suits over UCSC's 2005-2020 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). The HAWC suit claims that SHW is aimed at growing enrollment beyond the 19,500 student limit set in the agreement.

UCSC is now in the midst of approving the Environmental Impact Report for its LRDP 2021-2040, which targets enrollment growth at 28,000 students. Much of the nearly five million square feet of proposed buildings under the plan will be built on the North Campus, in Bonny Doon. This has garnered a lot of opposition in both Santa Cruz and Bonny Doon.

The Board of Supervisors and the Santa

Cruz City Council have formed a Task Force to back their demands: that UCSC legally guarantee that all the student, faculty and staff growth called for in the new LRDP will be housed on campus; that the growth won't occur unless the infrastructure to support it is built "prior to or concurrent with enrollment"; that the Campus Natural Reserve will remain undeveloped in perpetuity; that construction will be minimized in the areas of highest biodiversity; that the strictest standards of greenhouse gas emissions and air quality will be adhered to; and, perhaps most importantly for safety and protection of the quality of life in Bonny Doon, that wildfire risk will be thoroughly analyzed and mitigated and that there will be no development on the North Campus, even if it means curtailing enrollment growth.

The Task Force (on whose advisory group the RBDA Board is represented) has begun circulating a petition containing those demands. To sign it, and the RBDA Board strongly encourages you to, go to www.actonucscgrowth.org/get-involved.

Call to Action: New Rules Proposed by the Board of Forestry May Impact Rebuilding for CZU Fire Victims

There are new rules being planned by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection that are not favorable to our community and may make it difficult to rebuild in certain locations. The rulemaking package entitled "State Minimum Fire Safe Regulations, 2021" was published April 23, 2021 in the California Regulatory Notice Register, triggering a public comment period that ends at the close of the public hearing on June 22, 2021.

You can view the 45-day Notice, Initial Statement of Reasons, and Rule Plead at the Board's Proposed Rule Packages, along with a link to register for the public hearing (Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 9:30 a.m.) on the RBDA website (rbda.us/hot-topics/).

Please make your voice heard by submitting comments and concerns to PublicComments@bof.ca.gov.

Grassroots Communication

continued from page 1

program (nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Wildfire/Firewise-USA) is a wildfire specific planning program that also establishes fire-hardening actions which will render your homes certified as defensible — allowing CalFire to understand which homes to invest resources in — even if they can't see your house from the road.

Emergency communication also requires some hardware, and Dawn Mackey spoke at the March RBDA Public meeting about what radios are best for communicating house to house in a power outage. Although any of us who have neighbors who are HAM radio enthusiasts became very grateful for HAM radios during the fire, there are other handheld radio communication solutions. Mackey recommends MURS Radios, which are affordable, don't require a license and are easy to use. Specifically, she recommends the BTechV-1 MURS radio as that model will allow us all to be on a shared frequency. You can buy this radio online for around \$60. Mackey made a training video for the MURS radio which can be found on the CERT website: santacruzcountycert.org. Of course MURS radios do not have the range of HAM radios and can only communicate house to house, so for best practices, the radios require organization and planning. Talk to your neighbors to find out who would like to invest in the system. Test your radios regularly, and practice using them with your neighbors at an agreed upon time, preferably once a week.

Please contact the RBDA (board@rbda.us) if you would like to meet directly with any of the other organizers

in Bonny Doon. Everyone who presented at the last public meeting has generously offered to be resources for others.

The RBDA has set up a website (rbda.us/grassroots-communications-system/) with links to resources to help you get started working with your neighbors to organize your own little slice of prepared heaven. It's very inspiring to hear how our neighbors have worked together. If you missed their stories, there is also a link to the Zoom meeting recording on our website.

And if you are frustrated by our lack of cell service in emergencies, please know you are not alone. Join our working group to help lobby public agencies and corporate providers to serve Bonny Doon. Contact Eric Ornas for more information (eornas@gmail.com).

Solving our emergency isolation is going to take both grassroots dedication and traditional old lobbying.

Post-Fire Perspectives

continued from page 1

by Dr. Hanson covers topics such as: natural post-fire forest regrowth and carbon sequestration; historical forests, carbon flux in wildland fires; current forest fire patterns and trends; fire history; habitat selection of rare wildlife species associated with habitat created by high-intensity fire; and adverse impacts to wildlife caused by logging. He became involved in forest conservation work after hiking the entire length of the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada in 1989 with his older brother, and seeing firsthand the devastation to forests caused by the commercial logging program on federal public lands.

Support Our Sponsors

FRANS LANTING STUDIO

Photography Workshops
108 High Road
Santa Cruz CA 95060
831-429-1331
www.lanting.com

LIGHTHOUSE REALTY & PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

Chris Trowbridge, DRE#02048989
Cave Gulch Family/5th Generation Local
831-566-9622
christopher.sc.homes@gmail.com

WE DRIVE DOONERS!

\$125 SFO, \$75 SJC
Airports & Personal Rides (4 ppl max)
Mimi 310-721-1464
Jackie 831-295-7239

MCHENRY VINEYARD

Estate Pinot Noir
Bonny Doon CA 95060
www.mchenryvineyard.com
530-756-3202

HEIDI E. HART, President, CEO

California Dreaming Real Estate
Local / Non-Corporate
myagentheidi@gmail.com
831-247-9410

BOYCE-ABEL ASSOCIATES & FAMILY LANDS CONSULTING

Helping Families with Land, Estate and Asset Transference Issues.
www.familylands.com
831-469-9223

Sponsorships:

\$100 a year (6 issues).
Send check and text to:
RBDA, P.O. Box 551
Felton, CA 95018

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) _____

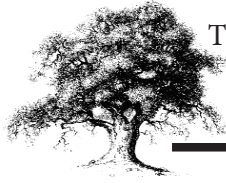
I certify that I (we) live or own property in the Bonny Doon Planning District.

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

Keeping Bonny Doon Rural and Natural since 1957

Prsrt Std
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #236
Santa Cruz, CA

The Rural Bonny Doon Association Newsletter P.O. Box 551 • Felton, CA 95018

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.rbda.us

E-mail us at:

board@rbda.us

Facebook (RBDA Members Only):

RBDA, Rural Bonny Doon Association

RBDA EXECUTIVE BOARD

CHAIR: Andy Davidson (650)862-2639

VICE CHAIR: Lisa Ortiz

TREASURER/MEMBERSHIP: Russell Kliegel (303)246-6197

RECORDING SECRETARY: David Rubin

CORRESPONDING SECRETARY: Martin Burmeister (831)600-8685

HIGHLANDER EDITOR: Kendra Turk-Kubo (626)379-7232

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

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

May 12 RBDA Virtual Public Meeting: Living in a Post-Fire Forest

Proposed Changes to California's Net Energy Metering Program Could Increase Cost of Solar for Homeowners

Dooners who have solar or are considering adding solar should know that the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is in the process of revising the state's Net Energy Metering (NEM) program for homeowners with renewable energy generation capacity. The changes to the program that are under consideration could have far reaching consequences for home based power generators.

The present version of the NEM program, NEM 2.0, was implemented in 2016. This program regulates what homeowners are charged and credited by the utilities for supplying power back to the grid. Presently, under NEM 2.0, the homeowner pays an initial one time interconnection fee and pays monthly fees like other non-power generating (regular) utility customers. Unlike regular customers, they pay for electricity supplied by the utility on a time of use basis: the cost of the electricity used varies depending on the time of day and what day of the year it is. The excess electricity that the homeowner generates (that is not used by the homeowner) is

exported to the grid and the homeowner gets a credit towards their monthly bill. Excess credits (i.e., if you generate more credits from selling your electricity than you spent on electricity you consumed) are allowed to accumulate throughout the year. At the end of the year, the utility pays you for the cumulative credits at a rate of about \$0.02 to \$0.03 per kWh generated.

The new NEM program, dubbed NEM-3, is presently under discussion and expected to be agreed on by December 31, 2021. It would go into effect in February 2022. Current proposals under consideration by the CPUC were put forth largely by the three large California utility companies (PG&E, SCE, SDG&E) and would potentially implement the following changes among others:

- Impose new grid maintenance charges in addition to the existing fees;
- Replace the annual accumulation of energy credits with a monthly payoff of excess credits instead;
- Align the exported electricity credits to be in-line with what the utilities pay for large scale renewable energy resources;

- Eliminate the 20-year grandfathering for existing customers;
- Reduce fixed solar installation charges for low-income households.

Depending on what changes to the NEM program are made, this could significantly increase the homeowner's costs for solar panels and would likely drive homeowners who do adopt solar panels to opt for home energy storage over exporting electricity to the grid. Furthermore, this may negatively impact people rebuilding after the CZU Wildfires, since California now requires newly constructed homes to have a solar photovoltaic system as an electricity source.

Dooners need to get involved in the NEM-3 proposal process and register their points of view with the CPUC. Our community needs to help shape the final form of the NEM-3 regulation and not leave it only to utilities and other corporations.

For more information on NEM-3, the latest updates and to contact the CPUC, please see the CPUC NEM-3 website at cpuc.ca.gov/nemrevisit/.