



THE

Highlander

March/April 2020

The Rural Bonny Doon Association Newsletter

RBDA Public Meeting: ***The Future of Communications Infrastructure in Bonny Doon***

Wednesday, March 11, 7:30 p.m.
Bonny Doon School Multipurpose Room
Pine Flat Road & Ice Cream Grade

The RBDA will be organizing a series of meetings over the next year to gather the community together to discuss the many critical issues surrounding the safety of our community. For the first meeting, we will gather a panel of experts to discuss communications infrastructure issues. Panel members will include:

Ryan Coonerty - County Supervisor, 3rd District

Maureen McCarty - District Director for Assemblymember Mark Stone

Kate Beck and Eileen Odell - Representatives from the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Public Advocate's office

Lennies Gutierrez - Director of External Affairs, South Bay and Southern Peninsula Areas, Comcast

Jeana Arnold - Local Public Affairs, Central Coast Division, PG&E

Maureen Cruzen - Municipal Engagement Specialist, Verizon

Alex Max Leupp - Executive Director, External and Government Affairs, Verizon

AT&T was invited and did not have any representatives available to participate, but said they are working on a cell plan for Bonny Doon, and will send details when it is farther along.

The 2018 Camp Fire was a wake-up call for all Californians. A great deal has changed since Bonny Doon was last threatened by the Martin (2008) and Lockheed (2009) fires. At that time, Bonny Doon residents had copper wire phone service and received reverse 911 phone calls in time to evacuate. The copper wire infrastructure was reliable and robust. During winter storms it was not uncommon for the power to go out for days, but the phones still worked. Today many people have only mobile phones and/or internet based voice over internet protocol (VOIP) phone service. As a result, during winter storms, it is now common to be without internet services for days even after power has been restored. In the past, a temporary loss of phone service was considered mostly an inconvenience. However, as traffic and the cost of housing has gotten worse, more people are choosing to live and work remotely, so a service loss can have severe economic consequences. Furthermore, with PG&E's public service power shutoff events, we are now contemplating a future where, during wildfire season, the only line of communication people have is vulnerable.

At our March public meeting we will discuss three main topics with an expert panel comprised of the different communication stakeholders, including internet service providers, traditional telecommunication providers, power utilities, and local government. First, how does the current communication infrastructure work—from our personal communication devices, to the network infrastructure outside our homes, to data centers operated by internet service providers and power utilities? Second, what can be done today to be better prepared as an individual, community, local government, and/or non-governmental stake holder? Third, what might the future of communication infrastructure in small rural communities look like, and what kind of infrastructure and technologies should we advocate?

Please join us, and bring all your neighbors, for this important discussion on communication infrastructure. We need your participation!

Public Access Plan for Cotoni-Coast Dairies Taking Shape

On Valentine's Day the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) gave us our first glimpse into their plan for public access to our local national monument. It's called a Resource Management Plan and Environmental Assessment (RMPA), and it outlines several scenarios, including hiking, biking, horseback riding, dog walking, camping and even enhancing populations of deer, quail, and turkey to promote hunting opportunities. It also describes what impacts from each activity may be expected on the monument's resources, wildlife, plants, streams and ponds, and archeological and paleological sites. Timbering, motorized vehicles and mining are prohibited. Stated goals also include minimizing conflicts with adjacent property owners and among user groups.

Local BLM Field Manager Ben Blom hopes to get the RMPA approved this summer and begin implementing it shortly thereafter. Remediation efforts within the central portion of Coast Dairies will be ongoing for the next 8 to 12 years, and the approved RMPA will be in effect for 15 to 20 years.

It's divided up into three alternatives, A, B and C. BLM doesn't identify an agency-preferred alternative; it will develop one following the draft public comment period, and may choose a preferred alternative that consists of elements from A, B and C. And it's all complicated by BLM's prediction that by 2050 global warming will increase temperatures sharply and rainfall a little, resulting in our area resembling the present mountain climate between Oxnard and San Diego.

A: BLM would develop two access points for day-use hiking and would continue guided tours. Trail-based recreation opportunities limited to day-use hiking on designated trails. Dogs on leashes allowed on designated trails.

B: Provides four access points (two year-round parking areas, one seasonal parking area, and one pedestrian/bicycle connection to the North Coast Rail Trail). BLM would work with partners to develop and manage a system of multiple use trails for pedestrians, equestrians and mountain bikes in part of the monument, and the rest would be

continued on page 2

Public Access Plan for Cotoni-Coast Dairies

continued from page 1

managed as core habitat areas for wildlife, with recreation access limited to guided tours. Hunting deer, boar, quail and turkeys, (currently prohibited everywhere in the County with some special exceptions), would be allowed in the area between Bonny Doon and Warrenella Roads, and managed through a program in partnership with the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. Camping would be allowed through a permit system. Trails will be phased in over time, and parking fees may be charged.

C: More and longer trails, five access points, dogs allowed off-leash in some places, hunting and camping permitted, but guided tours only in one section of the park.

Under all three alternatives, to minimize conflicts, some of the trails for bikers and equestrians will be separate. Furthermore, cattle and sheep grazing would be permitted in all alternatives — which BLM says helps significantly to control the many invasive plant species.

Even more ominous is the increased risk of wildfires, as the RMP says: “Once areas are open to the public, the chances of accidental ignition could increase. To deal with both fire and invasive plants BLM plans to apply herbicides. In Alternative C even helicopter spraying may be employed.

Cotoni-Coast Dairies is hardly a pristine property. The native Cotoni tribelet set periodic fires to manage the vegetation and clear land for farming. European settlers grazed their livestock, Americans clearcut the trees for timber and then the Swiss owners grazed their dairy cows there. In the last century it’s been almost free of human activity and wildlife has made a comeback, though several “Special Status” species are on the decline, and BLM is obligated by law to help them thrive. Thus they will take extra precautions to preserve and restore riparian areas by enhancing stream flows and ponds to help salmonids, Red-legged Frogs and others, and to protect and enhance habitat of federally listed species, including limiting public impact during breeding seasons and closing trails during wet weather.

Despite studies showing the negative impacts dogs have on wildlife, especially birds, BLM is thinking of allowing them, even off-leash. Their justification is that people like to hike with their dogs, and feel safer, so more people will come to the monument. This illustrates the basic paradox of BLM’s twin mission: preserving the environment and wildlife while fostering public recreation.

The RMP also states that: “Having sufficient resources to monitor the impacts of recreation adequately is challenging for all land managers. Even if researchers have a clear understanding of the threshold levels of recreational use that impact wildlife



Cotoni-Coast Dairies - Photo by Ted Benhari

adversely, it may still not be clear where or when recreational levels are exceeded.” This is alarming, since BLM predicts that there will be 50,000 (Alternative A), 150,000 (Alternative B) or 250,000 (Alternative C) annual visitors! The RMAP admits that “All three Alternatives are predicted to influence wildlife to shift daytime activities to nighttime activities to varying degrees.”

BLM will also try to identify and preserve cultural sites, with the help of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, which represents all the remaining Ohlone people, and will be on the lookout for fossils as it builds infrastructure to support public access.

One highly important resource, the viewsheds, will also be protected. Their preservation has been strongly supported by the Friends of the North Coast (FONC), which opposed monument status on the grounds that Cotoni-Coast Dairies was already protected by strong deed restrictions (the mineral rights, for example, were retained by the previous owner, the Trust for Public Lands) and that monument status would foster too much visitation. FONC pointed out to BLM that from certain vantage points a person gazing out from the park can see exactly the view that a Cotoni Indian did 600 years ago!

By our calculations BLM seems to be underestimating the number of parking spaces — 100 — it needs by nearly half. It assumes that each spot will be utilized by 6 cars a day and that the average vehicle will be occupied by 2.5 people. We think those numbers are high, but so may be the estimate of 250,000 annual visitors, mostly on the weekends. Furthermore, despite their assurance that protecting viewsheds is of critical importance, it should be noted

that they also propose a parking lot up on the second coastal terrace (Marina Ranch Gate) which would impact views, that would otherwise appear relatively undisturbed.

The RMPA admits “BLM was unable to quantify risks to transportation, emergency services, public health, or safety, from implementation of the range of alternatives, because there is no reliable data on visitor use for this unit of the CCNM due to the nature of the acquisition. Therefore, BLM’s evaluation of such impacts is based upon theoretical approaches or research methods.” [Italics added] We certainly hope those methods prove reliable!

Other, very important unknowns, are the natural and cultural resources Cotoni-Coast Dairies contains. The RMPA states that: “A reliable inventory will be necessary for the management of C-CD to clearly understand the significance and extent of the objects and values [the monument is] intended to protect. ...Therefore, the BLM will seek the partnerships and funding needed to undertake detailed characterizations of Monument resources.” As Joni Mitchell sang: “Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you got till it’s gone.”

The entire RMPA is available online, though it’s not easy to find: go to Blm.gov/office/central-coast-field-office, search for Cotoni-Coast Dairies Resource Management Plan, click on the top item and then on “Documents and Reports”, and then on the second item for the complete document, “BLM Cotoni-Coast Dairies Draft RMPA and EA Chapters, Combined”. You will also need to separately click on all the additional PDFs of the Appendixes.

Representatives from the Central Coast

continued on page 3

Community Gears Up for UCSC Growth Fight

The graduate student strike commotion is the most visible evidence of conflict at UCSC, but behind the scenes an even bigger battle is brewing over the university's mammoth growth plans.

Responding to the overwhelming support for Measure U, which called on UCSC to provide on-campus housing for all additional student growth, the City and County and community allies are preparing to resist the UC Regents' and UC Office of the President's target of 9,500 more students enrolled by 2040. The problems on campus are garnering increasing attention: dormitory overcrowding; the ever higher cost of housing and tuition; reduced faculty to student ratios, resulting in ever larger class sizes; difficulty enrolling in classes necessary for graduation; transportation woes; underpaid teaching assistants unable to afford housing; planned despoliation of the adored East Meadow to meet the demands of a private, for-profit construction firm; and increasing impacts on neighborhoods, rents and traffic.

To deal with the last the City and County have formed a joint task force, hired an advocate to give it agency, and martialed a committee of local citizens to advise it. The goal is to force UCSC not only to provide housing for all additional students and staff but to fully mitigate the growth's impacts on the community.

Cotoni-Coast Dairies

continued from page 2

BLM office will be presenting the RMPA at two public meetings, March 4 at Bonny Doon School, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., and the same times the next day, March 5, at Loudon Nelson Community Center, 301 Center St.

BLM will be accepting public comments on the plan up until March 19. There are several ways to comment: at the public meetings, online by clicking on the "Comment on Document" link, by email blm_ca_cotoni_coast_dairies@blm.gov, or by mail to BLM Central Coast Field Office, Attn: Cotoni-Coast Dairies RMPA/EA, 940 2nd Ave., Marina, CA 93933-6009.

Following the public comment period on the Draft RMPA, BLM will develop a final version, which the public will have 30 days to protest, and then yet another version will be approved. This version can also be appealed to the Dept. of the Interior Board of Land Appeals.

UCSC is planning to issue the draft of its new 2020-2040 Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP) this spring. When the final LRDP is approved, the current 2005-2020 LRDP will expire, and with it UCSC's legal obligation to mitigate the housing, traffic and water use impacts of its growth to 19,500 students. That growth was the target of City, County and community lawsuits that resulted in an historic settlement binding the university to house more students on campus and help the City address traffic and other infrastructure problems.

A major benefit of the settlement was unprecedented cooperation between the university and local authorities, and a marked improvement in "town-gown" relations. It would be very unfortunate if that cooperation disappears in another round of legal battles over UCSC's new growth plan.

Neither side seems to want this, but it may be unavoidable. Last year UCSC convened a Citizens' Advisory Group (including a representative of the RBDA) in hopes of avoiding litigation this time around, but for months it hasn't held a meeting as it grapples with the group's demands that all additional students, faculty and staff be housed on campus. Meanwhile, UCSC continues the process that will lead to another massive enrollment jump.

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

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

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

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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.

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*Dues paid after Nov. 30
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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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**Bonny Doon Resident
Santa Cruz, CA 95060**

Public Meeting Mar. 11: Communications Infrastructure in the Bonny Doon

New RBDA Board Member and Vice Chair

Lisa Allen Ortiz

Lisa Allen Ortiz was born and raised in rural Mendocino County and has lived in the Santa Cruz Mountains for 23 years. She has worked as a teacher and writer and is the author of three volumes of poetry including Guide to the Exhibit which received the 2016 Perugia Press Prize, and which explores the relationship between self and nature and what of nature and self a community chooses to save. She's a founding member of the Hive Poetry Collective and a counselor for Save the Redwoods League. She's been married to her husband Rafi for 26 years, and their two daughters are now in college. She spends a lot of time with her fruit trees and in her vegetable garden as well as running and riding her horse in the woods. She loves Bonny Doon and looks forward to serving the community and joining the effort to keep our home natural and rural.



Lisa Ortiz

Results from January Board Elections

Volunteers are still needed - Can you volunteer to be our Social Media Coordinator?

At our RBDA Annual Meeting on January 8 we held our Executive Board Officer elections. There were three seats whose terms had expired. Incumbent Board Members David Rubin (former Vice Chair and now Recording Secretary) and Kendra Turk-Kubo (*Highlander* Editor) were re-elected. J. Russell Kliegel's nomination for Treasurer was also approved. Lisa Ortiz was appointed as Vice Chair to fill the vacancy left by David Rubin at the February Executive Board Meeting. All seats on the RBDA Board are now full.

We are always accepting volunteer participation! We are currently looking for a Social Media Coordinator. Contact us as board@rbda.us.

Have You Renewed Your RBDA Membership? WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

ALL MEMBERSHIPS RENEW ON JANUARY 31. PLEASE USE THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED IN THE LAST HIGHLANDER OR SEND RENEWALS TO: Rural Bonny Doon Association, Box 551, Felton, California 95018

Individual membership: \$20/pp Two or more members at same address: \$15 each