

Yolano Group Election Results

Thanks to everyone who took the time to vote for Management Committee members in our recent election. Please welcome back Holly Bishop and Pam Nieberg. Also, give a big welcome to new Management Committee members, Carolyn Hinshaw and Ida Bryan. All are pleased to have the opportunity to work for the club and for all of you for the next two years. Continuing members are Bob Schneider, Marc Vayssières, and Don Mooney.

The Management Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month. You are invited to attend the meetings. Meeting locations are announced in the Davis Enterprise, or you can call Pam at 530-756-6856.

All the work done by the Yolano Group is volunteer effort. We can use your help wherever you feel you can fit in. **To volunteer, contact either Pam Nieberg at pnieberg@dcn.davis.ca.us or Holly Bishop at holly@hollytime.com.**

Thank you for your support.

Dixon Downs racetrack to bring regional gridlock and air pollution.

By Pam Nieberg

Imagine a huge horse racing track, with a 5,000 seat pavilion and grandstands for 1,800 more, right next to your quiet community. Imagine hundreds to thousands of patrons descending daily on this site for gambling, horse races or other events. The Dixon City Council is seriously considering just such a facility, the Dixon Downs Race Track, adjacent to the town of Dixon and just 6 miles from the city of Davis.

Dixon officials turned down a previous proposal for a race track about four years ago. Now, Magna Entertainment, the Canadian Company behind the original track proposal, has come forward with a new, larger project—a race track and training facility plus a large retail/commercial complex adjacent to the track. Because of promises of tax revenues from the retail complex, which was not part of the previous plan, Dixon officials are now seriously considering the Dixon Downs proposal.

Members of the Yolano Group who have been studying this issue have serious concerns about the proposal. This project would result in many adverse impacts on not only



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Care for God's Creation Conference

The Care for God's Creation Conference will be held this year on May 20, 2006 at the Davis Unitarian Church. This is an ecumenical conference to celebrate the wonder of God's creation and our responsibility for good stewardship.

Conference Chair, Reverend Sarah



Motley Fisher, encourages folks to sign up early as seating is limited. "It is an amazing creation, our planet earth. We need to treasure and steward it and

maintain that spiritual connection to the place in which we live," she added.

Julia Butterfly Hill will be the program headliner with key speakers from Jewish, Islam and Christian religions.

Registration forms are online at: www.careforgodscreation.net. For more information, or if you would like to help, call Reverend Sandy Motley Fisher at 530-753-2581 extension 225.

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the town of Dixon, but on surrounding communities, the environment, and the region. Severe traffic impacts, deterioration in air quality, degradation of quality of life for residents in near-by communities, and negative fiscal impacts are just a few of the problems that would result from approval of this project. The project would also irreversibly change the character of a quiet, semi-rural region dotted with small towns and cities.

Project Description

This proposal is for a 260 acre phased, mixed-use development including a thoroughbred horse racing and training facility that would also operate as a performance arts center (Phase 1) and a retail/commercial complex that would include a hotel/convention center and office space (Phase 2). The project would lie along Pedrick Road and I-80 adjacent to Dixon.

Phase 1 consists of two tracks—a 1 1/8 mile dirt track and a turf track varying in length from 7/8 to one mile—and a training facility with stables, barns, dining and temporary housing facilities for workers, and parking and service facilities. It includes an Entertainment Center—the three-story Finish Line Pavilion—with capacity for 5,000 patrons, that would provide simulcast technology for satellite wagering, live pari-mutual betting, a venue for staged events, and restaurant and bar facilities. Attached to the Pavilion would be an outdoor grandstand with seating for an additional 1,800 patrons. The project would include horse racing and non-horse racing events with attendance varying from up to 6,800 patrons (Tier 1 events) to events that could attract up to 50,000 attendees (Tier 3 events). Non-horse racing events would include concerts, athletic events, automobile/motorcycle events, dirt bike races, tractor pulls, social events, rallies, and others.

Phase 2 would not be constructed until after Phase 1 is operational and depends on future market demands for the addition of retail/commercial.

Transportation and Circulation

Implementation of this project will have significant adverse impacts on transportation and circulation both locally and regionally. Proposed uses will bring thousand of additional vehicles to the site. As a result, many intersections, road segments, and sections of I-80 will have their service levels reduced to “unacceptable” levels. The draft

Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) states that roads, interchanges and large sections of I-80 would have to be widened to accommodate the traffic. Traffic impacts would be



felt in surrounding communities and along I-80 to the east and west. Much of the attendance at the facility is expected to come from the greater Sacramento Region — heavily affecting sections of I-80 east of the project and across the causeway to Sacramento and beyond.

Pedrick Road/Road 98 would also experience substantial problems. Many other communities use this route in daily commutes. It is heavily used by the farming community and is a

major truck route. With the additional impacts from this project, traffic on this route would grow considerably, resulting in dangerous conditions that will be difficult and costly to mitigate.

There is a greater safety issue. I-80 is the major east-west route in northern California. With no funding available in the foreseeable future to mitigate for the substantial traffic impacts of this project, portions of I-80 will become gridlocked, producing a serious threat to security and safety. Unlike in the Bay Area, where surface streets can offer alternatives to travel on major free-ways, there would be few alternatives in this case. There are virtually no other significant routes for emergency vehicles and no other routes of evacuation in case of a catastrophic event. The safety study done for the project looked only at local impacts; it did not consider impacts on major freeway routes in the event of a catastrophic event or threat to homeland security.



Air Quality

Solano and Yolo County are already out of attainment for both federal and state standards for ozone and small particulates. Ozone is formed when reactive organic gases (ROGs) and nitrogen oxides (NOXs) undergo photochemical reactions in the presence of sunlight. Small particulates (PM10) come from diesel soot, dust, combustion, brakes and tires. Trucks and automobiles are the primary sources for these air pollutants. Ozone and small particulates enter the lungs and cause damage to the lining and small air sacs, leading to increased rates of asthma, chronic bronchitis, and cardiovascular

diseases. This project would add thousands of additional vehicles trips to this area, adding hundreds of pounds more of health-threatening pollutants to the air, and resulting in a

significant degradation of air quality. In addition, hundreds of diesel trucks will be moving into and out of the project to service the facility, to remove waste, and to transport horses, sending more pollution into the air. Even after mitigations proposed in the DEIR, addition of this project would result in significant adverse impacts on air quality.

A potential contributor to air pollution that was not considered in the DEIR is the production of ROG's from the urine and manure from more than 1400 horses that will be stabled on the site, year-round, as part of the training facility. The volatile solids from the manure from this number of horses could reach 14,000 pounds per day. Even if only a small percentage enters the atmosphere, the amount of pollution produced from the horse manure alone would significantly degrade air quality.

Fiscal Impacts

The project would also have negative fiscal consequences. Alleviating the traffic impacts from this project would require major changes and augmentations to existing traffic routes at a cost of hundreds of millions of dollars of public investments. Funding for this expansion would not be available for many years, if at all.

According to the fiscal analysis done for the project, there could be \$400 million less economic output with the track than with current zoning. Current zoning (commercial/light industrial) would generate 2,000 more jobs paying annually \$4,300 more than those provided by the Dixon Downs proposal. Compensation impacts with combined Phase I (the track and training facility) and Phase II (the retail complex) are half what development under current zoning would provide. It is impossible to predict what financial benefits might accrue from Phase 2, as there is no specific project to analyze at this point. However, regardless of any fiscal benefit from Phase 2, impacted communities and the State would still have to contend with the substantial adverse impacts, including significant infrastructure costs for major road and freeway widening and reconfiguration triggered by this project. The costs to human health and welfare are incalculable.

TAKE ACTION!

Yolano Group members are working with a group of Dixon residents, Dixon Citizens for Quality Growth, who are actively campaigning to defeat the Dixon Downs race track project. We could use your help.

Contact Dixon City Council members Steve Alexander, Loren Ferrero, Mike Smith, Gil Vega, and Mayor Mary Ann Courville by email at citycouncil@ci.dixon.ca.us. Their phone numbers are on the city website at www.ci.dixon.ca.us. Let them know how you feel about the track and that you are very concerned with the negative impacts from this project. Tell them they must listen to their constituents and their community when considering whether to approve this project.

Contact the Davis City Council also and let them know that Davis should be concerned with the possibility of a huge race track/entertainment center and all the attendant impacts just 6 miles from our city.

Davis City Council:

Ruth Asmundson rasmundson@cityofdavis.org
 Sue Greenwald suegreen@dcn.davis.ca.us
 Don Saylor dsaylor@cityofdavis.org
 Steve Souza sasouza@sbcglobal.net
 Ted Puntillo tedpuntillo@prodigy.net

For more information, visit the Dixon Citizens for Quality Growth website, www.dumpthedowns.org.



Photo: Kevin Walsh

It's time for America to get smart about energy and be less dependent on dwindling oil reserves. We need to increase our use of clean, renewable energy sources like wind and solar power.

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

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Sierra Club, P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322-2968



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Conservation updates: What's ahead in 2006

By Bob Schneider

The Bad and Ugly:

This year offers huge challenges on the national front as the Bush administration continues to wage its war on the environment attacking clean air and water quality. It supports bulldozing mountains into rivers for coal and pushes a disingenuous energy plan that includes continued efforts to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and refuses to discuss improved gas mileage standards. It encourages efforts to eviscerate the Endangered Species Act. The list is unending.

More recent are the attacks on our public lands, including Congressman Pombo's efforts to sell off the West to corporate friends. Sadly, the party of President Theodore Roosevelt is now rewriting our National Parks management documents to limit efforts to protect and preserves these special places. It is insidious.

But, good things are happening and we need to support them:

The Good:

I strongly urge our friends in the Republican Party to join REP America: Republicans for Environmental Protection. Their web site is www.repamerica.org. This national grassroots organization of Republicans for Environmental Protection represents the very best of the Republican Party in the tradition of Teddy Roosevelt.

Many in the faith community are awakening to the spiritual power that lays in working to protect the wonder of our world. Locally, Reverend Sarah Motley Fisher is the chair of the Care for God's Creation Conference. The website is www.careforgodscreation.net and she can be reached at 530-753-2581 extension 225. The conference is on May 20, 2006. If you are interested in helping your church's involvement in efforts to protect the environment, contact her.

Here is some specific information on Lake Berryessa, Thompson's Wilderness Bill, and Conaway Ranch.

Lake Berryessa:

The Lake Berryessa redevelopment plan Record of Decision is expected in March, although Pombo has asked for

more public comment and additional delay to benefit his friends and their private trailers.

But, it is time to get rid of the private trailer parks and open up the Lake to the general public. As the Napa Valley Register said in their editorial on February 5th, "They should be removed because they limit—rather than enhance—public use of this taxpayer resource."

Thompson's Wilderness Bill (HR233):

Congressman Mike Thompson's wilderness bill will permanently protect nearly 300,000 acres in northwestern California including 31,000 acres of Cache Creek wilderness. The Senate companion bill (S128) cosponsored by Senators Boxer and Feinstein unanimously passed the US Senate last year. This is the year to pass the bill in congress and enact this

legislation. Let Mike know you support his efforts. Check the California Wild Heritage Campaign website for updated information at www.californiawild.org.

Conaway Ranch:

It is rare for politicians to be so bold, but our Yolo County Supervisors have shown visionary leadership in their efforts to purchase Conaway Ranch for the people of Yolo County. Make no mistake. In 50 years the residents of Yolo County will thank them for this legacy purchase.

The current owners, a Sacramento developer group, bought the property knowing that the county had begun the eminent domain process. It is developers who own this property: not home owners or farmers. Developers do what they do, they develop. And, they pay big bucks to influence elections. This purchase is a developer wedge to leverage control in Yolo County.

Let us control our destiny.

Support our supervisors in this legacy purchase for open space, habitat, water supply, and our working landscape.

Take Action

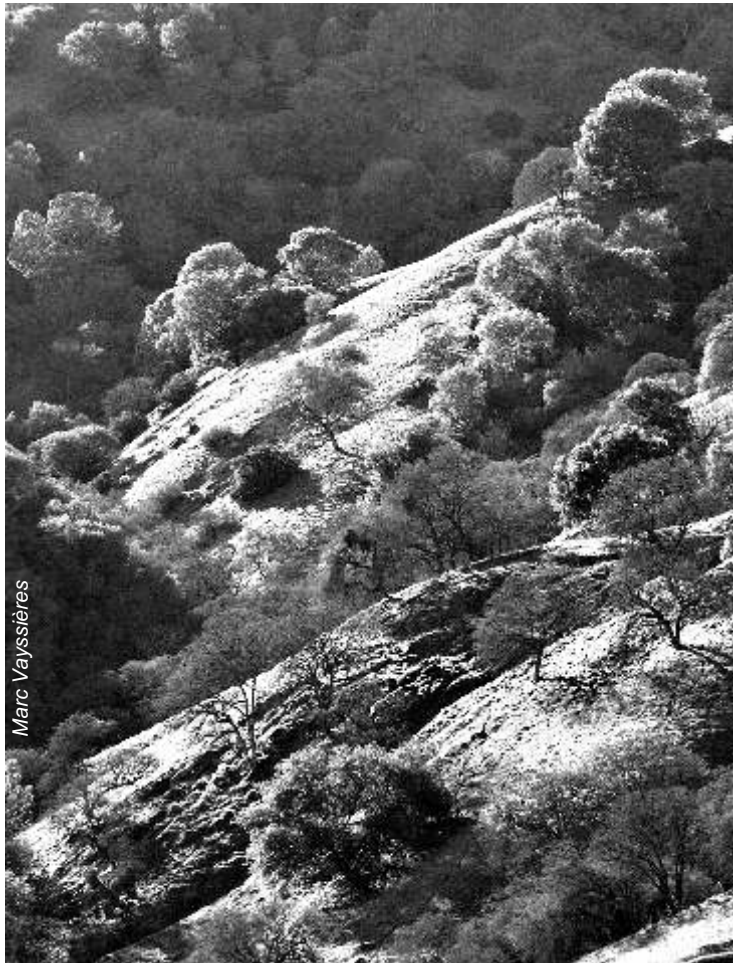
Write to:

✍ Frank Siefertman, Chair and Yolo County Supervisors, 625 Court, Woodland, CA 95695.

Send letters to the editor at:

✍ Debbie Davis, editor, Davis Enterprise, ddavis@davisenterprise.net

✍ Jim Smith, editor, Daily Democrat, jsmith@dailydemocrat.com. ☒



Marc Vayssières



Marc Vayssières

Sierra Club Outings

Led by local leaders

Mar. 25, Sat. Day Hike (2B) (Seniors)

Muir Woods, Coast Trail. Hike a loop trail through redwoods, uphill beside Redwood Creek, return by coastal route. Meet in Davis at 8:30 a.m. at the South Nugget Market parking lot, Mace Blvd. & Chiles Rd., south of I-80.

Have essentials, lunch & water. \$ for entrance fee or Golden Age Passport. Leader, *Sue Barnette (530-753-5855)*
sbarnett@dcn.davis.ca.us Rain cancels.

April 1, Sat. Day Hike (1A)

Annadel State Park. Enjoy a leisurely ramble through this lovely State Park near Santa Rosa. Bring lunch and water. Rain cancels. In Davis, meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Park & Ride at Mace Blvd. & I-80, behind Ikeda's.

Co-leaders, *Ida Bryan (530) 758-1807* and *Estelle Miller (916) 925-0700*.

Have \$\$\$ for car-pooling.

April 12, Wed. Historic Tour (1A)

Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site. Reservations are required on this one. Please call by Wed., April 5. Admission is free to this historic home and grounds. Have \$\$ for car pooling, water, and lunch if you wish to brown bag. Leaders, *Ida Bryan (530) 758-1807* and *Estelle Miller (916) 925-0700*.

April 29, Sat. Day Hike (1A) (Seniors)

Spenceville Wildlife Area. Wildflowers, oak woodlands, and waterfalls. Five miles, 400 feet elevation gain. Bring lunch, water, sturdy boots; long pants suggested (poison oak in area.) In Davis: meet at 8:15 a.m. at the Park and Ride near Ikeda's, Mace Blvd. exit off I-80. Limited to 15 hikers, so please contact leaders to reserve spot. Leaders: *Lin and Peter Lindert, (530) 758-6418* or *llindert@sbcglobal.net*. Rain cancels.



May 6, Sat. Day Hike (1A) (Seniors)

Coyote Ridge Trail, Bothe Napa State Park. Ferns, redwoods, oak forests, views of upper Napa Valley and poison oak on this moderate 5.5 mile hike with 950 feet elevation gain. Some steep, rocky parts. Wear sturdy boots and long slacks; bring lunch, water, snacks, \$6.00 for car entrance to park (\$5.00 seniors.)

Note: this is an all day outing; hikers must be in good physical condition. In Davis, meet at 8:30 a.m. at Park and Ride near Ikeda's at Mace Blvd. exit off I-80. Leaders: *Lin and Peter Lindert, (530) 758-6418* or *llindert@sbcglobal.net*. Rain cancels.

Other Outings

The Yolano Group is part of the Mother Lode Chapter. To find out about other Sierra Club outings, find them listed at: www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/ and click on "outings". There are outings for people of all ages and at all levels, including hiking, backpacking, kayaking, paddle trips, etc.

Yolano Group management committee

- ⊗ Pam Nieberg, Co-chair; pnieberg@dcn.davis.ca.us; 530-756-6856
- ⊗ Holly Bishop, Co-chair; holly@hollytime.com; 530-753-2773
- ⊗ Carolyn Hinshaw, Co-conservation chair; carolynhinshaw@sbcglobal.net; 530-757-2830
- ⊗ Bob Schneider, Co-conservation chair; verve@dcn.davis.ca.us; 530-758-4315
- ⊗ Ida Bryan; 530-758-1807
- ⊗ Don Mooney; dbmooney@dcn.davis.ca.us; 530-758-5433
- ⊗ Marc Vayssières; marcvc@dcn.davis.ca.us; 530-758-3969

The Management Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month. The public is invited to the meetings. Watch for announcements in the Enterprise for location or you can call Pam at 530-756-6856 for information or to get on our email list.

- ⊗ Treasurer: Marc Vayssières
- ⊗ Secretary: Pam Nieberg
- ⊗ Newsletter editor and webmaster: Marc Vayssières
- ⊗ Flame Distribution and membership: Ida Bryan

<http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/Yolano/>

Volunteers needed for Grasslands Park

The Yolano Group will soon be overseeing management and restoration of oak tree/grassland habitat in the dog park/oak tree area of the County's Grassland Park. The county is in the process of developing the 320 acre park into a grasslands/oak tree/vernal pool habitat plus areas for active and passive recreation, educational kiosks and tours. The Yolano Group will be working with the county to maintain the tree area and establish and maintain native grasses in the park.



Marc Vayssières

We will be mowing and hand-clearing weeds, mowing existing plantings of native grasses, and hand-clearing under the Valley Oak trees to prevent vole damage. We will also be preparing ground for native grass plantings in the oak area and around the park perimeter.

We need your help. The work will begin this spring. This is a wonderful opportunity to help develop an historic landscape of native grasses, oak woodland, and vernal pool habitats.

If you can volunteer to help or for more information, please contact Pam Nieberg, 530-756-6856 or pnieberg@dcn.davis.ca.us.

**Mother Lode Chapter, Sierra Club
Yolano Flame
P.O. Box 1335
Sacramento, CA. 95806**

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