

# Weekly ReCAP May 7, 2021



*Protecting our rural environment by promoting citizen participation in sustainable land use planning since 2006*

The Community Action Project (CAP) administers the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC), which is comprised of regional and local organizations, community groups, and concerned individuals who promote public participation in land use and resource planning to ensure a healthy human, natural, and economic environment now and in the future.

Learn more at

[www.calaverascap.com](http://www.calaverascap.com)

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## Join Us!

*Get a glimpse into what CPC membership is like by attending a meeting. There is no commitment, just show up and listen in!*

### **Next Calaveras Planning Coalition Meeting**

**June 7, 2021 3 P.M. - 5 P.M.**

### **New Members Welcome at CPC Meetings**

Organizations, groups, and individuals (known as associate members) may join the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC). Prospective members may attend two consecutive meetings before making a final decision on membership in the Coalition. The membership form is a pledge to support and advocate for the Coalition's eleven Land Use and Development Principles, which you will find on our website:

[www.calaverascap.com](http://www.calaverascap.com).

There is no membership fee. However, members are encouraged to donate to the Community Action Project/Calaveras Planning Coalition. Visitors and prospective members will, by necessity, be excluded from attorney/client privileged discussions.

If you are interested in membership, please email CPC Facilitator Tom Infusino, [tomi@volcano.net](mailto:tomi@volcano.net), to receive a membership form, agenda, and the Zoom meeting connection.

*To help prevent the spread of Covid-19 in our county, all CAP and CPC meetings will be held online via Zoom until restrictions are lifted by the Public Health Department.*

**Board of Supervisors Meeting  
May 11, 2021 - [Agenda](#)  
Planning Commission Meeting  
May 13, 2021 [Agenda](#)**

**Donate Now**

## California could get 600,000 acres of new federally protected wilderness

*Alex Wigglesworth / LA Times / May 3, 2021*

Legislation proposed by California's two senators would designate more than 583 miles of river in the state — including 45 miles of San Gabriel River tributaries, as well as Little Rock Creek — as "wild and scenic rivers," a protection that prohibits dams or new mining. (Carolyn Cole / Los Angeles Times) California could get 600,000 new acres of federally protected wilderness under legislation introduced in the U.S. Senate recently. The designation would ensure the lands remain free of development, vehicles and commercial activity.

In total, the package introduced by Sen. Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and co-sponsored by Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) would expand protections for more than 1 million acres of public land in the state, officials said.

“Our public lands and natural spaces are indeed our nation’s greatest treasures,” Padilla said Monday at a news conference at the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale. If the legislation is successful, the site will be the center of a new 50,000-acre national recreation area covering foothill areas of the San Gabriel Mountains and portions of the San Gabriel River and the Rio Hondo.<sup>44</sup>

“These lands are not just precious for their stunning scenery but also for their important biodiversity and the role that they play in keeping our environment strong and resilient,” Padilla said

The package, which consists of three bills approved by the U.S. House in February, would add more than 109,000 acres to San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and designate 30,000 acres of wilderness, roughly half of it in a region at its western end that was left out when then-President Obama designated the monument in 2014. It would also designate more than 583 miles of river — including 45 miles of San Gabriel River tributaries, as well as Little Rock Creek — as “wild and scenic rivers,” a protection that prohibits dams or new mining.

About 17 million people — or one in 20 Americans — live within a 90-minute drive of the San Gabriel Mountains, yet for many communities of color, such open-space areas remain inaccessible, said Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis.

“A staggering 82% of communities of color in the county lack green space and many suffer from air pollution, from asthma, childhood obesity and other ailments,” Solis said. “The San Gabriel Mountains make up 70% of L.A. County’s open space and offer a critical open space for all of these impacted communities.”

The additions to the protected lands will ensure these resources are expanded and preserved for generations to come, she said.

A Canada goose takes a drink at the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale. About 17 million people — or one in 20 Americans — live within a 90-minute drive of the San Gabriel Mountains. (Carolyn Cole / Los Angeles Times)The package of legislation would also designate as wilderness about 262,000 acres of public lands in northwest California and 288,000 acres of land in the Los Padres National Forest and Carrizo Plain National Monument, as well as establish a 400-mile-long Condor National Scenic Trail stretching from Los Angeles to Monterey County.

The legislation advances a goal endorsed by President Biden and supported by California Gov. Gavin Newsom to conserve 30% of the nation's lands and waters by 2030, said Wade Crowfoot, California's secretary for natural resources.

He noted that the protection of 1 million acres of California land equates to one out of every 100 acres in the state.

"Simply put, this is a big deal," he said.

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## Outdoor burning suspended in Calaveras, neighboring counties

*The Valley Springs News/ Press Release / May 5, 2021*

CalFire's Tuolumne-Calaveras Unit has suspended all burn permits for outdoor open residential burning within the State Responsibility Area of Tuolumne County, Calaveras County,

eastern Stanislaus County and eastern San Joaquin County as drought conditions continue to increase fire danger in the region.

This suspension began on Monday and bans all residential outdoor burning of landscape debris including branches and leaves for all residents.

Since Jan. 1 of this year, CalFire and firefighters across the state have responded to more than 1,354 wildfires that have burned nearly 2,219 acres.

"We are experiencing dry conditions and fire behavior that would normally be expected later in the season," said TCU Unit Chief Nick Casci. "Although debris burning is a useful tool to reduce flammable vegetation, the conditions we are experiencing in the Tuolumne- Calaveras Unit have reached the point where debris burning poses an unacceptable risk of starting an unwanted fire."

CalFire is asking residents to ensure that they are prepared for wildfires including maintaining a minimum of 100 feet of defensible space around every home.

Here are some tips to help prepare your home and property.

- Clear all dead or dying vegetation 100 feet around all structures.
- Landscape with fire resistant/ drought tolerant plants.
- Find alternative ways to dispose of landscape debris like chipping.

For additional information on preparing for and preventing wildfires, visit [www.ReadyForWildfire.org](http://www.ReadyForWildfire.org).

The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program is a Federal Communications Commission (FCC) program that provides a temporary discount on monthly broadband bills for qualifying low-income households.

**If your household is eligible, you can receive:**

- ☐ Up to a \$50/month discount on your broadband service and associated equipment rentals
- ☐ Up to a \$75/month discount if your household is on qualifying Tribal lands
- ☐ A one-time discount of up to \$100 for a laptop, tablet, or desktop computer (with a co-payment of more than \$10 but less than \$50)

Only one monthly service discount and one device discount is allowed per household.

The FCC has announced that consumers can begin applying for and enrolling in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program on May 12, 2021. The program will end when the fund runs out of money, or six months after the Department of Health and Human Services declares an end to the COVID-19 health emergency, whichever is sooner.

For more information: The Emergency Broadband Benefit Program ([getemergencybroadband.org](https://www.fcc.gov/efund))

**Conservation in California**  
*Your voice is needed!*

Let the great state of California know what Conservation means to you! In support of the 30x30 initiative to save 30% of our lands and waters by 2030, the state is seeking input from stakeholders about what **we** want conservation to look like in California.

[All you have to do is take the short 15 question survey found here!](#)

This process has incredible potential for protecting precious lands in California. How would YOU conserve 30% of California's lands by 2030?

**Effective Strategies so far include:**

Conservation Plans

Laws & Regulations

**Challenges include:**

Competing Land Uses

Resource Limitations

**Success Looks Like:**

Protecting Biodiversity

Resilience to Climate Change

Supporting rural economies

Reducing risks to people and places



Prioritizing Grassland, Forests and Shrubland

**Challenges to Climate Smart in CA:**

Croplands (inefficient water use high consumption)

Forests and Shrublands (burning)

Policy, Public investments, private investments

[You can view the action alert here for more details, including CAP's priorities for conservation through the 30x30 initiative.](#)

## Editorial: There is no drought

*The Times Editorial Board /May 6, 2021*

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a drought emergency last month in Sonoma and Mendocino counties because of severe drop-offs in the winter rains that once had been counted on to fill reservoirs in the Russian River watershed, north of the San Francisco Bay Area. Like most other California reservoirs, those human-made lakes were built in the 20th century, an unusually wet period when compared with more than a thousand years of climate records reconstructed from studies of ancient tree rings and geological evidence.

The two formerly verdant counties were among the state's hardest-hit regions in last year's record-setting wildfire season that included the August Complex fires, which erupted not just because of years of intensifying summer heat drying out the trees

and the ground beneath them but also, ironically, because of fierce summer storms and accompanying lightning. The August Complex followed the 2019 Kincadee fire, which burned much of Sonoma County, and the 2018 Mendocino Complex fires, which at the time made up the state's largest recorded wildfire incident. Before that was the 2017 Tubbs fire, which destroyed significant portions of Santa Rosa — following California's wettest year on record. So much rain fell that winter that the ground could not absorb it all, yet the summer was so hot that it desiccated the forests.

Average out the sporadic flood years with the succession of dry ones and the numbers will tell you that California is getting as much precipitation as ever. There is no drought — not if drought means a decrease in total rainfall.

But we legislated and plumbed this state for a different climate pattern, when annual winter rains reliably fell on Sonoma and points north, and a full Sierra snowpack reliably melted through the spring and summer to feed streams and irrigate orchards and farm fields. That era is long gone. The snowpack comes unpredictably, because a warmer climate means water that formerly stayed in the mountains as snow through the summer now melts sooner, or falls as rain and rushes westward to the sea in the winter, when we need it the least. A quick look at any satellite photo from a heavy-snow year reveals that no number of new dams could ever replace the snowpack's formerly reliable volume.

More 20th century infrastructure, lawmaking and emergency declarations won't get us through this drought — because this is no drought.

Droughts come for a year, or two, or even 10 — and then end. Seasonal crops are fallowed, lawns are ripped out, car washing stops — and then life, lawns, crops and car washing all return to the way they were before.

That's not what we've got. Drought does not erase the coastal fog that once was commonplace in the Bay Area, or suck all moisture from the ground even after flood winters the way it has done not just in Sonoma and Mendocino but also in Topanga, Malibu and the Santa Susana Mountains, as was the case before 2018's Woolsey fire. Droughts are deviations from the norm. What we have now is no deviation. It is the norm itself. Our climate has changed. As much water falls from the sky as before, but at different times and in different ways.

A drought declaration suspends existing rules governing storage, transport and quality of water, but the details matter. In Sonoma and Mendocino, Newsom's declaration means more water can be kept in reservoirs instead of being delivered to farmers who grow wine grapes and other crops. But Central Valley lawmakers are hopping mad that the governor didn't declare drought statewide, because they want the rules bent to allow the opposite — more water from reservoirs to grow their crops, less for urban residents and migrating fish.

They argue that an emergency order will help with "this challenging, but temporary, situation," and that in the meantime, some of California's unexpected billions in revenue should be used to keep agricultural operations going through the "drought."

But no — this is no drought, there is no “temporary” situation, and one-time money should not be spent to keep operations at unsustainable former levels. Money spent on programs or infrastructure that does not reflect new climate patterns or help water users adapt to them is money wasted.

More agricultural acreage should be fallowed, and less water diverted from dried-out rivers and streams for unsustainable vineyards and orchards. Floodplains should be restored, so that in wet winters the excess water that once might have been frozen on mountainsides but now rushes downhill as flash floods can gather, settle and seep into the ground over the dry springs, summers and falls, and in the meantime sustain birds and spawning fish whose ancient marshes and wetlands we have drained. Urban areas, once they use their water, must purify it and use it again, because imports from distant places will be less certain, and it is foolish to keep flushing all that useful water away.

Yet we still need linkages among California’s many regions. That’s one lesson from Sonoma and Mendocino, which have no water connections to wetter areas, and Los Angeles, which does. Some transfers must be actual water, but many can be on paper — transfers of contractual water rights, for example.

There is no drought. That phrase is sometimes used to deny the epic and obvious change in our climate patterns, but that’s all wrong. Just as there is no temporary drought in the Sahara, where heat and dryness punctuated by flash flooding is the norm, there is no temporary drought in California. The years of steady and predictable water flow are over, and there is no sign of them coming back in our lifetimes. This is it. We have to build, and

grow, and legislate, and consume for the world as it is, not as we may remember it.

This story originally appeared in Los Angeles Times.

## ***Did you know ...***

CEQA, or the California Environmental Quality Act, is a statute that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.

The impetus for CEQA can be traced to the passage of the first federal environmental protection statute in 1969, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In response to this federal law, the California State Assembly created the Assembly Select Committee on Environmental Quality to study the possibility of supplementing NEPA through state law. This legislative committee, in 1970, issued a report entitled The Environmental Bill of Rights, which called for a California counterpart to NEPA. Later that same year, acting on the recommendations of the select committee, the legislature passed, and Governor Reagan signed, the CEQA statute.

CEQA is a self-executing statute. Public agencies are entrusted with compliance with CEQA and **its provisions are enforced, as necessary, by the public through litigation and the threat thereof**. While the Resources Agency is charged with the adoption of CEQA Guidelines, and may often assist public agencies in the interpretation of CEQA, it is each public agency's duty to determine what is and is not subject to CEQA. As such, the Resources Agency does not review the facts and exercise of

discretion by public agencies in individual situations. In sum, the Agency does not enforce CEQA, nor does it review for compliance with CEQA the many state and local agency actions which are subject to CEQA.

For more information see "Frequently Asked Questions About CEQA" on the California NaturalResources website: [CEQA \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ceqa.ca.gov/).

## Biden's plan would boost conservation of US lands, waters

*MATTHEW DALY / AP / May 6, 2021*

The Biden administration on Thursday detailed steps to achieve an ambitious goal to conserve nearly one-third of America's lands and waters by 2030, relying on voluntary efforts to preserve public, private and tribal areas while also helping tackle climate change and create jobs.

A report, with the lofty title "America the Beautiful," calls for a decade-long commitment on projects nationwide to make the conservation and restoration of lands and waters an urgent priority. The plan would purify drinking water, increase green space, improve access to outdoor recreation, restore healthy fisheries, reduce the risk of wildfires and recognize the "oversized contributions" of farmers, ranchers, forest owners, fishers, hunters, rural communities and tribal nations.

In the process, the effort will produce thousands of new jobs and a stronger economy while also addressing climate change and

environmental justice, including expanded access by disadvantaged communities to the outdoors, the report said.

President Joe Biden has set a goal of conserving at least 30% of U.S. lands and waters by 2030. If successful, the plan will help slow global warming and preserve some of the nation's most scenic lands for future generations of Americans, the report said.

About 12% of the nation's lands and 25% of its waters are currently protected, according to research by the Center for American Progress, a left-leaning think tank. Those protected areas include not just parks but also wilderness areas, game refuges, agricultural lands, forests, ranches and other sites with conservation easements.

The plan released Thursday recommends a series of actions, including expansion of a federal grant program to create local parks, especially in cities and other "nature-deprived communities." The report also suggests grants for Native American tribes to support tribal conservation priorities; expansion of fish and wildlife habitats and corridors; increased access for outdoor recreation; and creation of a "civilian climate corps" to work on conservation and restoration projects nationwide.

The plan follows through on a Biden campaign promise and builds on the , a 2020 law passed by Congress that authorizes nearly \$3 billion for conservation projects, outdoor recreation and maintenance of national parks and other public lands. Great American Outdoors Act Supporters call the law the most significant conservation statute in nearly half a century. It

provides dedicated annual funding for parks and open space projects across the country.

Even with that injection of federal dollars, the Biden plan relies heavily on voluntary conservation efforts by farmers, ranchers, forest owners and fishing communities. No cost estimate for the project was provided. Much of the spending could be done through department budgets, as well as the 2020 outdoors law, the 2018 farm bill and Biden's proposed \$2.3 trillion infrastructure plan, officials said.

"The president's challenge is a call to action to support locally led conservation and restoration efforts of all kinds and all over America, wherever communities wish to safeguard the lands and waters they know and love," the report says. "Doing so will not only protect our lands and waters but also boost our economy and support jobs nationwide."

The report was signed by three Cabinet members — Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo — along with Brenda Mallory, who leads the White House Council on Environmental Quality.

"Nature plays an important role in improving resilience to climate change and creating a thriving economy," Haaland said at a news conference Thursday. "'America the Beautiful' is the beginning of an important effort that we can only do together.

"White House climate adviser Gina McCarthy said the Great Outdoors law, which bankrolls the popular Land and Water Conservation Fund and takes aim at a growing maintenance backlog at national parks, was a "down payment" on the



conservation initiative. The law authorizes \$900 million a year for that fund and an additional \$1.9 billion per year on improvements at parks, forests, wildlife refuges and range lands.

“There are many tools available to us” to pay for the conservation program, McCarthy said. The report is only the "starting point" on a path to fulfill Biden's conservation vision, she and other officials said.

“Where this path leads over the next decade will be determined not by our agencies, but by the ideas and leadership of local communities," the Cabinet officials said in the report. “It is our job to listen, learn and provide support along the way to ... pass on healthy lands, waters and wildlife to the generations to come.”

Environmental and outdoors groups hailed the initiative.

“The bottom line is that healthier public lands and waters mean more opportunities for Americans to recreate outside and for communities’ economies to thrive,” said Jessica Turner, executive director of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, a coalition that represents a range of outdoor businesses.

Alex Taurel of the League of Conservation Voters added: “We are all-in to help reach and exceed" Biden's goal.

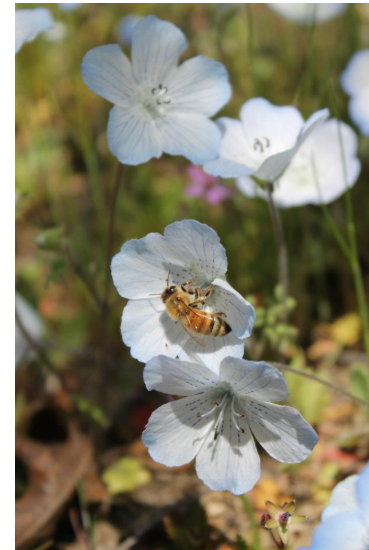
Chris Wood, president of Trout Unlimited, a fisheries conservation group, said that “the most lasting and durable conservation is the most local.” His organization will work with the administration and others “to advance solutions that empower local communities, support landowners, protect trout and salmon and — most

importantly — leave a healthier land and water legacy for our kids."



## Sierra Nevada Conservancy Funding Opportunities Newsletter for April/May

This is an electronic newsletter published every two months containing information on upcoming grant and funding opportunities for the Sierra Nevada region. The newsletter includes federal, state, and private foundation funders as well as additional resources and information related to grant funding. The Sierra Nevada Conservancy provides the Funding Opportunities Newsletter as a free resource under its Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program.



# On-Farm Research

by JESSICA GIGOT

The entomologist comes to the farm  
To capture and record the diversity of bees  
In our fields.

He is trying to find out how many  
And what kind of bees  
Are still here.  
How bad is this die-off, the reported  
Widespread hive collapse?

We have a lot of bees here, he tells me,  
Such as the wool carder bee.  
The ones that came from England  
That collect hairs from plants,  
Use them to line their egg cells.  
Harvest "wool" to cushion  
And insulate their young.

We will shear our sheep in September.  
I hope to knit my baby a blanket  
Using their carded and spun wool.  
I will wrap it around her  
Luminous, thin skin in winter.

Our flock grazes beyond the herbs  
And vegetables and sweeping motion  
Of his sword-like net. I watch as the bees,

The scientist, the plants and sheep  
Do their work. Separate  
And also glaringly interwoven.

THE HOPPER, THE LITERARY MAGAZINE OF GREEN WRITERS PRESS,  
OCT. 2018 On-Farm Research — The Hopper | Environmental Lit.  
Poetry. Art. (hoppermag.org)



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