

# the green sheet

All Things Green in the Eastern Sierra

Saturday, April 21, 2012

FREE

Vol. 5, No. 1



PHOTO: TODD VOGEL

You don't have to go too far to take care of the Earth. There's plenty to do in your own backyard. See story p. 4

## IN THIS ISSUE

ESSAY WINNERS, P. 2

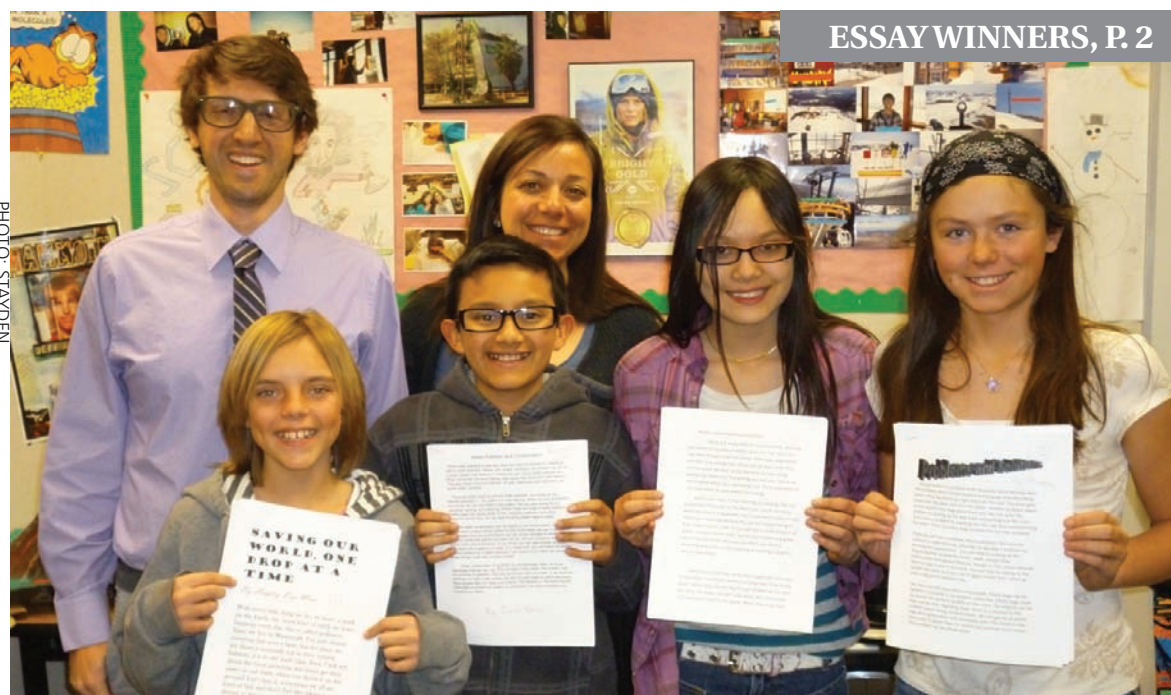


PHOTO: STAYDEN

Back row: Six grade Earth Science teacher Gil Gampos, Principal Annie Rinaldi. Front row: The three LivingWise essay winners: Hayley Kay Moss, Alyson D. Dewire, Meaghan Thompson, plus honorable mention: Jairo Yanez (second from left)

GREEN-MINDED REMODELS, P. 6



PHOTO: KIRKNER

The Mono Lake Committee's bookstore is getting a facelift ... plus some cool, "green" features.

## DUMPSTER DIVING

TOML works to get on CalRecycle's good side

By Kirkner

An elephant never forgets, and neither, it seems does CalRecycle, the state of California's recycling and waste management enforcement arm.

Past transgressions from former Town employees have left a bad taste in CalRecycle's mouth when it comes to Mammoth Lakes. In the past the Town had ignored a C&D (construction and demolition) ordinance issued by CalRecycle. Until now, the Town has not looked seriously at addressing the problem, but with the need to recycle more due to a new state assembly bill (AB 341), and the threat of heavy fines from CalRecycle for code compliance neglect, the Town is taking action.

When the Town's Senior Building Inspector Johnny Goetz found a CalRecycle employee digging through town dumpsters one day [perhaps looking for evidence to fine the Town], he decided to embrace fixing the code compliance problem and therefore the relationship with CalRecycle.

The problem is this: according to CalRecycle, the Town of Mammoth should be diverting 50% of its refuse materials from the landfill, annually. Currently, Mammoth is only diverting 27%. However, Goetz and Public Works Director Ray Jarvis believe the 50% diversion number would be easily reached if the Town were able to offer an easier way for contractors to

recycle their construction and demolition materials. That's really the only type of refuse not being recycled currently because there is no easy way to sort the materials such as dry wall, clean wood and metal.

"A facility would solve all the problems," Goetz said. "Contractors would just drop stuff off and it would be sorted for them."

This pipe dream, which the Town has wanted for many years, according to Jarvis, might just have an opportunity to become a reality if Mammoth Disposal General Manager Pat Fenton has anything to say about it.

"Pat's pointed out that it doesn't have to be the gold-plated Cadillac that the Town always pushed for," Jarvis explained.

But Fenton's idea wouldn't be a Pinto, either.

For the price of a long-term lease with the Town, Fenton would be willing to purchase land at the lumberyard in Mammoth's Industrial Park and build the facility for sorting C&D materials. Mammoth Disposal already houses the local facility for sorting aluminum, glass, cardboard, etc., but Fenton wouldn't just stop there.

With the local Mono County landfill set to close in 2023, Fenton is thinking bigger than just recycling. He envisions a

see DIVING page 3

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# LIVINGWISE ESSAY WINNERS

The LivingWise® program, sponsored by Southern California Edison, Mammoth Community Water District and the Eastern Sierra Energy Initiative, celebrated its sixth anniversary at Mammoth Middle School last month. The program helps bring water and energy efficiency awareness to local sixth graders.

This year, as part of the program, students were asked to compete in an essay-writing contest. The topic was water conservation and pollution. Below are the three winning essays.

## Water Conservation & Pollution By Alyson D. Dewire

There are many ways to conserve water. You can conserve water by washing the dishes or laundry when it's full. Also, use low-flow showerheads and faucets. When you save water you also save energy, too. When you do daily tasks that involve water be very careful because you are using double the resources. Everything you and your family do that involves water also uses energy. These are some of the many ways to save water and energy.

Water your lawn in the morning or evening. The sun evaporates the water in the afternoon. You'll use more water because it evaporates. You'll save more water in the morning or evening because the sun isn't evaporating it. Also, have a timer so you'll use a small amount of water. Using too much water can kill your plants and grass. Also, it wastes water because you don't use all of it. Watering your lawn in the morning or evening is a great way to save water.

Sometimes fishermen drop their used lines and trash in the water. Fishermen sometimes drop their used lines in the water. When they do this the fish get tangled up in it and die. Also, the water can get really dirty. Also, fishermen can drop their trash into the clean water. When they drop their trash in the water the fish can swallow it and die. Then there would be no more fish. When fishermen drop stuff in the water the fish will die.

Chemicals can get in the water and kill the fish and other animals. Oil rigs and tankers can leak into the ocean. Birds and mammals are also affected by the thick, oily pollutant. Oil can damage fish and wildlife also trees and plants may die. In addition to the animals, their homes are also destroyed. Oil is a pollution that ruins habitats and is never completely cleaned up. Chemicals can kill fish and wildlife in many ways.

## Saving Our World, One Drop at a Time By Hayley Kay Moss

With every little thing we do, we leave a mark on the Earth. The worst kind of mark we leave happens every day, this is called pollution. Since we live in Mammoth, I'm sure almost everyone has seen a bear, but the place we see them is



*With water issues making headlines up and down the Eastern Sierra, the LivingWise® program is more essential than ever. Pictured: Mammoth Creek.*

normally not in their natural habitats, it is in our trash cans. The most atrocious way bears get their paws on our trash is when you throw it on the ground! Let's face it, sometimes we all get kind of lazy and don't feel like taking a detour to the gas station in our car or walking ALL THE WAY to the trash can, but it is time to get up and save our planet! I know that there are people who don't mind going the extra mile and throwing away their trash, but might wonder why the big bears get their left-overs? That my friends is not because you are a slothful person, but because you are probably not locking your dumpsters. So make sure you use a good lock on your trash cans and never get so sluggish that you can't walk a few more feet or drive for a little more time. Just remember trash+cute turtle (or big bear or cute bunny) = DEATH!

Do you love your puppy? Is your kitten the most well behaved kitty in the whole wide world? Think again! All of your pets are pollutants! But you can be a solution to your dog and the Earth's problems! I'm talking about that special time when you tell your pet to go outside and go to the bathroom. How does my dog affect anything but my nose when he goes to the bathroom? The pollutants in the waste will sink into the ground and travel to your water source, continuing on to a lake further wrecking that water. So, next time you take your puppy out in the yard just clean it up!

A lot of people have gone riding on a horse by a lake, so you know that the horses go to the bathroom a LOT but what you didn't know is they are also contaminating the water! Just like the dogs, the waste contaminates the water and that is water we fish in, boat in, canoe in, and play in! I don't know about you, but I don't want to play in a horse's toilet.

Now that you know more about water contamination and how to clean it up, you are probably thinking, "People have done these things for ages, how do we still have clean water?" The answer to that is the water cycle! The water cycle is a never ending circle our water goes

through — evaporation, condensation, precipitation.

Evaporation is when the water turns to vapor, goes to the sky, condensates into clouds and precipitates. There are droughts when we don't get enough water through the cycle! To help save water you can follow a few simple steps.

Sometimes you just need that one dress for the dance, or the baseball uniform needs to be washed for the game tomorrow, but don't waste all that water on one thing! The washer can't tell the difference between two shirts or 20 so it still uses that massive amount of water. The average person uses about 50 gallons a day washing clothes. So next time you do laundry look for EVERY dirty article of clothing so you don't have to suffer through the droughts! Another thing that wastes a ton of water is the dishwasher. When you need a few wine glasses for a dinner party, don't throw away your money and water by just washing the glasses, wash everything! The average human uses about 20 gallons per day washing dishes by hand, think of how much the dishwasher uses! I'm sure you will always find a few more dirty dishes around your home. (Especially if you have kids!)

If you have a yard, you could be washing away water and money with your sprinklers! If your sprinkler is broken, there is probably a leak flooding your yard, stealing your savings and taking your water! The same effect can be brought on if you are watering your yard too long! The water you are wasting could cause your fertilizer to wash away and damage wildlife habitats. The bunnies need carrots, not poisons! The fertilizer can wash into all of the lakes and rivers around you where your dogs drink and children play!

Always remember, every drop counts so get water wise!

## Problems & Solutions By Meaghan Thompson

Animal waste is a problem in the beautiful Sierra Nevada lakes. One problem about animal waste is horse



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waste. One disturbing detail is that the horses go right there on the trail. The waste gets blown into the lakes and ruins the water. Another problem about animal waste is the dogs waste there, too. We can solve this problem by picking up the dog poop and putting it in the trash. This is also a problem by washing into the lake and contaminating the water. There are many ways to solve this horrible problem.

There are still more problems about pollution! This harmful creature is called littering. Littering can develop a problem by harming the environment. You can help by picking up the disgusting litter to help the forest. Sadly, people litter continuously throughout America. People do this choice because they're too lazy to put in the trash. You can help by talking to the people who litter and won't do it again in their lives. Littering plays a big part in pollution too.

Yet, there are still more forms of pollution. Plastic bags can be harmful to the birds in Los Angeles. Every day, plastic bags show up around the world in landfills on the coast. The seagulls eat the bags and die from ingesting them. There is a solution to this problem about killing innocent birds. We can get rid of plastic bags and replace them with reuseable ones. The children that have lunch in plastic bags for school can purchase lunch boxes. That problem can be solved easily.

Oil and other liquids can poison the water, too. Oil, gas, and other toxic things can kill humans and animals. We can solve this problem by making concrete floors to warehouses. We can also solve this problem by creating a wall from the houses to the river. Oil from oil wells can seep into the ground and get into lakes with clean water. We can solve this problem by building shelter around the well. This can help by the oil not going into the ground. You have learned some problems and solutions of pollution and you can create solutions to more problems!

# WATER, HOLD THE WARS

By Geisel

Caltrout Program Manager Mark Drew, who also serves as Director of the Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP), is taking a more Switzerland-like approach to the Eastern Sierra's water needs.

Let others fight over it, he's got more pressing business to do. "I'm not looking to get involved in anything acrimonious or contentious," Drew said. "[The Eastern Sierra] has enough non-political projects and funding needs without getting in the middle of rights disputes."

Administered by the California Department of Water Resources, the state's IRWMP program dates back to 2002's Senate Bill 1672, the Integrated Regional Water Management Act. Designed to bring local stakeholders representing a wide array of water-related interests together to cooperatively identify and address priority water needs, the Inyo-Mono program was brainstormed in 2007, held its first meeting in February 2008 and went through the DWR's Regional Acceptance process that fall.

Today, its network includes 200 orga-

nizations and government and public agencies, with 30 signatories to the IRWMP's Memorandum of Understanding providing for the group's governance structure and decision-making process. Drew said that Caltrout, one of the signatories, is still one of the "driving engines" moving the effort forward.

"I'm pleased that we've got so many people committed to water management not only in the Eastern Sierra, but the eastern part of California," Drew said, calling the coalition a "a foundation for significant opportunity."

Be it schools or potable water or anything in between, Drew's focus is building regional capacity, capital and resources for a variety of needs. "It's about spreading everything out on the table ... empowering and problem solving."

Our region, according to Drew, might be unique versus more metropolitan areas, but we are nonetheless "connected by water." Recently, Drew headed south for meetings with the City of Los Angeles to explore what a partnership between the City and Inyo-Mono IRWMP might look like.

"The Eastern Sierra is part of a larger water management landscape, and we need to leverage synergies if we're going to effectively respond to needs," Drew said.

The Inyo-Mono IRWMP is one of the first to receive grants that are specifically targeted to support engagement of economically disadvantaged communities.

Drew said he's "very satisfied" with the recognition the Inyo-Mono IRWMP's been getting from Sacramento. "Our group's done extremely well so far," he acknowledged. "We're looked at as something of a model for the planning process, and have been invited to sit on some very influential groups."

Drew currently holds a seat on the state's finance caucus for the State Water Plan Revision 2013, which has a direct line of sight to the state's budgeting for water resources and activities. Both Drew and local IRWMP employee Holly Alpert serve on other committees supporting the Water Plan Revision process to make sure the needs of regions such as the Eastern Sierra are not forgotten.

"We want a seat at the table," Drew

said. "Our area is critical to the state's water situation, but is too often overlooked."

The Inyo-Mono IRWMP is also taking the lead on engaging Native American tribes in water management.

Drew hopes that the IRWMP will pull in additional money during the next round of planning grants to expand efforts with the tribes.

That planning would also ideally include not only working with the Ft. Independence tribe on the Oak Creek flood restoration plan, but also a restoration plan for the West Walker River, a storm water management plan for the Town of Mammoth Lakes, help with a joint Inyo-Mono Invasive Species plan, and a greenhouse gas inventory that would examine climate change as it pertains to criteria such as watershed and precipitation patterns.

"The IRWMP has proven to be an effective way to bring historically disparate ad hoc efforts together," Drew enthused. "I'm convinced that, with respect to water management, the way of the future is IRWMP."

## DIVING continued from page 1

larger facility where his trucks would haul solid waste. The waste would be dumped from the pick-up trucks into large trailers and would never touch the ground. According to Fenton, this would allow him to bypass the state's permit process, which could take two years, and get the facility going this summer.

"Normally trucks dump the solid waste onto the ground at transfer stations, but I'm trying to be sensitive to the bears here, so we would be transferring it from one truck to another [the trailer]," Fenton said.

Once the waste was in the trailers, it would be compacted, leaving more space for another drop off from the next truck. The trailers would be emptied several times a month by long-haul trucks that would take the solid waste out of town to larger landfills out of the area that have no immediate threat of closure.

The trailers would be inside a building where the recycling sorting center would also be housed.

In return for the facility, Fenton hopes for a 30-year lease agreement with the Town. Mammoth Disposal is currently the exclusive hauler for the Town and has been for a long time, according to Fenton. The current agreement expires in 2019.

"I need to figure out how to spread out the costs, so we're looking for a 30-year agreement," Fenton said. Costs to bring the facility online include purchase of the land and equipment, in addition to

the construction of the facility.

"We're all going to be paying for it," Fenton said, but couldn't quote any rates at this time.

Fenton has already struck a deal with his parent company, Waste Connections to keep all of the jobs related to the facility, local.

He hopes to get an ordinance in place by May, and has been working with Town Manager Dave Wilbrecht on a draft. If the Town were unable or unwilling to come into compliance, Fenton said the state could charge it up to \$10,000 per day.

"We're being as aggressive as we can," Jarvis said.

And it's helping. CalRecycle has taken notice and Goetz and Jarvis believed the Town is close to being moved to a "good faith effort" list, rather than an out of compliance list.

Goetz is also working with Mammoth Lakes Tourism Director John Urdi on a public education campaign, which also ties in with the Town's responsibility with AB 341.

"Municipalities have the responsibility of education, but ultimately AB 341 directly affects businesses," Goetz explained.

AB 341 requires businesses and multi-family residential dwellings of five units or more generating more than four cubic yards (or one dumpster) of solid waste per week to arrange for recycling services. It goes into effect July.

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# STEWARDSHIP

## CELEBRATE THE EARTH IN YOUR CORNER OF THE WORLD

By Stacy Corless

Here in the Eastern Sierra, we are surrounded by land that belongs to all of us: the Inyo National Forest, Yosemite and Death Valley National Parks, and lands of the Bureau of Land Management. We have thousands of miles of roads and trails, untracked wilderness, rocks and boulders to climb, routes to ride, fish to catch. We can connect with the past at cultural sites, picnic under the Jeffrey pines, sleep under the stars in a developed or backcountry campsite.

As we celebrate Earth Day, many of us ask how we can give back to the earth and live more sustainably. On the Eastside, our public lands provide many opportunities to do just that.

By playing a role in the health and maintenance of our public lands, we help ensure the health of the entire 193 million acre national forest system.

Here are ways to make a difference:

### Plan

The buzzword for federal land management these days is "collaboration." That means getting people more involved in figuring out the best uses of our lands and the wisest way to manage them. In 2012, the Inyo National Forest, along with other forests in California and across the U.S., will be revising its management plan for the first time in over 20 years. Whether you attend a meeting or write an online comment, your participation matters.

### Steward

When you volunteer, you are making a solid investment in your public lands. Helping maintain an eroding trail or picking up trash along a lakeshore means you are improving water quality, not to mention improving the experience for the many visitors who

come to the Eastern Sierra each year.

Friends of the Inyo, partnering with the Forest Service, BLM, and fellow nonprofits and community groups, has many stewardship events in the next few months. From clearing trails in the Mammoth Lakes Basin to restoring pupfish habitat at Fish Slough, there's a chance to give back nearly every week this summer.

Not only does volunteering just feel good, you're very likely to nab a free lunch and a cool prize, too.

### Explore

The more of our amazing public lands we know and love, the more inspired we'll be to take care of them. Friends of the Inyo leads winter and spring hikes to all corners of the region, from Conglomerate Mesa (near Death Valley) north to the Bodie Hills. Moderate and family-friendly tours happen in the Mammoth Lakes Basin

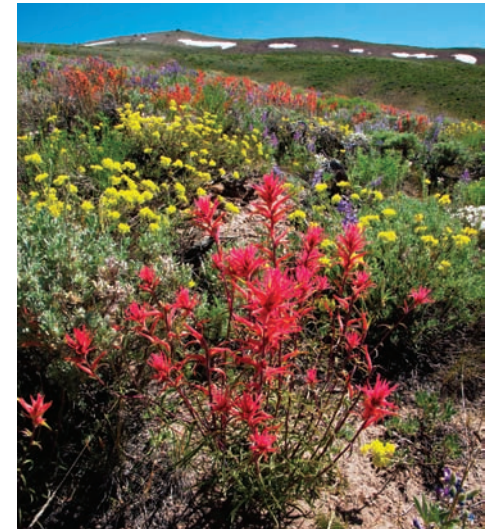


PHOTO: JOHN DITTLI

Flowers in the Bodie Hills

every week during July and August. Hike leaders talk about plants, wildlife, geology and history, and share leave-no-trace ethics with participants.

### Share

Sure, there's some comfort in solitude, but there's even more satisfaction in sharing your favorite spot. Invite a friend to explore with you on a Friends of the Inyo hike or take your visiting relatives on a geology tour at Horseshoe Lake. There's a great sense of community that comes with caring for public lands.

### Go Solar

Friends of the Inyo is partnering with home-solar installer Sungevity on an affordable new way to lease solar panels for your home, and raise money for Friends of the Inyo. Sungevity puts up solar panels on your house for free when you sign up to lease them. You then pay Sungevity on a monthly basis for your home-solar lease, usually the same or less than what your pre-solar electric bill was. It's a win-win: Sungevity pays Friends of the Inyo a \$750 referral fee for sending you their way, and Sungevity pays you an additional \$750 cash bonus for joining the solar lease program. [www.sungevity.org/Friends-inyo](http://www.sungevity.org/Friends-inyo)

Visit [www.friendsoftheinyo.org](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org) or [www.facebook.com/friendsoftheinyo](http://www.facebook.com/friendsoftheinyo) for more information about upcoming events, or check out the calendar section on p. 6 of this issue of *The Green Sheet*.

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## ECO-FRIENDLY 101

**G**ear up for spring greening. Go “greener” this spring and update your three “eco” R’s by adding Rethink to your repertoire of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Spring is a wonderful time of year to take a leaf from Mother Nature’s book and add a few more eco-friendly tools to your family’s green living habits.

Ready, set, rethink. When in doubt, don’t throw it out. With a little rethinking and ingenuity, you can recycle or reuse many household objects otherwise destined for the county landfill. Consuming less energy and safely disposing of hazardous waste are additional green goals to which every family can aspire.

Make a pledge. To protect our planet and to help stop global warming trends. Involve the entire family in committing to being part of this exciting time of positive change, to get creative, to rethink and to act now. What new and unconventional ideas can your family come up with to rethink how we can live more eco friendly? Here are 12 ideas from my

family that you can add to your list.

Leave your shoes at the door. To eliminate bringing in dust, dirt, pollen for better indoor air quality.

Scrub used tubs & bags. Wash out plastic bags, old yogurt cups and butter tubs for storage instead of buying new containers.

Kitchen compost daily. Eggshells, coffee grinds, tea leaves and bags and fruit & vegetable trimmings will replenish the Earth’s nutrients.

Donate to charity. Working old cell phones and computers, monitors and printers & spectacles.

Change a light. Switch from incandescent to compact fluorescent to save energy.

Kill your energy vampires. Unplug all electronics when not in use.

Mow the lawn. Get a push mower and keep your lawn pesticide-free.

Reduce your garbage. Buy in bulk, recycle and compost.

Buy local, in season and organic.

Tune your ride. Inflating your tires

properly can increase your mileage.

Plant a tree. A single tree will absorb one ton of CO<sub>2</sub> over its lifetime, making cleaner air.

Get off the work-spend cycle. Buy less ... have more time, money, YOU!

Recycle Factoid: 28 – 33 Aluminum

cans = 1 pound. Price per 1 pound of aluminum = .60¢

*Tammy Hooper is a licensed California Realtor with Mammoth Village Properties and has earned the NAR GREEN DESIGNATION. Visit [www.RockStarRealEstate.com](http://www.RockStarRealEstate.com)*

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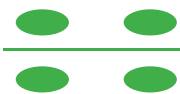
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# Community Calendar and Connections

## WASHING UP HAS NEW MEANING



PHOTOS COURTESY MONO LAKE COMMITTEE

Regina Hirsch digs a mulch pit that will eventually connect to the greywater system. Inset photo: The sink and installed greywater system.

By Kirkner

Inside the Mono Lake Committee's Information Center/Bookstore in Lee Vining, which is currently undergoing a remodel, you will soon find that just by washing your hands, you are watering the plant life outside.

Nope, it's not magic, it's the fourth commercial greywater system in California; the first in the Eastern Sierra.

"It's really simple," explained the MLC's Education Director Bartshe Miller. "We hooked up the bathroom sink in the public restroom to the greywater system."

At its summer peak that restroom produces up to 100 gallons/day. The water from the sink will flow through pipes marked as greywater and end up

in underground mulch boxes that end up watering plants in four different areas around the complex.

"The water never touches the surface, just the roots of the plants," Miller said.

During its transport, the water becomes slightly purified to remove some of the dirt, oil and hand soap people are washing off of their skin.

According to Regina Hirsch of Sierra Watershed Progressive, the company installing the system, MLC won't have to worry about overwatering if it plants the right plants. Currently on track to be watered by the system is a small grove of Aspens.

The MLC hopes to have the greywater system online by the end of June.

## SLOW AND STEADY WINS ORMAT EXPANSION RACE

By Geisel

During the past year or so, progress has been slow, though steady for upgrades and expansion at the Ormat Casa Diablo geothermal power facility located off U.S. 395 just below the Hwy 203 interchange.

Announced in September 2010, the new Casa Diablo 4 (aka "CD-4") plant will, when completed, yield 33 megawatts (MW) by early 2013, supplying enough electricity for approximately 25,000 people.

The plant will be able to tap an expanded geothermal well field that's part of a magma parcel leased from Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP). In addition to pipelines to bring geothermal "brine" to and from the injection wells, CD-4 will also augment a standard air-cooled system

with a new, untried feature: water-cooling for some of the hotter times of year. The water-cooled mode would siphon off a certain amount of MCWD-supplied water to lower the condenser temperatures and dissipate excess heat.

Casa Diablo's current three-plant complex produces 29 MW, all of which is sold to Southern California Edison, which is used by SCE customers.

In addition to adding a new plant, Reno-based Ormat, which owns the Casa Diablo facility, also has plans to "repower" (or replace) its G-1 plant at Casa Diablo with a new one, known as "M-1," that will be based around a state-of-the-art Ormat Energy Converter (OEC). G-1, which produces 10 MW, began operation in 1984. The M-1 will feature a new generation OEC, which is

## Calendar

**Saturday, April 21/ Earth Day Celebrations** Check out the vendors at Bishop City Park from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Then head over to Flowmotion Pilates for the Friends of the Inyo fundraiser from 7-10 p.m. [www.bloggibishop.com](http://www.bloggibishop.com) and [www.friendsoftheinyo.org](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org)

**Sunday, April 22/ Earth Day Celebrations** at the Village at Mammoth.  
**Audubon Wild at Home workshop** Learn how native plants, garden features, and smart planning can make your yard a healthy habitat for wildlife, 760.873.4554 or [victoria@eslt.org](mailto:victoria@eslt.org)  
**Earth Day Ride with Eastside Velo** Meet at Millpond Park at 10 a.m., [www.eastsidevelo.org](http://www.eastsidevelo.org)

**Wednesday, April 25/ ES Audubon's Big Day** Spring survey of birds at Owens Lake, [esaudubon.org](http://esaudubon.org)

**Saturday, April 28/ Fishing Opener**

**Thursday, May 3/ Gardenfest** Celebrate the beginning of the 2012 garden season with ESLT, 760.873.4554 or email [victoria@eslt.org](mailto:victoria@eslt.org)

**Tuesday, May 8/ SNARL Lecture** A Field Study of Storm Snow Slab Avalanches, 760.935.4356 or [ldawson@msi.ucsb.edu](mailto:ldawson@msi.ucsb.edu)

**Saturday, May 12/ International Migratory Bird Day**

**Tuesday, May 15/ Friends of the Inyo Open House** from 5-7 p.m., [www.friendsoftheinyo.org](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org)

**Friday, May 18/ Snowcreek Golf Course Projected Opening Day**

**May 27 & June 10/ Bodie Hills hikes with Friends of the Inyo and partners**, [www.friendsoftheinyo.org](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org)

**Saturday, June 2/ National Trails Day** in the Mammoth Lakes Basin with FOI, MLTPA and INF, [www.friendsoftheinyo.org](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org)

**June 30-July 7/ Volunteer Vacation** Reds Meadow Trail Work Party with Friends of the Inyo, email [todd@friendsoftheinyo.org](mailto:todd@friendsoftheinyo.org)

**July-August/ Summer of Stewardship Trail Days** Give back to the places you love to play with Friends of the Inyo and MLTPA! Go to [mltpa.org](http://mltpa.org) and [friendsoftheinyo.org](http://friendsoftheinyo.org) for dates and details.

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## HIGH SCHOOL, ENERGY POLICY AND OTHER MUSINGS

By Rick Phelps

If “Energy Efficiency” and “Renewable Energy” were personified as high school students, one would be pretty dull and the other really cool. The cool one would wear the latest styles, have the biggest allowance, and get invited to all the best parties. The dull one would wear pretty scruffy clothes, never seem to be able to afford anything, and would not be welcome at much except nerd parties ... but would always get the best grades. At the inevitable reunion, Cool is still looking for the next big deal, while Dull is still just plodding along, but does seem to live very well.

Cool is renewable energy and Dull is energy efficiency. In reality, energy efficiency and renewable energy are complementary and are part of meeting our energy future, but communicating that message means changing perceptions — always a big challenge in any marketing campaign.

An example is last year’s Southern California Edison-sponsored Small Business Direct Install program that the High Sierra Energy Foundation helped market and promote in Mammoth Lakes, Bishop and Inyo and Mono counties. More than 400 small businesses were retrofitted with new lighting and other basic efficiency measures and the annual savings of those 400 businesses was about \$225,000. That’s a lot of money to save each year, but since it only averages about \$550 annually for each business, there were no great celebrations or major news stories.

That \$225,000 annual savings is equivalent to about 125 solar home conversions, which would have been major news across the country. The headline: “Small California counties lead the way to a solar future.” (*Solar home estimate is based on the average solar home in the Sierra saving about \$1,800 annually.*)

So, how do we get the same kind of excitement about nerdy energy efficiency for those that can’t afford a solar home? Perhaps the first step is to embrace the “Small is Beautiful” ethic, articulated by British economist E. F. Schumacher in 1973. While those words relate more to global economics than energy efficiency, there is a parallel worth exploring. Often individuals don’t take the first step to be more energy efficient because it seems too complex, expensive or lifestyle limiting.

I can’t count the number of times people have said to me things such as, “We really can’t afford a solar home and don’t think all that light bulb stuff will make much of a difference,” or “We’d have to

live like medieval monks to reduce our ‘carbon footprint’ sufficiently.” The fact they are thinking about energy is a great first step. The second, often a baby step, is to get them thinking about energy efficiency and the aggregate impact of thousands of baby steps in thousands of households.

Three words keep the conversation going: lighting, thermostats and caulking (a.k.a weatherization).

**Lighting:** Where, when and how do we use light? Is exterior lighting for security or ambiance and how many hours each day does it need to be on? Is the quality of the light important; i.e. cold versus warm tones? Are some uses inflexible such as the use of traditional light bulbs to apply makeup? Note each use of lighting, and determine if the light can be replaced with a compact fluorescent lamp or connected to a timer, or both. Install the lamps and timers. And don’t touch those lights that might require prying the traditional bulbs from someone’s “cold, dead hands.” Granted, you might leave some potential saved kilowatt-hours on the table, but you have made a start, and you will be saving energy and money, as well as reducing power plant pollution.

**Thermostats:** If you still have a thermostat with just one non-programmable setting, you’ll have to develop the discipline to turn it up and down as you go to sleep, get up, and come and go during the day. Doing that can be a great pain and not likely to happen consistently. The better alternative is a programmable thermostat that allows you to change the time and setting for several activities a day such as wake, leave, return and sleep. The tricky part is determining what is the comfortable range for each family or individual, which usually

involves a little trial and error. Some people don’t want the temperature any lower than 60 while sleeping while other are comfortable at 50. It’s all a personal choice and reliving the life of a medieval monk is not a requirement. Using a programmable thermostat, however, has one drawback: you have to read the manual and figure out how to set it. As about 75% of our energy use in the Sierra is for heating, thermostats have a huge payoff. Some people have told me their heating bills have gone down by as much as 35% after programming.

**Caulking (a.k.a weatherization):** This is not glamorous, and is sometimes messy and seemingly trivial. But many of our residences, particularly the older ones, have the equivalent of an open window that needs to be “shut” with caulk. To get a feel for the process, it might help to start small – try it in just one room. Feel around the windows and doors, and use tape to mark the places where you can feel the air. Then, using



HSEF Executive Director Rick Phelps the correctly colored caulk, fill in the holes. After a little practice, it goes very quickly. That open window will be closed ... and you will be saving energy. And you’ll now get invited to all the cool parties. Rick Phelps is Executive Director of the High Sierra Energy Foundation. The views expressed in this column are those of the author and not necessarily those of his employer.

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