



Santa Cruz VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

April 2019

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MID-COUNTY WATER PLANS Solutions for a reliable and sustainable water supply



Melanie Mow Schumacher
Soquel Creek Water District



Darcy Pruitt
Regional Water
Management Foundation

Calendar

Tuesday, April 9, 2019
10 a.m.-noon
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
75 River Street, Santa Cruz, CA

Saturday, April 27
10:00 a.m.–Noon
Mid-County Water Plans
Capitola City Hall, Council Chambers
420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola, CA 95010
Free and open to the public

Tuesday, May 14, 2019
10 a.m.-noon
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
75 River Street, Santa Cruz, CA

Tuesday, May 21, 2019
12:30-2 p.m.
Recycling Tour
CSC Resource Recovery Facility
605 Dimeo Lane, Santa Cruz, CA 95060
Free and open to the public
RSVP: league@lwvsc.org or (831)325-4140

Saturday, June 8, 2019
10:00 a.m.–Noon
LWVSCC Annual Meeting
Seascape Golf Club, Seascape room
610 Clubhouse Drive, Aptos, California 95003
RSVP by Tuesday, May 28; see article for details

Tuesday, June 11, 2019
10 a.m.-noon
LWVSCC Board Meeting
Santa Cruz County Bank
75 River Street, Santa Cruz, CA

Saturday, April 27, 10:00 a.m. to Noon

Capitola City Hall Council Chambers, 420 Capitola Avenue, Capitola

Solutions to prevent seawater intrusion into the critically overdrafted mid-county groundwater basin will be discussed by Santa Cruz County's "Women of Water" at a free community forum on April 27 in Capitola. Groundwater replenishment with purified water (the Pure Water Soquel Project), river water transfers, desalination, and storm water capture are some of the options currently under consideration.

Melanie Mow Schumacher, special projects and communications manager for Soquel Creek Water District, will present the District's approach to addressing reliable and sustainable water solutions to protect the basin and meet current and future water needs. Highlights include the Community Water Plan (conservation, pumping redistribution, and securing new supplies) and the Pure Water Soquel Project.

Darcy Pruitt, senior planner for groundwater sustainability for the Regional Water Management Foundation (a subsidiary of Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County), will discuss how California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act relates to the Santa Cruz Mid-County Groundwater Agency (MGA) and how water augmentation plans fit into the MGA's state-mandated Groundwater Sustainability Plan.

Heidi Luckenbach, City of Santa Cruz deputy water director, will present information about the water transfer project between the city and the Soquel Creek Water District.

The forum will include introductory remarks by each speaker followed by a question-and-answer period. This free, informational public event sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County will be held at the Capitola City Hall Council Chambers, 420 Capitola Avenue in Capitola; metered parking is available in the parking lot next door. Starting at 10 a.m., we will gather and have light refreshments; the program begins at 10:30 a.m. and ends at noon.

For more information: lwvsc.org, league@lwvsc.org, 831-325-4140.

Membership Report

A hearty welcome to the newest members of LWVSCC, Margaret Maideh Radpour and Paul Radpour of Scotts Valley and Lori Zink of Santa Cruz. Also, a reminder to our members that individual annual membership dues are \$65, however a household membership of two people is \$100. The League encourages spouses and partners to join as a household member. In April we will be reminding our members to renew before the deadline at the end of June. Consider a household membership!

— Lydia Nogales Parker, Membership

LWVSCC Annual Meeting June 8: RSVP online today!

Join the League at our 2019 annual meeting with featured speaker Cabrillo College's new president, Matthew Wetstein, giving an update on what's happening at our local community college. Look for our annual meeting kit with nominations for next year's board and proposed programs to arrive in May.

The League's annual meeting is open to members and the public and will be held on Saturday, June 8 from 10 to noon at the Seascope Golf Club in the Seascope Room, 610 Clubhouse Drive, Aptos. The cost is \$22 per person, or \$40 for two household members or one member and a guest. Prepaid reservations required by Tuesday, May 28. It's easy to pay using PayPal at our website, lwvsc.org/calendar or send a check to LWVSCC, P.O. Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010. For more information email league@lwvsc.org or call 831-325-4140.

President's Message



Now that the drought is officially over, with 2015 having been the worst drought in 300 years, as residents of Santa Cruz County we need to plan ahead for future extreme weather conditions caused by climate change and find creative solutions to integrate water management. I have been participating in a series of workshops and talks sponsored by the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency at Felton Community Hall for several months and have been amazed at the high attendance and intelligence of our community members county-wide in exploring options and cooperating with each other. After this positive experience, I look forward to the water forum on April 27, which will be sponsored by our Santa Cruz County League of Women Voters, at Capitola City Hall. Details are on page one in this April VOTER. Thank you to Program Chair Stephanie Harlan for contacting speakers and making the arrangements and to Dottie Fry for agreeing to coordinate the question and answer part of the program using note cards, a method that worked very well in the Santa Margarita Groundwater Agency series.

On March 7, we had a stimulating and productive local program planning meeting. I want to thank Sandy Warren for her continuing hospitality, as she approaches 50 years as a League of Women Voters member; Stephanie Harlan for leading the discussion; Marilyn McCusker for taking notes, and participants for their ideas and helping decide on recommendations for the 2019-2020 program. These recommendations were approved by our board of directors on March 12 and will be included in the annual meeting kit for our June 8 meeting discussion and vote.

—Barbara Lewis, President LWVSCC

LWVSCC Website Upgrade

We are pleased to announce that our local League's website has been upgraded to a newer system called My League Online (MyLO), which is being used by many state and local Leagues across the country. Thanks to the work of our local website team, LWVSCC members Jan Dwyer and Jan Karwin, our website now includes the advanced features of MyLO, including a Home page pictorial slideshow of various areas of our county, articles with photos, action alerts, a new calendar format, and a password-protected members-only page. Also, our local League information is now networked with national and state League information. We hope you will check it out, bookmark it, and refer to it often at: lwvsc.org.

Interview with Senator Bill Monning

In February, members of three local leagues interviewed state Senator Bill Monning at his office in Monterey. League members in attendance included Howard Fosler and Sharon Miller from Monterey county; Marilyn McCusker and Lydia Parker from Santa Cruz county; and Sara Nicolson and Gloria Chun Hoo from San Jose/Santa Clara.

The interview began with a question about



Left to right: Howard Fosler and Sharon Miller (LWV Monterey County), Lydia Nogales Parker (LWVSCC), Senator Bill Monning (representing California Senate District 17 and proud LWVMC member), Gloria Chun Hoo (LWV San Jose/Santa Clara), Marilyn McClusker (LWVSCC), and Sara Nicholson (LWVSJSC).

using independent commissions for local redistricting. Since Senator Monning supports the state's independent redistricting commission, it makes sense to him that we would apply a similar nonpartisan process to local districts. He is open to hearing proposals about local redistricting from various groups like the League and would seriously consider a proposal for creation of independent redistricting commissions for local municipalities. However, Senator Monning pointed out that key questions would be what the cost would be, who would pay for it, and who would determine the composition.

Continuing on the subject of redistricting, Senator Monning remarked that, with the upcoming 2020 census and the redrawing of California's districts that follows in 2021, the new state Citizens Redistricting Commission will be forming later this year. Senator Monning suggested that the League make people aware of

filing requirements and deadlines for joining the commission. In his opinion, the more people that show interest in participating in the redistricting commission, the broader cross section of the public we will have represented in the process.

Responding to the next question about addressing needs of his constituency while advancing water management planning to benefit all Californians, Senator Monning discussed the complexities and challenges of water management and water storage, specifically looking through the lens of climate change. He said that one of the big challenges is the Delta and the debate about moving the water from northern to southern California without upsetting the balance of nature. A majority of his constituents in the 17th Senate District are not beneficiaries of the north-south conveyance, relying mainly on groundwater. Because of this, he thinks continued water conservation is critical to the region. In a positive development, the Senator said that the agriculture industry is using less water and that southern California continues to increase its conservation efforts.

Senator Monning went on to mention his grave concern about the lack of safe drinking water that affects more than one million California residents—more than the number of people impacted by contaminated drinking water in Flint, Michigan. This polluted water is approximately 30% from agricultural pesticide and fertilizer runoff, with the other remaining 70% from natural contaminants, like arsenic, lead, uranium, and chromium 6. Unfortunately, these natural contaminants continue to be more prominent because water wells have been stressed due to the drought. There are about 300 communities in California that are currently facing this issue. They are mostly small water districts in disadvantaged communities who cannot afford to increase their water rates enough to treat the water, let alone build the infrastructure necessary to connect to a

clean water source. In some cases, bond funding can be used to build a water treatment plant to address the problem, but these bond funds cannot be used for the ongoing cost of plant operation and maintenance.

To address this issue, Senator Monning has been working for more than two years with a coalition of more than 70 organizations, including the agricultural industry and environmental justice groups, to better understand the problems these communities face and to determine the best way for the Legislature to get Californians clean, safe, drinking water.

Recently, he introduced Senate Bill (SB) 200 to address this problem. The bill would obtain approximately one third of the funds needed for safe, affordable drinking water from a tax on fertilizer supported by the agricultural community. The remaining funds would be raised from a ratepayer tax of no more than 95 cents/month, with those who make under 200% of the federal poverty line being exempt from the cost increase. (See this [editorial from the San Jose Mercury](#) for more information about the current drinking water crisis in California.)

The next question concerned the achievement gap in education and a recent study that suggested early education was key to closing those gaps. Senator Monning mentioned the current initiatives that the legislature has worked on in order to close the achievement gap. The Local Control Funding Formula, initiated by former Governor Brown, places funds for public education directly in the hands of local school boards, with supplements for communities with higher poverty rates or large numbers of English-language learners. The Senator fully supports early childhood education. Additionally, he highlighted a few of California's challenges to providing early-education opportunities: our large population of almost 40 million people that places a strain on our resources, the number of English language learners in the state, and low-income families whose children lack sufficient nutrition and have difficulties focusing.

Senator Monning's 2019 priorities include passing legislation to ensure safe drinking water for every Californian, reducing consumption of sugar sweetened beverages statewide via a bill in the

Legislature (in spite of the tactics used by the sweetened beverage industry last year to derail his efforts), ensuring that PG&E's bankruptcy proceeding do not negatively impact Northern and Central California, and ensuring the safe decommissioning of Diablo Canyon while retaining the current workforce.

China's National Sword Comes Down on Santa Cruz

How will China's new National Sword policy impact Santa Cruz County? As China enacts tight restrictions on what plastics will be accepted for recycling, will rates increase as what was once a source of revenue becomes a cost?

The realities of plastic recycling have finally hit home. Learn what this means to us locally at our May tour of the Santa Cruz recycling facility and see what happens to our waste first-hand. Find out the fate of what goes into your recycling bin and learn how you can become a better recycler and consumer.

Make your reservation today for the tour on Tuesday, May 21 at 12:30 pm at the City of Santa Cruz Resource Recovery Facility, 605 Dimeo Lane. The tour is free and open to League members and the public, but space is limited and reservations are required; to sign up, email league@lwvscc.org or call (831)325-4140.



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

Interview with Assemblymember Mark Stone

The League of Women Voters legislative interview with Assemblymember Mark Stone, representing California's 29th Assembly District, took place on March 1 at his office in Santa Cruz. In attendance were Barbara Lewis, Dottie Fry, Sue Becker, Marilyn McCusker, and Stephanie Harlan from the Santa Cruz County League; Sara Nicolson and Sandy Mory from the San Jose/Santa Clara League; and Sylvia Shih and Alice Ann Glenn from the Monterey County League.



Left to right: Sara Nicolson (LWV San Jose/Santa Clara), Stephanie Harlan and Barbara Lewis (LWVSCC), Sylvia Shih (LWV Monterey County), Assemblymember Mark Stone (representing California's 29th Assembly District), Sue Becker and Marilyn McCusker (LWVSCC), Sandy Mory (LWVSJSC), Dorothy Fry (LWVSCC), and Alice Ann Glenn (LWVMC).

Asked about his support for a potential state bill requiring establishing independent redistricting commissions for local district elections, Assemblymember Stone said he was not aware of such a bill at the moment, but that he would support one if it came to the floor as long as that was the only thing in it. He is part of an effort to push for district elections in localities where they currently exist in order to ensure fair representation in an open and transparent process.

Moving on to the second question on state-wide and local water issues, Assemblymember Stone started by acknowledging that this is "a big topic." He said that, at the state level, groundwater agencies across the state are responsible, and results are a mixed bag. He feels more is being done in his district than in others. He would like to see more teeth put into the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) to move the timeline up for actions from all agencies.

The discussion continued to the topic of local "Pure Water" projects to inject treated waste water into depleted aquifers to prevent seawater intrusion. One such plan is underway in Monterey that looks very promising and could obviate the need for a desalination plant. We have not always looked at storm water and waste water as supply, a change he believes the state must embrace. However, if we are to use waste water as a water supply, we must think through the differences between state regulations for waste water and supply water.

In response to a question about measuring the amount of water being drawn from groundwater sources, Assemblymember Stone explained that SGMA is supposed to require meters, but it is not happening everywhere because of resistance by people who don't want to report how much is taken out. Locally, most water is drawn by public agencies, but in the Central Valley much of it is drawn by

private agricultural wells.

Asked about the educational achievement gap and how we can prevent such gaps from occurring, Assemblymember Stone responded that he would like to see more support for families living in cycles of poverty. There is no mystery why we have these struggles, in Assemblymember Stone's opinion, since we haven't put the money up front. He pointed out that there are implications under Prop 98 [a 1988 state constitutional amendment that

requires a certain percentage of the state's budget be spent on K through 12 education].

Assemblyman Stone feels that if money is taken from higher levels, for example high school seniors, and applied to early education, it would break some of the cycles early and would save money later. This is politically difficult to do.

He then went on to reiterate the on-going problem with funding for education in the state. California is the only state that funds K-14 out of state general funds, which are based on very volatile sources of revenue: income taxes, sales taxes, regressive taxes.

Some major issues Assemblymember Stone thinks the California legislature should focus on in 2019 include ocean protection, education, tax reform, prison reform, and climate change, where he would like to see the state move from mitigation to adaptation [with regard to sea level rise].

Interviewers rounded out the session with questions specific to their local areas.

From Monterey, Sylvia Shih asked about public utilities reform and the public buyout of the Monterey water company, currently privately owned by Cal-Am. Assemblyman Stone said he supports the buyout and has a level of confidence that it will get done.

Sara Nicolson from San Jose and Barbara Lewis from Santa Cruz asked about housing shortages. Assemblymember Stone pointed out that all most all localities have the issue of housing shortages and homelessness. He explained how complicated the issue is: there isn't just one group of homeless people, but rather a broad spectrum of homeless people with very different needs. For some it could be easy to find housing, while others have more challenges. Politically it is difficult to get anything done about it. San Jose is doing a good job of getting housing built.

Alice Ann Glenn from Monterey asked if he would support the renewal of the Fort Ord Reuse Authority. Assemblymember Stone said he would not, as he feels it needs to be handled at the local level at this point.

—Reported by Marilyn McCusker, Secretary, LWVSCC

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of voting age who are U.S. citizens. Others are welcome to join the League as associate members.

Send your check payable to League of Women Voters of Santa Cruz County or LWVSCC with this form to LWVSCC, Box 1745, Capitola, CA 95010-1745.

___ \$65.00 Individual annual membership
___ \$100.00 Two members in a household
___ \$10.00 Student membership
___ Contribution \$ _____

Checks made out to LWVSCC are not tax deductible.

To make a tax-deductible donation, write a separate check to LWVC Education Fund.

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