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CRC's GREEN SCENE

A monthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College

Turn Down That Thermostat... Really!

Cath Hooper reports...

My guess is that, now cooler weather has set in, you're turning on the heat for the first time since last winter. You probably have a programmable thermostat at home, and that's a good start to energy and money savings—but do you know how to use it properly?

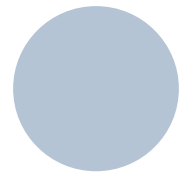
Most energy-conscious people set the thermostat to 68 degrees and leave it there, but, according to the DOE, we can save 5 to 15% a year on heating bills if we turn the thermostat back 10 to 15 degrees for at least 8 hours (up to 1% for each degree).

Similarly, the Energy Star Program suggests we set the thermostat at 70 degrees for waking hours and back to 62 degrees or less for sleeping or away hours to get maximum savings.

And the science behind this? According to environmental journalist Lori Bongiorno, "Studies show that the fuel required to reheat your home back up is about equal to the fuel saved as the building drops in temperature. The upshot: You'll save fuel from the time the temperature hits the lower level you programmed it for until it starts rising again. The longer the time period, the greater the savings."

Now that you know, don't just think green, act green!

Bongiorno, Lori. "How to program your thermostat." *The Conscious Consumer*. Yahoo! Green. Oct 30, 2008. Nov 8, 2008. http://green.yahoo.com/blog/the_conscious_consumer/14/how-to-program-your-thermostat.html;_ylt=AsrBbdCualEJzLlacIzIva_AV8cX



Kids at Child Development Center Study the Earth

Did you know that our Child Development Center offers a school-age children's program? Lora Wardlaw, its teacher, has been working with the school-age kids to make them aware of 'our earth.'

Each day, the children recall and discuss what they can do at school and in their homes to become more efficient in their use of resources.

They are writing stories (see

John's story on page 4) and creating their own games (Did you know that a shoe box and some paper towel rolls can become a child's playful puppy or that ten plastic water bottles and some newspaper becomes a game of bowling?).

They are recycling whatever they can and planning a sculpture (a tree made of plastic bottles) as part of their Earth Day goal to help "save the

(SEE CDC, PAGE 4)

In This Issue:

- Meet our Student Members -- Heather Downing 2
- Fellowship to Study CRC's Greenhouse Gas Output 2
- Bark Beetles -- poetry by Dennis Hock 3
- Sacramento Mass Transit Survey 4
- Nature Corner: Our Resident Owls 5
- News In Brief: Green Forks, Earth Week, SB 3124, Recycle tips 6



Heather Downing, student member of the CRC Sustainability committee, wants her nieces and nephew to have a brighter future.



Meet our Student Members: *a Monthly Feature*

The CRC Sustainability Committee has several committed student members, one of which will be featured each month.

Heather Downing's interest in sustainability goes hand in hand with her newly found major, geography. A CRC student for several years, Heather is a relatively recent convert to geography. In Spring 2009, she will graduate with an A.S. in geography and a certificate in GIS. In Fall 2009, she will transfer to CSU, Sacramento to study for a B.A. in geography. From there she plans to transfer to either UC Davis or CSU Chico to pursue an M.A. in geography. In the future, she sees herself either teaching or working for a National Park on sustainability or native and invasive species monitoring.

Sustainability is somewhat new to Heather. While she has always recycled as much as possible and used less energy when she could, she never really got directly

involved with sustainability issues. The global climate change class last spring and projects on climate change led her to research sea-level rise and its many impacts on our planet and to realize that she needs to become more seriously involved: "If I want my nieces and nephew to have a good future, I need to start somewhere to make that future-- what's the word?--easier, I guess, is what I'm looking for. . . . They shouldn't have to deal with the problems we didn't find time to deal with."

Heather realizes that change must start small (hence her commitment to the Sustainability Committee and the NWF Fellowship) and expand from there. "The changes I hope to help make on campus will change my family's future, my future, and all of yours. I look forward to working with you all and working on the projects to come!"

CRC Student Applies for Fellowship to Inventory CRC's Greenhouse Gas

Heather Downing, student member of the Campus Sustainability Committee, and advisor, Debra Sharkey, have written a proposal for a \$2,000 grant from the National Wildlife Federation's Campus Ecology Fellowship program.

If funded, Heather will lead an initiative to establish the first campus greenhouse gas inventory at CRC (and in the

district) in 2009. This inventory will provide critical baseline information to help the college identify and establish emission reduction targets and, ultimately, formulate a Campus Climate Action Plan.

In addition, the project includes provisions to increase recycling awareness on campus as well as educational outreach to the district's other three

colleges, local businesses, and nearby K-12 schools.

Two other student members of the Campus Sustainability Committee, Daniel Fagan and Elizabeth Gaylord, are named in the grant proposal as each has pledged to help Heather with this endeavor. Stay tuned for more news about this exciting project in a future issue of the CRC Green Scene.

Bark Beetles

by Dennis Hock

As the last snow
in the rock bowls
gave itself up
under the sun's relentless
questioning
and streams slowed to trickles,
the woods grew discouraged.
Each evergreen began to brown.
I saw this from my cabin window.

Before long the forest turned blanket sepia,
taupe granite above treeline,
and the whole brown smear slowly
sucked the blue out of the sky
until it became the color of erasers.

Soon all birds of hue flew away
and only the drab remained--
the wren, sparrow, and martin.
Rasping lizards roamed everywhere,
their reptilian eyes slits of cruel yellow.
I took up 24-hour watch, praying
for the teal-shouldered hummingbird
to return to the feeder nailed
to the white pine outside my window.

During my vigil I rolled a green pebble under my tongue
and listened closely for shimmering wings in the stillborn air.
The old clock on the stone hearth ticked the minutes
as pine needles fluttered dryly to the ground.

I closed my eyes and waited.
I could hear the lizards scratching
the rocks in the dusty riverbed.
I could hear the beetles laying
their eggs beneath the bark,
the bark of the white pine.



Sacramento Regional Transit Master Plan: Tired of Traffic? Add Your Two Cents

Fred Deneke reports...

What could reduce all of the following?

- emissions associated with global climate change
- U.S. dependence on foreign oil
- stress associated with traffic congestion and rude drivers
- transportation costs

Walking? Biking? Carpooling? Each option provides distinct advantages over driving alone, and, of course, certain disadvantages. How about mass transit? The current Sacramento regional transit system leaves much to be desired. But, could steps be taken now for dramatic improvements by 2035?



The Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) is predicting “major increases in population, households and employment over the next 25-50 years. These increases will lead to increasing traffic levels and increased congestion on our roads. This in turn will lead to worsening air quality unless changes are made.”

“To address these issues, SACOG has developed a 50-year land use scenario, known as the Blueprint, that sets out a new, more

sustainable way to accommodate growth in the Sacramento Region. Transit services will have an increasingly important role to play in this future.”

Please consider completing a survey during November, even if you have never taken mass transit in the Sacramento area before. Your comments could result in a much more user-friendly mass transit system for us all. Recruit your friends and family members for the survey too!

<http://visuals.sdgworld.net/sacro/survey.aspx>

Additional background information on the Regional Transit Master Plan can be found at:

<http://visuals.sdgworld.net/sacro/>

CDC Children Collect Bottles for Earth Day Tree, Write Recycling Stories

(FROM PAGE 1)

earth.” You too can participate by bringing your clean plastic bottles to the CDC, weekdays 7:15am to 5:00pm.

Lora and the children also invite you to come by the Child Development Center and join in or just explore the exciting things that are happening there.

Recycling - by John Seely

Recycle if you don't recycle the earth will torn in to a big ball of trash do you want that to be like this so we can't sail the seas. I do not want that to be like this for ever in my life because me and my dad won't go fishing no more and we want have any fish to eat. I like fish because I caught a 2 pound fish and it was a trout. I like that trout that I caught but I ate it with garlic and butter and on the side was bread.

(John Seely's father was recently deployed to Iraq, and John is anxiously awaiting his dad's return.)



CRC Nature Corner: Owls in Residence

If you didn't see the owlets yourself last spring, nesting in a sycamore tree near the northwest corner of the central quad, chances are you saw the photos of them.

We asked one of our resident animal experts, Susan Scott, to offer us some insights into the lives of those cute little fluffballs that are now fully-fledged Great Horned Owls.

Distinctive features:	ear tufts and territorial call “hoo-hoo hooooo hoo-hoo” which can travel as far as several miles
Popular perching places:	at dusk, on antennas, telephone poles or high trees in suburban areas and parks
Dimensions:	about 2 feet high but only 2 to 4 pounds in weight



Photo: Jim West



Photo: Ray Neuarth photography IA.

Favorite foods:	rodents, rabbits, squirrels and birds –prey can be several times heavier than the birds themselves, which explains the large size of the owl's wings. (Interestingly, they are the only animal that regularly eats skunks!)
Nesting habits:	about 30 to 50 feet up, often taking over a crow or squirrel nest; 2 to 3 eggs quite early in the year to take advantage of peak food supply
Incubation time:	26 to 35 days
Ready to perch:	6 to 7 weeks old
Ready to fly:	9 to 10 weeks old
Destination:	up to 150 miles away from their birthplace
Good news:	mom and dad may be back here next year
Bad news:	in spite of few natural enemies, human activities and structures take a significant toll through shootings, traps, road kills and electrocutions

http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Great_Horned_Owl.html

<http://www.owlpages.com/owls.php?genus=Bubo&species=virginianus>





Cosumnes River College Sustainability Committee

Members:

Gregory Beyrer
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Cindy Erickson
Dennis Hock
Dave Hodapp
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Student Members:

Heather Downing
Daniel Fagan
Elizabeth Gaylord
Kristiana Hauge
Kelsey Jacoby

Newsletter:

Cindy Erickson
Catherine Hooper

*We welcome your
comments, observations,
and story ideas.*

News In Brief...

To Buy a Compost-able Fork

We received several inquiries about purchasing recyclable picnicware (see "No More Fork: Musings on Green Plasticware...", October Issue). The CRC cafeteria found their forks through Sysco, but we tracked down some sources for the retail consumer:

Eco-Products:

http://www.ecoproducts.com/food_services/utensils/food_service_utensils_index.htm

Branch:

http://www.branchhome.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=215&zenid=aop7f913ecvvtjrd2rrl1kpp37



Senate Considers Green Bill

In June, Senate Bill 3124, the Community College Sustainability Act, was introduced to the Senate. The bill would require the Secretary of Labor to establish a program to provide for workforce training and education at community colleges in the fields of renewable energy and efficiency, green technology, and sustainable environmental practices.

The bill also requires that at least one-half of the funds provided under this Act be awarded to schools that have existing sustainability programs leading to certificates or degrees in at least one of the industries or practices listed above—good news for us at CRC with our new sustainability-related programs going through curriculum now (Environmental Studies & Sustainability degree, and Green Building Certificate program).

SB 3124 is currently in review, and the current budget situation no doubt makes its future even more uncertain, but we promise to keep you posted on its progress.



Earth Week 2009 is Coming!

Recently, the Earth Week organizing committee and the Campus Sustainability Committee joined forces. By mutual agreement, the Earth Week Committee became a sub-committee of the Sustainability Committee.

Julie Oliver (Biology) will chair the event, scheduled to take place the week of April 20-24, 2009. As in years past, membership on the Earth Week Committee is open to all staff. If you would like to serve on this committee, please notify Julie at oliverj@crc.losrios.edu.

Faculty, please consider using environment-related activities or projects in your spring semester classes.



More Recycling Tips

Did you know that the larger bin in your office is for *mixed* recyclables (paper, cardboard, plastic, glass, aluminum, etc.)?

However, please recycle **overhead transparencies, DVDs, CD-ROMs** or **batteries** in a separate container, now available in your division office. If no containers are to be found in your area, please contact a Sustainability Committee member.