

the green sheet

All Things Green in the Eastern Sierra

Saturday, April 18, 2015

FREE

Vol. 8, No. 1



PHOTO: COURTESY ESLT

Eastern Sierra Land Trust celebrates spring, and its upcoming season of events and activities. See p. 10.

GRADES OF GREEN SOMETHING IN THE WATER

MMS embraces trash-free lunch

By Evans

Habits, by definition, are routine actions repeated throughout our everyday lives. For some of us, recycling is a habit we've developed after years of consciously saving plastic bottles, rinsing out jars and aluminum cans, and then driving to Vons to dispose of them in the large green bins. For others, recycling is a habit still forming.

In hopes of increasing recycling and reducing waste, while creating "green" habits in the students, Mammoth Middle School (MMS) implemented a new trash-free lunch program this month with the help of Los Angeles based non-profit Grades of Green.

"In Mammoth, you really have to make an effort to recycle," said sixth grade science teacher Gil Campos. He has been teaching at MMS for nine years and said starting a full recycling program has been a challenge. During his second year, he brought in recycling containers from CalRecycle, hoping to earn money for the science department by turning in bottles and cans. But at the time, Mammoth Disposal didn't offer payment for recycling and "I had to take it to Bishop, and that got old very fast," he said. Plus, "The separate bins were difficult. The plastic bin would fill up way before the other

ones and it just became really tedious."

Since then, the recycling program has been lacking, with bins for paper in classrooms and not much else. But all that changed this year, as Mammoth Disposal offered to donate a large recycling dumpster that they empty and sort, without charging the school.

"People are more inclined to recycle if they can put

see GRADES page 11

By Vane

You could drive Route 395 for years and never know that in the hills behind Coso Junction is the third largest geothermal power plant in the United States. The Coso Operating Company geothermal facility, nine geothermal plants on U.S. Navy-owned land abutting China Lake, produces about 175 gross megawatts (MW) of power to Southern California Edison. To put that in perspective, a single megawatt has enough

electricity to provide power to roughly 1,000 homes.

The plants were constructed from 1987 to 1989, and currently use about 105 production wells to capture underground steam that steam turbines then transform into electricity.

"Drilling by the Navy started here in the 60's and 70's," explained geothermal facility General Manager Chris Ellis. A site tour demonstrated why the Navy explored the area:

steam issuing from pale-colored rock and muddy fumaroles attests to the geothermal activity necessary for geothermal power production.

For those who might not know how geothermal power is created, it all begins with magma below the earth's crust, which produces heat that in some areas comes into close contact with the earth's surface.

Geothermal power production takes advantage of these naturally occurring "hot spots" in the earth, using wells to bring super-heated fluids to the surface. When pressure is reduced, these fluids "flash" into steam, which is then used to turn turbines. The spinning turbines generate electricity just like a regular coal or hydro-electric plant. Leftover steam and fluid is recycled back into the ground, where it is re-heated by the earth and re-used.

The area around the Coso Operating Company geothermal facility has a fascinating history; first held sacred by the Paiute and Shoshone Tribes who settled in the area, then transformed into a health resort in the late 1800's, which took advantage of the many natural hot springs, and finally purchased by the Navy for its Naval Air Weapons Station.

see COSO page 7



PHOTO: EVANS

Gil Campos' (top right) fifth period science class, the designated "green team" at Mammoth Middle School, change habits with the help of Grades of Green staff Emily Gee and Allie Bussjaeger (far left).

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SIERRA STAR SETS THE BAR

Golf course innovates its water use in Mammoth's fourth drought year

By Vane

Like many golf courses across the state of California, Mammoth Lakes' Sierra Star is faced with a dilemma when it comes to the historic drought year.

"At the end of the day, grass is what we sell," said Sierra Star Superintendent Pat Lewis in an interview with The Sheet. But to grow that cash crop, Sierra Star must use water, an increasingly priceless resource in this fourth year of drought. How can a golf course use that resource conscientiously? Sierra Star may already have the answer.

Sierra Star PGA Head Golf Professional Dave Schacht explained that Sierra Star has been using reclaimed water to maintain its course since 2010. The program was a part of the original master plan for the golf course.

Reclaimed water is former wastewater (also known as sewage) treated to remove solids and impurities. The water can then be used in landscape irrigation, groundwater aquifer recharge, or to meet commercial and industrial water needs.

Sierra Star uses reclaimed water for two reasons, Schacht said: "Environmentally, it's the right thing to do; water is a precious resource, and we have to conserve it. Secondly, someone had the foresight to see possible drought conditions and plan for them."

That someone was Dan Dawson of the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL). "Back in '99, when the golf course opened, he worked with Mammoth Community Water District and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. He put many hours into developing the system, and got the Water District to buy in," Schacht explained.

Lewis said that Mammoth's reclaimed water is not wastewater effluent (liquid waste), but rather tertiary water, "which is one step away from drinking water." Tertiary water passes through a filter intended to keep out bacteria such as giardia, Lewis said.

The Water District stores its reclaimed water in two 1.5 million gallon tanks, using the second tank to manage the flow of water into the plant.

Sierra Star has an agreement with the Water District to use the reclaimed water, and pays for the privilege, Schacht said. Sierra Star remains the only major entity in town using reclaimed water, although Snowcreek Resort is currently pursuing its use as well.

Sierra Star's reliance on reclaimed water has already paid off. According to Mammoth Mountain Ski Area (Sierra Star's owner) Public Relations Lauren Burke, the use of reclaimed water at Sierra Star saves 74 million gallons per year of groundwater which in turn becomes available for long term municipal water supply needs. Since 2010, the reclaimed water program has saved approximately 370 million gallons.



PHOTO: PETER MORNING

A golfer tees off at Sierra Star Golf Course. Sierra Star uses reclaimed water to manage its turf, but will be cutting even that water use by 10 percent or more this golf season.

But in this fourth year of drought, Sierra Star is going still further to mitigate its impact on Mammoth's water supply. Schacht reported that after a recent meeting with the Water District, Sierra Star voluntarily agreed to cut water use by 10 percent.

"Our agreement [with the District] states that we don't have to, but in the spirit of cooperation, we are," he said.

Schacht said Sierra Star will likely cut more than 10 percent of its water use, as it evaluates where water is most and least needed on the course. Sierra Star has already cut its water use by about 30 percent since 2010, he added.

"Per our agreement with the District, we feel pretty comfortable that we can keep the grass alive, conserve water, and keep the cost down as well," he said.

Lewis said Sierra Star is also reducing areas of turf that are out of play. Course staff are switching to some native species in areas "we don't need to be as playable," he said, and are generally "reducing the plants around here that demand a lot of water."

Lewis also credited Sierra Star's Irrigation Technician Wade Heinsch for changing the way the golf course uses water. "He's made probably the biggest difference to our use of water through his own hard work and efforts," Lewis said, "and hours and hours of messing with sprinkler heads," he added with a laugh. (If you're curious to see the reclaimed water system at work, purple pipes and purple sprinkler heads indicate where reclaimed water is being used throughout the course.)

Both Schacht and Lewis agreed that Sierra Star may be ahead of the curve, but that Western golf courses need to start thinking differently about how to manage their turf.

"In the U.S., people have this idea of golf courses being wall to wall green," Schacht said. But he noted that last year's U.S. Open at Pinehurst Resort in North Carolina might help change that perception. "They completely redid their golf course [prior to the Open], using natural plants, and reducing their

water use by 30 percent," Schacht said.

Lewis said televising a golf event on that modified course would help shift people's mentality about what a course should look like.

Schacht also pointed out that well-known golf courses in the United Kingdom "typically don't have irrigation systems." Although the U.K. receives a great deal of rain, "There are times when it can appear that the turf is dead. That's called links golf. It's not as visually appealing to some, but I think it's beautiful," he said.

the green sheet

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"The biggest thing in the industry, on my side of it, is the environmental sustainability of maintaining a golf course," Lewis said. Apart from the Masters, and in Midwestern states that receive heavy rainfall, the wall-to-wall green aesthetic "is on its way out for sure," he concluded.

Sierra Star is scheduled to open on May 22.

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MAY 2nd | 11am - 3pm

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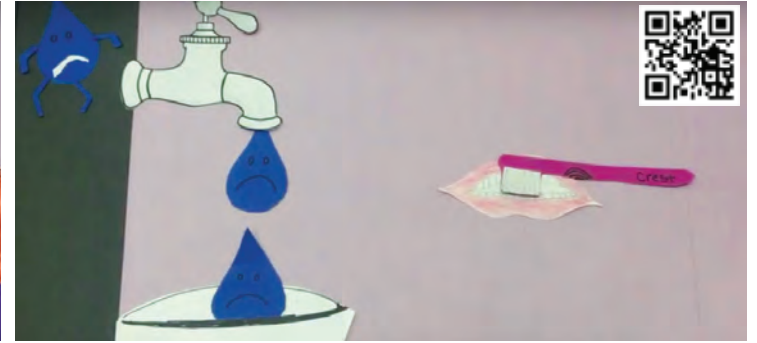


LIVINGWISE®

WHO KNEW PUBLIC SERVICE VIDEOS COULD BE FUN?

By Gil Campos

For nearly a decade the High Sierra Energy Foundation, 6th graders from Mammoth Middle School, the Mammoth Community Water District, and Southern California Edison, have partnered together for the very successful LivingWise® Program. This program is designed to teach the 6th graders about energy and water conservation. Every year, Pamela Stayden from High Sierra Energy Foundation helps orchestrate a community outreach project in which the young conservationists participate to help spread ideas of saving water and energy to the town of Mammoth Lakes. This year, with a sponsorship from the Mammoth Community Water District (and a huge thanks to our judge, Betty Hylton!), students were asked to create a public service announcement that related to the extreme drought we are experiencing, and the importance of saving water during the upcoming difficult summer months. The following students created these unique animations in hopes of passing along their message to others so we can all begin changing our habits and use water wisely.



PHOTOS: COURTESY LIVINGWISE

Sill images clockwise from top left: Stay Water Wise: Jessie Bonich, Kimra Smith, Delany Perpall; Stan the Man: Catherine Gacho, Alexa Cruz, Michelle Villalpando, Rebekah Temple, Christo Jaimes; The Leak: Brayan Murguia, Liam Gooch, Electa Clark; and Save Water: Estefania Apodaca, Monique Garcia, Kathy Medina. Scan the QR codes to see the videos in their entirety.

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SUSTAINABLE VS. SUSTAINABLE

By Rick Phelps

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.
- A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens

While Dickens published those words more than 150 years ago, they seem eerily descriptive of today's world. The words popped into my head as I contemplated the many facets of the popularity of the sustainability movement. Sustainability is the "spring of hope," but the question of how to pay for it is the "winter of despair." This short column

will explore that dilemma with the motive of getting us thinking rather than trying to resolve the issue. Webster's defines sustainable as: "Capable of being sustained; of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged; of or relating to a lifestyle involving the use of sustainable methods." Wikipedia, drawing on many academic papers, offers a more complex, but comprehensive definition: "Sustainability has been used more in the sense of human sustainability on planet Earth and this has resulted in the most widely quoted definition of sustainability as a part of the concept sustainable development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The wonderful simplicity of sustainability gives birth to many supporting themes such as sustainable agriculture, sustainable transportation, sustainable families and renewable (sustainable) energy.

Sustainable energy is closest to my heart as it promises sources of energy that will minimize resource use and environmental impact, but will still provide the watts to power our modern economy. Governments across the globe also support sustainable energy, offering generous incentives and subsidies to spur sustainable energy development. The result has been rapid growth in solar and wind resources with eager proponents congratulating each other. Unfortunately, there is one troubling "gotcha:" how to pay for these sustainable projects and how to make them financially sustainable (see winter of despair)? The money to provide the incentives for sustainable energy projects comes from either taxes collected by governments or from surcharges levied on utility customers. When times were booming, this money was a minor cost, but as growth slowed, it became more significant and resulted in a reduction of incentives for sustainable energy development, most notably in Spain. And, as history has shown us, any project



HSEF Executive Director Rick Phelps
dependent on tax subsidies or utility surcharges is not sustainable. (e.g. Synthetic Fuels Corporation circa 70-80s)
A contrasting positive is that, over the longer term, any short term financial "losses" in sustainable energy development are more than offset by the value of "externalities" that are not included in standard financial calculations. These externalities include estimated values of improvement in air quality and related health benefits, reduction of carbon based energy sources, and
see SUSTAINABLE, page 6



TOWN CLEAN UP DAY
 SATURDAY, MAY 16
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Beginning at 8am on Saturday, May 16, you can drop off your **TRASH, RECYCLING & GREEN WASTE** at the **TOWN CLEAN-UP DAY STATIONS** conveniently located throughout town.

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LOOK FOR MORE DETAILS IN MAY 9 NEWSPAPERS

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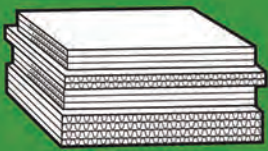
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SUSTAINABLE

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climate change impacts, among many others.

The only problem with this concept is that externalities do not generate cash. And, if sustainable projects do not generate positive cash returns, they are not sustainable, regardless of the value of externalities. It takes cash to make payrolls, buy supplies, make capital investments and pay lobbyists to ensure continued political support.

Politicians and policy makers address this concern by allocating limited tax and subsidy dollars to favored technologies or promoters. This is a messy process and generates a few winners and a lot of losers, as would be expected. More importantly, can the process be improved, and limited funds invested better, or are we doomed to business as usual?

President Obama may provide part of the answer by his stated "all of the above" energy policy. I assume he means oil, gas, nuclear, wind, solar, geothermal and host of emerging technologies. Perhaps it would be possible to rank all of the above, including sustainable and fossil energy sources, and develop a better policy

framework. Suggested criteria for ranking might include:

1) Profit and loss both basis current and projected with a focus on cash; simply put, is the technology a money maker now and, if not, when?

2) What is the energy produced per unit of incentive/subsidy; this is another way of estimating the value of the tax/subsidy investment.

3) Is there a distinct probability of technological success? How is it measured?

4) Obviously, each of these criteria deserves more explanation and the weighting of each in any ranking will pre-determine any outcome. However, the objective of this column is to stimulate your thinking on the question of what is sustainable versus what is really sustainable. I hope I succeeded.

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.



Community Calendar

Saturday, April 18/

Earth Day Sierra Event, hosted by the Sunrise Rotary of Bishop. Check out the vendors at Bishop City Park from 10 a.m.-3 p.m., plus live music, talent show, informational displays, trash triathlon, and a human powered Ferris wheel. Info: www.BloggingBishop.com, or [Facebook.com/bishopsunriserotary](https://www.facebook.com/bishopsunriserotary).

Tuesday, April 21/

Sierra Club Potluck and Program at Crowley Lake Community Center, 6:15 social and potluck, bring a dish to share and your own place setting. Program at 7 p.m. with researcher David Lee presenting "Rock Art of the Eastern Sierra: Local Examples of a Global Expression." Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, April 22/

Owens Lake Big Day Spring survey of birds at Owens Lake. Birders with at least some experience are welcomed to help out. Contact Mike Prather to sign up. 760.876.5807 or mprather@lonepinetv.com. Meet at 7 a.m. at the Diaz Lake parking lot three miles south of Lone Pine on Highway 395.

Friday, April 24-25/

Owens Lake Bird Festival in Lone Pine. Two days of tours, speakers, and inspiration at Owens Lake Important Bird Area. Tickets are \$35; \$20 for students. Children under 12 free with an adult. Info: call 760.873.6500 or email owenslakefestival@friendsoftheinyo.org.

Friday, April 24/

Annual Andrea Lawrence Award Dinner hosted by the Mono Lake Committee. Info: Lily Pastel at 760.647.6595.

Friday, May 1/

Eastern Sierra Land Trust's annual GardenFest (See story p. 10) ESLT Office Backyard (250 N. Fowler St., Bishop CA), 3 - 6 p.m. Visit www.eslt.org for info.

Monday, May 4/

Mono Basin Historical Society potluck dinner and meeting at the Lee Vining Community Center. Potluck begins at 6:30 p.m. followed by the meeting at 7. The public is invited to attend. Info: 760.647.6644.

Saturday, May 9/

Migratory Bird Day with Friends of the Inyo. This year's IMBD focuses on restoring bird habitat. Meet at 8 a.m. at the junction of 395 and Westgard Pass road. Bring binoculars, sturdy waterproof footwear, water and lunch. Info: email: joraATfriendsoftheinyo.org

Saturday, May 16/

Excelsior Auto Tour with Friends of the Inyo. Four-wheel auto tours are a great way to experience the edge of the roadless area in one day. RSVP to joraATfriendsoftheinyo.org

Friday, May 22/

Snowcreek and Sierra Star Golf Course Projected Opening Day

Friday-Sunday, June 19-21/

Fourteenth Annual Bird Chautauqua. Registration opens on Tuesday, April 15, 2014 at 6:30 a.m. Check-in at the Community Center in Lee Vining.

Saturday, June 27/

Canoe Tours of Mono Lake Saturdays and Sundays June - Labor Day weekend. Tours begin at 8, 9:30, and 11 a.m. and last about an hour. Reservations recommended. \$25 per person (no children under age 4; no pets). Info: Mono Lake Committee at 760.647.6595.

July 13-17 and 20-24/

Bodie Hills Stewardship Projects. Projects are designed for college students at no cost. To apply, email resume and cover letter to info@bodiehills.org. Please indicate which week you would like to participate in.

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COSO
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“It wasn’t until 1981 that the Navy and private industry joined together and did real exploratory drilling for the purpose of developing commercial geothermal,” Ellis said.

The first of the facility’s four power plants eventually went online in May of 1987. Each power plant now produces about 33 gross MW of power. Ellis said the facility can produce so much energy in part because it operates 24 hours a day. But that operation comes with challenges, such as pipe maintenance and the handling of toxic gasses like carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide, both byproducts of geothermal water extraction.

Coso Operating Company works with Great Basin Unified Air Pollution Control District to ensure that gas emissions remain at acceptable levels, Ellis said, even going so far as to make elemental sulfur out of hydrogen sulfide, which Coso Operating Company then sells to the agriculture industry for fertilizer.

Turning hydrogen sulfide into sulfur isn’t a cheap process, Ellis said. He called it the highest cost to the geothermal facility operations.

Another challenge to operations: the necessary use of water. “We certainly do use a lot of water in the form of steam,” Ellis said. “But there is no fresh water up here; all of it is brackish.”

Coso Operating Company also uses water from Hay Ranch, which it operates under a conditional use permit with Inyo County. That water is added to the facility’s injection stream to augment natural recharge in the field, Ellis said. Ultimately, it will be turned into steam by the heat of the earth.

But, as in other parts of the County,

water at Hay Ranch is dwindling with the drought. “It’s an issue,” Ellis said. Although Coso Operating Company’s Conditional Use Permit allows for pumping of up to 4,839 acre-feet per year, he said the Company has pre-emptively reduced the pumping amount while working with the County to set the rate.

“We are currently pumping at 33 percent of the permitted rate,” he said. “We’ve stayed ahead of the County and cut pumping before the County asks ... We want to do the right thing first.”

Coso Operating Company Public Relations Officer Julie Faber said the Company makes every effort to be a good neighbor to Inyo County.

“We like to do our part with sponsorships and hiring local people,” she said. She noted that the Company provides scholarships to local students, and support for local sports teams. Coso Operating Company also offers support to the Tri-County Fair, Mule Days, Lone Pine Film Festival, and numerous other local events and organizations.

Ellis added that Coso Operating Company also strives to be aware of native Tribal concerns. Work at the plants avoids sites of cultural significance, such as petroglyphs, a prayer site, and the hot springs.

The plants themselves are an impressive feat of engineering. Production wells, which range between 2,500 and 13,000 feet deep, provide steam to a miles-long system of pipes that transports the steam to turbines.

That steam is about 600 degrees Fahrenheit, Faber said. Because of this, the pipes move as they heat and cool, requiring pipe supports that allow the

see COSO, page 8



PHOTO: COURTESY COSO OPERATING COMPANY
An aerial view of Coso Operating Company power plant “Navy 1,” one of four power plants that produce 175 gross megawatts (MW) of power.



Look closely at your April energy bills this year. Chances are you received something called the California Climate Credit. It’s a credit from a state program designed to cut carbon pollution. If you’d like to use your savings, below are simple and affordable ideas to manage your energy use.



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Around \$32

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COSO

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pipes to shift, and anchors to shape the pipes into loops as they grow. These sinuous, beautiful curves and arches give the geothermal facility grounds the look of an abstract art installation.

The pipes enter each power station, weaving into steam turbines. The turbines are coupled to generators, and turn at about 3,600 rpm, producing 13,800 volts of electricity. That electricity goes to Kramer Junction and Inyokern, and into the grid.

Once the steam has powered the turbines, the steam then flows into a condenser, where gases rise to the top and water falls to the bottom. That fluid is then reused within the system, entering cooling towers. The water that remains—about 55 percent of all fluid used in operation, Ellis said—is collected and sent to the injection system for reinjection to the ground.

Meanwhile the gas that separates from the water travels to an abatement area, where the effects of carbon dioxide and hydrogen sulfide emissions are mitigated. Ellis said that geothermal plants only emit about 5 percent of the carbon dioxide emitted by coal, and only about 20 percent of the carbon dioxide emitted by the use of natural gas.

Such a complex operation requires 93 employees, and “more art than science,” Ellis laughed. To perfect that art,

employees go through a rigorous training program, learning first how to run the well field, then, after two years, to run the power plant, and finally to run the control room, through which they monitor and run the entire facility. That training program “takes a minimum of five years,” he said.

Geothermal facility staff are hardly deterred by the demands of their work; most employees have been at the facility for many years. Ellis himself came to work for Coso Operating Company in 1988.

“I said I’d be here for a short period of time, and I’ve been here ever since,” he said.

Faber agreed. The facility staff “Is really special,” she said. “It rings true to how long people have been here.”

While most visitors to the area, and even many locals, might not know the scale of the geothermal operations tucked away in the hills of Inyo County, Ellis said Coso Operating Company strives to give back to both far-flung and local communities.

“Locally, we are the largest private taxpayer in Inyo County,” he said. “We are also an employer of local people and businesses. We believe in buying local wherever possible. We do our best to be an excellent community partner, supporting multiple organizations and



PHOTOS: COURTESY COSO OPERATING COMPANY

Above, a network of pipes directs hot steam from production wells toward a power station. Below, a steam turbine blade, which rotates at 3,600 rpm to produce electricity.

efforts to improve the quality of life in the area.

“On a more global scale, geothermal energy is an outstanding method for replacing energy demands associated with fossil fuels, thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollu-

tion in general. We do this while providing base load electricity which contributes to a stable electrical transmission and distribution system.”

Coso Operating Company will have a booth again at Earth Day on April 18 in the Bishop City Park.

Join ESLT as we Celebrate this Season of Growth!

GardenFest

Friday, May 1
3 ~ 6pm
250 N. Fowler St.
in Bishop

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From the sweeping vistas of the High Sierra to the wildflowers in your backyard, Eastern Sierra Land Trust is committed to protecting the beauty and productivity of our region. Become a member of ESLT today, and you'll help save these wonders forever.

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GRAY BEAR

AT MAMMOTH

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GRAY BEAR RESIDENCE II

4 Bedrooms
4.5 Baths
Oversize 2-Car Garage
2740 sq.ft.
\$1,285,000

GRAY BEAR VICINITY MAP

GRAY BEAR at Mammoth is Mammoth Lakes' newest residential neighborhood,

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View the GRAY BEAR DESIGN CENTER:

Mammoth Realty Group's Main Street office at
3325 Main Street, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

www.GrayBearMammoth.com

The Bureau of Real Estate Preliminary Title Report is on file with listing broker. All reservations will be submitted to Inyo Mono Title Company, at which time a refundable 'reservation' deposit of 3% of the purchase price is required. Developer reservations available at Mammoth Realty Group.



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WHO'S WHO IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE

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STEWARDSHIP

ESLT CELEBRATES SPRING

All around us, spring unfolds her tendrils. Everywhere you look, our land has come alive: butterflies dance from flower to flower, young calves romp in their pastures, and even in the high country new life peeks out from between cracks in the Sierra's granite visage.

Where winter is a time of rest and preparation, spring is a season of growth and discovery: every year there's something new to behold. This is the magic of our rugged land, and the inspiration for our work.

We at Eastern Sierra Land Trust believe there's something inherently special in our rural landscape. We dedicate ourselves to protecting what makes the Eastern Sierra so unique: the working family farms, the stunning vistas, the wildlife habitats, and the historic places that speak to our roots.

With the coming of spring, we are reminded of our own roots: roots that first gained hold in Swall Meadows. Fourteen years ago, a concerned group of residents witnessed how development hampered the historic annual migration of the Round Valley mule deer herd through the community. These individuals came together, taking action

to protect the land's values by forming Eastern Sierra Land Trust.

Many years later, those same meadows where we first sprang up are blackened and scarred in the aftermath of wildfire. But the rootstock is still there, and, with a little nurturing, new life will grow again from the ashes. Along with other ESLT-protected lands further north that were touched by wildfire this spring, our five conservation easements and our Wildlife Preserve in Swall Meadows, all damaged by the Round Fire, will be a focus for extensive habitat restoration efforts to begin this summer. If you're interested in lending a hand, we encourage you to check www.eslt.org for ways you can help bring this landscape back to life.

As spring buds and blossoms around us, we're also reminded of the critical role that bees, butterflies, and other pollinators play in life's grand orchestra. Without them, there would be no new growth: they are the catalyst that keeps the Eastern Sierra blooming, year after year. We started our Eastside Pollinator Garden Project last spring to bring native pollinators to gardens throughout the Eastern Sierra, and this year the project is growing anew. We're teaching



PHOTO: COURTESY ESLT

ESLT is focusing this spring and summer on new projects to restore Round Valley mule deer habitat destroyed by the Round Fire.

gardeners of all ages and experience about the role pollinators play in maintaining the beauty and productivity of our region. With the support of our community of members, volunteers, and friends like you, we're showing these gardeners how they can help us build a corridor of pollinator-friendly habitat from Walker to Lone Pine.

And in just one week, we're hosting our annual GardenFest. On May Day, Friday May 1, ESLT is throwing a party to celebrate the growing season. If you're interested in learning more about the pivotal role pollinators play, Jaime Pawelek from the UC Berkeley Urban Bee Lab will be there to answer all your buzzing questions. There will be tomato,

pepper, and other vegetable plants to purchase for your edible garden, and you can beautify your yard with native plants brought by the California Native Plant Society. You'll also have the opportunity to learn about our local CSA and sign up for a weekly produce box. Plus, don't forget to bring last year's seeds to trade in our Seed Swap! This free, fun event will take place from 3-5 in ESLT's office backyard at 250 N. Fowler St. in Bishop. Everyone is welcome - we hope to celebrate spring with you.

To learn more about ESLT's work to protect the Eastern Sierra's wild and working lands - and how you can contribute to our efforts - please visit us at www.eslt.org.



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GRADES

continued from page 1

everything in one bin," Campos said.

Although the dumpster has been at MMS most of the school year, "Grades of Green came in to help us get the information out to the students," he said. "It's still a learning curve for the kids. Out of habit they just toss everything ... It's like you've been brushing your teeth wrong and now you have to learn the right way."

Grades of Green was started by four volunteer mothers at Grand View Elementary in Manhattan Beach. Founders wanted to instill eco-friendly, environmental values in the students. After winning an environmental award from the Environmental Protection Agency, the four moms started Grades of Green as a non-profit organization on Earth Day, 2010 by providing resources and green activities through their website.

After signing up, schools can download 40 different green activities—from the trash free lunch program, to in-class composting projects, water reduction challenges, and energy savers. The Grades of Green staff offers technical support, as well as hands on interaction with schools, mostly in Southern California. Over 187,000 students in 286 schools and 38 states are associated with Grades of Green through their website. They are also in six different countries, most recently adding a school in Kenya.

Parent Colleen Cole first signed MMS up on the Grades of Green website after moving to Mammoth from Hermosa Beach in January. As a parent volunteer for the Grades of Green program at Hermosa Elementary School with her daughter, Devon (currently in seventh grade), Cole has seen the impact of the program firsthand. "It empowers the kids to take control," she said. "In

elementary school, it is really parent-driven. But in Middle and High School it's student driven ... By Middle School, they should already have it down."

The most challenging part down south, according to Cole, is convincing school administration and teachers to take it on. But getting Principal Annie Rinaldi and Campos on board was easy. Plus, "Grades of Green has already developed all of these programs so we don't have to try and reinvent the wheel," Cole said.

Grades of Green Programs and Marketing Coordinator Emily Gee and Programs and Outreach Manager Allie Bussjaeger came to Mammoth at the end of March to host an assembly and get MMS students excited about trash reduction and recycling. "The trash free lunch program is an easy way to start being green and an easy way to tell the direct impact the kids are having by the end of the day," said Gee.

Bussjaeger told the students that Americans generate 30 percent of the world's trash and "90 percent of the stuff we buy ends up in a landfill in three months or less. Not only are we buying a lot of stuff, we're not keeping it very long," she said.

She explained that the average American generates four pounds of trash per day, 28 pounds per week and 1,460 pounds per year. So adding up "every single person in the U.S., [our trash] weighs the same as 41 million elephants," Bussjaeger told the assembly, eliciting gasps from the students.

"But we don't want to scare everyone about trash," Bussjaeger said. "There are simple changes you can start making today."

Gee and Bussjaeger gave the students easy solutions, such as bringing reusable containers to school, and buying bulk rather than individually packaged snacks. They also introduced the new sorting station that will replace the regular trashcans during lunch.

The sorting station includes a share box, liquids bucket, recycling container (the largest), a landfill can, and a box to stack cardboard lunch trays. The share box is for unopened snacks and whole fruits and vegetables, and "If you're hungry, go to the share box and you can take an extra snack," Bussjaeger told the students.

Students then empty out their milk, juice, or other drinks into the liquids bucket so that they can recycle the containers in the next bin, along with plastic bags, straws, plastic utensils, paper wrappers and aluminum cans.

The next bin, marked "landfill" is intended to remind the students where their trash goes. "Our trash doesn't just go away, it has to go to a landfill," Bussjaeger said. "It's such a hassle to get

see **GRADES**, page 12



PHOTO: EVANS

MMS students sort trash during lunch.



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The Town of Mammoth Lakes and Sierra Conservation Project have been working together to expand condo and business recycling programs throughout the Town. We would like to encourage you to take advantage of the available recycling programs and bring them to the attention of your HOA.

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Call: (760) 914-0115

GRADES

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rid of our trash. The best solution is just to make less of it."

The goal of the trash-free lunch program at MMS is to reduce the normal six bags of trash at lunchtime to three. On the day of the assembly, students only filled one and half bags. "If they keep that up every day of the year that's diverting 17,000 pounds of trash from the landfill," Gee said.

MMS Cafeteria Manager Tobi Yeomans is all about the new program. She said she had been taking the leftover food from the cafeteria home to Bishop to feed her chickens and add to her compost pile for years. "It's good that they [students] learn about recycling and try the best they can," she said. "If we don't start it now, we're in trouble. The more we can teach the kids, the better off we all are."

Campos' fifth period science class is the designated "green team" for the school waste reduction program, gathering classroom recycling bins and promoting waste reduction around campus. "After today everyone is excited, but maybe after a week everyone isn't going to care as much. We want to look to you guys to see how to keep the momentum going," Bussjaeger told the science class. "Even though we're far

away, think of us as your cheerleaders. We're available anytime you need help."

The students talked about decorating the sorting stations, making posters with lists of recyclables to hang around the school, and how to hand out prizes donated by Grades of Green to incentivize other students to reduce trash. Gee and Bussjaeger also encouraged the class to post their ideas on the MMS page on the Grades of Green website to inspire other students across the world to go green.

"We're hoping that after today you guys are inspired and empowered to know that you can make these changes and continue with these great habits the rest of your lives," Bussjaeger said.

For now, Campos monitors the sorting station everyday at lunch to regulate the recycling. Although it's fairly late in the school year to launch the trash free lunch program, Campos said it will give the school a chance to "see what's working and not working" before next year starts. By starting the Grades of Green program on the first day of school next year, Campos hopes to send the message: "This is just the way it is done now," he said.

Learn more about Grades of Green at gradesofgreen.org.



HEALTH

TOBACCO IS FAR FROM GREEN

Everyone knows someone who has died from a tobacco-related disease. Everyone knows smoking and exposure to second hands smoke is bad for one's health. But what it does to our Earth is also a tragedy.

The tobacco plant is sensitive and therefore needs multiple pesticides, fungicides and herbicides throughout its growing season. Workers in tobacco fields are exposed to these chemicals, causing a host of problems including acute poisoning, cancer, nervous system damage and birth defects. In the developing, environmental laws are often non-existent, and farmers lack protective equipment or training in the handling pesticides. Workers can get "green tobacco sickness," which occurs when they absorb an overdose of nicotine from wet tobacco leaves. Typical symptoms include weakness, dizziness, headache, nausea, vomiting, cramps and trouble breathing.

Trees are cleared both to provide land to grow tobacco, and to provide fuel to cure tobacco leaves. Tobacco is grown in more than 100 countries, including 80 developing countries accounting for 5 percent of deforestation in developing countries. Thousands of farmers have

replaced traditional food crops with tobacco, making hunger and malnutrition worse.

According to the Economic Input-Output Lifecycle Assessment (EIO-LCA) models developed by Carnegie Mellon University's Green Design Institute regarding carbon dioxide, if cigarettes were to disappear from the United States, we would see a carbon benefit equivalent to taking nearly 4 million cars off the road.

Meanwhile, cigarette butts are not biodegradable and contain benzene, nicotine, cadmium, and other poisons. Butts are the number one type of litter found in international beach clean-ups. They are poisonous to wildlife and young children. Fifty-six California cities have made their beaches smoke free.

Reduced deforestation and renewed tree growth, which would in turn lead to reduced amounts of CO2 in our atmosphere; land for food cultivation, which could reduce hunger; and a reduction in the amount of trash that is generated in the growing, manufacturing, use and disposal of these products—these are all excellent reasons to celebrate Earth Day by living tobacco-free.

- Mono County Health Department

CELEBRATE EARTH DAY. LIVE TOBACCO FREE.

TOBACCO'S EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT

Tobacco Farming



Deforestation

Soil
Erosion

Nutrient
Depletion

Loss of
Habitat

Global
Warming

Flooding

Biological Diversity

**TO QUIT, CALL THE CA SMOKER'S HELPLINE
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Message by the Tobacco Tax Health Protection Act of 1988 - Prop. 99,
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April 18, 2015

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

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ENTICING EVENTS IN THE RANGE OF LIGHT

The Sierra Club was established in 1892 with 177 members, with John Muir elected the first president. One hundred years later, the Range of Light Group (ROLG) was formed in 1992, serving all of Inyo and Mono counties. “Range of Light” is a term that John Muir used to describe the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

Outings continue to be a major activity of the Sierra Club and the ROLG, with local events ranging from lake clean-ups and flower walks to kayak trips and photography workshops. ROLG has identified specific areas worthy of consideration for wilderness designation. Some outings throughout the year are directly linked to these potential new wilderness areas.

Residents and visitors to the Eastern Sierra benefit greatly from the outings program. Everyone can enjoy a free outdoor activity, meet new people, explore and learn about new places, and gain appreciation for the natural environment. Dedicated ROLG outings leaders work year round to provide a variety of outdoor experiences that are open to everyone, not just Sierra Club members, in every season. For the past several years, the ROLG has also been working to restore the historic Blue Diamond



PHOTOS: SHALLE GENEVIEVE

Top: ROLG visits CARMA in the White Mountains. Bottom: Participants paddle Mono Lake.

cross-country ski trails, adding to the community’s recreation options.

Monthly meetings may include

potlucks, speakers, and films focusing on local areas and issues. ROLG participates in many community events

throughout the year, collaborates with the Forest Service and other local environmental groups, and monitors/acts on issues of environmental concern.

ROLG is currently involved with many issues in the eastern Sierra: Participating in the Inyo National Forest planning process; working to get the flow of the Owens River modified to help in restoration of Lower Owens River; advocating for “no bobcat trapping” zone in Mono Basin; and involvement in the Inyo County Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment (REGPA) issue. Sierra Club is trying to ensure that the new forest plan will take account of all sensitive species, rather than just isolated patches of land. ROLG is supporting efforts to modify the flow requirements for the Lower Owens River better to mimic normal flow variations and thus improve restoration of the river, including recruitment of river-side trees. ROLG consultants provided specific suggestions for such modification.

As stewards of the land, what we all do affects everything else. Our future is interconnected and Sierra Club’s motto—to “Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet”—shows the concern for this future.



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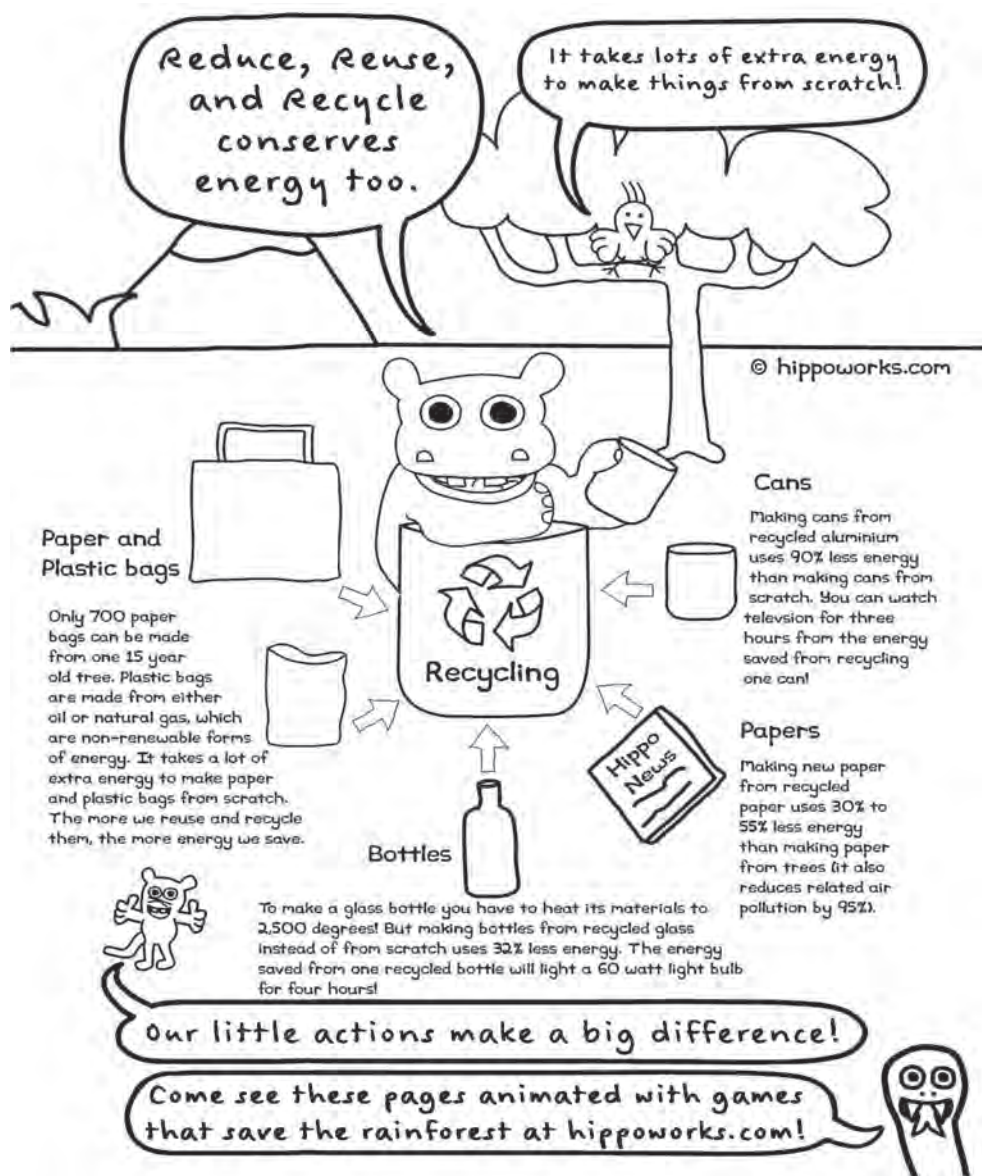
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RANGE OF LIGHT GROUP

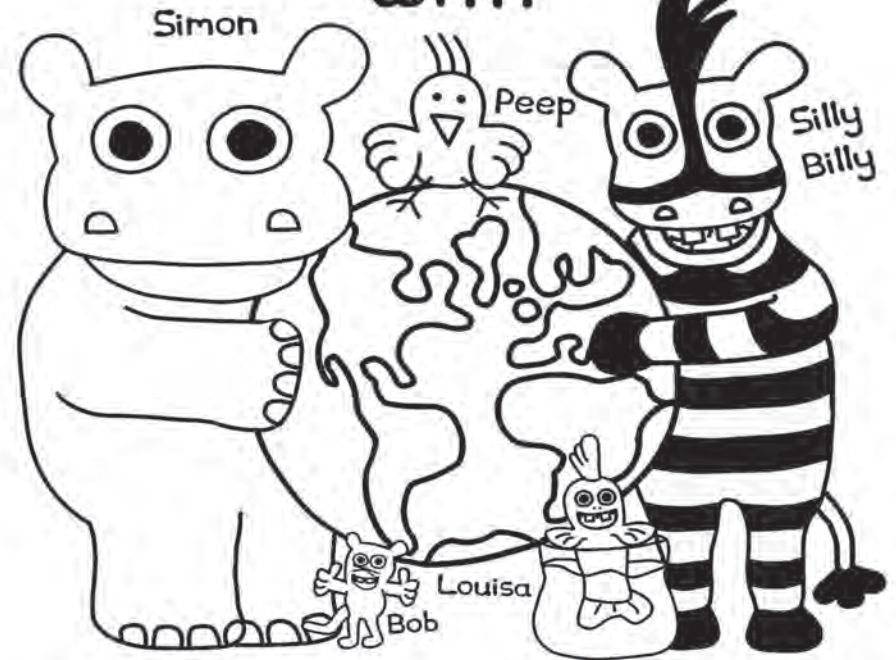
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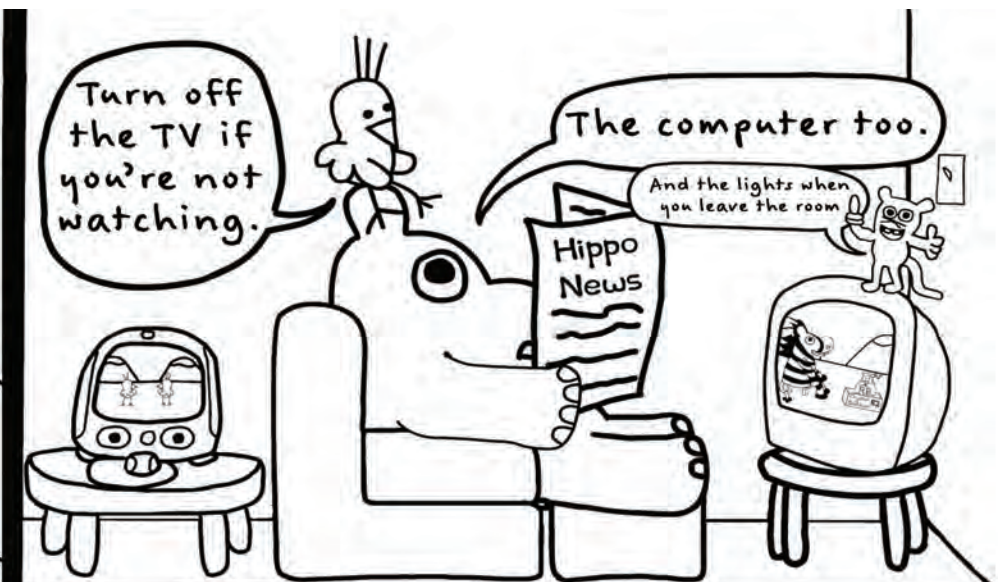
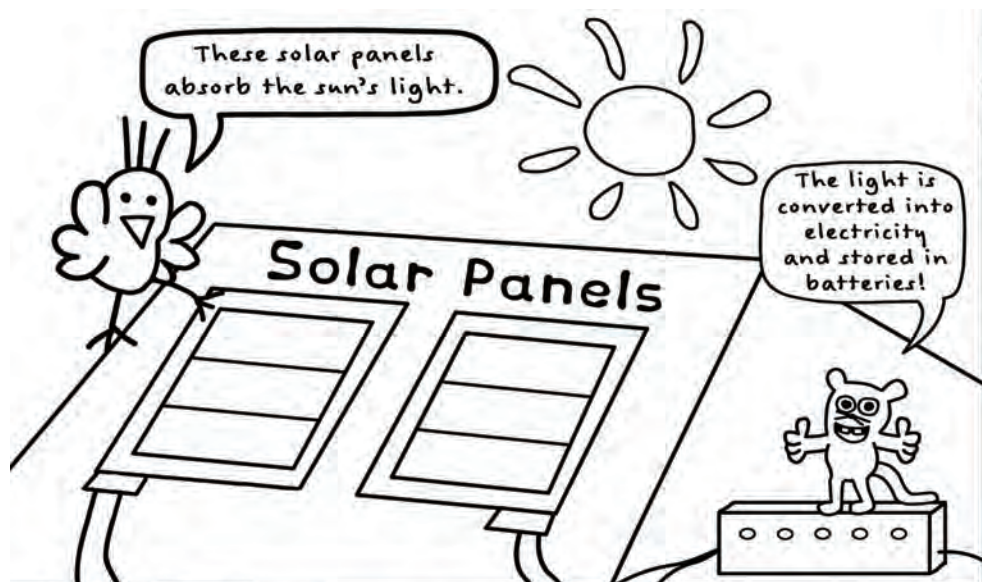


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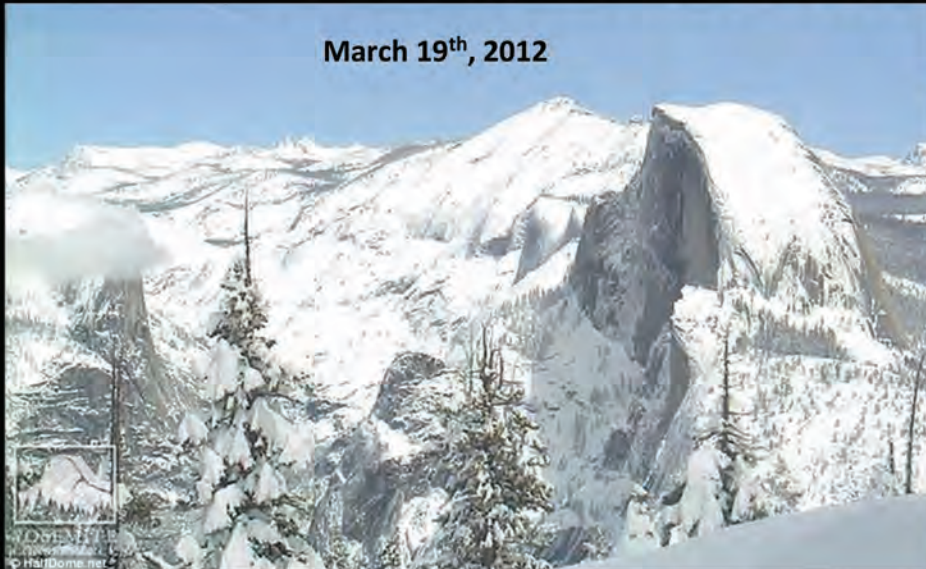
and the rest of the gang from hippoworks.com

By Denis Thomopoulos



Missing in Action! Sierra Snowpack

DO YOUR PART: avoid water waste and unreasonable use



**Yosemite webcam image provided by Yosemite Conservancy. View webcam images here: yosemiteconservancy.org/webcams

Level 3 Restrictions in Place

Commit to reducing your water use by 30%

- ❖ Cut your shower time by a couple minutes
- ❖ Wash fewer loads of laundry and dishes
- ❖ Spruce up your sprinklers so they don't mist, leak, or water outside the landscape area
- ❖ Do not use water to wash hard surfaces
- ❖ Vehicles may only be washed at commercial facilities

Go to the Mammoth Community Water District website for a complete list of Level 3 water restrictions

www.mcwd.dst.ca.us

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