

LWV hosts discussion on Sustainable Groundwater

By Jennifer Trainor

The League of Women Voters of Piedmont hosted a Zoom event on January 18 entitled “Sustainable Groundwater in California: The Challenges Ahead”. The discussion featured Tim Godwin, Technical Policy Advisor for Sustainable Groundwater, who filled in for the scheduled speaker, Paul Gosselin, Deputy Director of Sustainable Groundwater for the State Department of Water Resources, who had a last-minute emergency.

Godwin spoke in detail about the requirements and mechanics of the Sustainable Groundwater Act (SGMA), the first California law to regulate groundwater. SGMA became law in 2014. In times of drought, groundwater supplies up to 60% of the State’s total water needs. Even in wetter years, groundwater can account for 40% of total state usage. Some basins are 100% dependent

on groundwater.

SGMA implementation is envisaged over a 20-year period. It enables the formation of local Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs), which oversee basins in their areas.

Of more than 500 alluvial basins, SGMA has identified 21 that are critically overdrafted. An additional 94, representing 90% of total groundwater pumping in California, are considered high and medium priority. Currently, plans for eight of the 21 critical overdraft basins have been approved.

SGMA defines sustainability in terms of six conditions to be avoided:

- 1) lowering groundwater levels
- 2) reduction of groundwater storage
- 3) seawater intrusion
- 4) degraded water quality
- 5) land subsidence
- 6) depletion of interconnected streams

As an example of land subsidence, Godwin told of the Friant-Kern Canal, which has had a 60% reduction in its ability to convey water, due to the partial collapse of land subsidence. He noted that when land above an aquifer starts to collapse, it threatens bridges, railways, pipelines and water pipes.

Godwin explained that determining the appropriate metrics for groundwater pumping, water levels and recharge is a complex process. Each local agency needs to evaluate the level of demand for water, sources of supply, risk of contamination, performance of local wells, and many other factors.

To learn more about this talk and see the presentation, visit the League’s website at www.lwvpiedmont.org. To view a recording, visit the League’s YouTube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3v60XGmr13V_9WaYj6qUJg.



Environmental books to read in 2023

By Sophie Roberts

Is your New Year’s resolution to read more? Maybe you want to learn more about climate science. Here is a list of engaging books about climate change. Some will leave you hopeful for the future while others are a stark reminder of what’s at stake if we don’t address the climate crisis. The list also includes a novel that tackles environmental issues.

1. All We Can Save: Truth, Courage, and Solutions for the Climate Crisis, Edited by Ayana Elizabeth Johnson and Katharine K. Wilkinson
 “All We Can Save illuminates the insights of dozens of diverse women leading on climate in the United States. The list includes scientists, journalists, farmers, lawyers, teachers, activists, innovators, wonks, and designers across generations, geographies, and race. It aims to advance a more representative, nuanced, and solution-oriented public conversation on the climate crisis. These women offer a spectrum of ideas and insights for how we can rapidly, radically reshape society.”

2. Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer
 “Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, a mother, and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings – asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass – offer us gifts and lessons, even if we’ve forgotten how to hear their voices. In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of a wider eco-

logical consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world.”

3. The Day the World Stops Shopping: How Ending Consumerism Saves the Environment and Ourselves by J.B. MacKinnon
 “Consuming less is our best strategy for saving the planet — but can we do it? In this thoughtful and surprisingly optimistic book, journalist J. B. MacKinnon investigates how we may achieve a world without shopping. Drawing from experts in fields ranging from climate change to economics, MacKinnon investigates how living with less would change our planet, our society, and ourselves. Along the way, he reveals just how much we stand to gain: an investment in our physical and emotional wellness. The pleasure of caring for our possessions. Closer relationships with our natural world and one another. Imaginative and inspiring, The Day the World Stops Shopping will embolden you to envision another way.”

4. Climate Change is Racist: Race Privilege and the Struggle for Climate Justice by Jeremy Williams
 “In this eye-opening book, writer and environmental activist Jeremy Williams takes us on a short, urgent journey across the globe – from Kenya to India, the USA to Australia – to understand how White privilege and climate change overlap. We’ll look at the environmental facts, hear the experiences of the people most affected on our planet and learn from the activists leading the change.”

See *Climate Corner* on page 30

Climate Speaker Series continues on February 8

Piedmont resident Rupa Basu to address health impacts from rising temperatures

By Hope Salzer

Piedmont Connect and the League of Women Voters (LWV) of Piedmont continue their 2022-23 Climate Speaker Series on Wednesday, February 8, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. with an online presentation by Piedmont resident Dr. Rupa Basu. The talk will highlight the health impacts of fossil-fuel pollution presenting the latest scientific evidence, followed by a live, moderated Q&A.

Basu is Chief of the Air and Climate Epidemiology Section of the California EPA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHA). She identifies heat increases and their resulting health impacts as a common global problem which are significantly underreported.

Basu will present the scientific consensus on the health impacts of rising temperatures, such as the known cardiovascular impacts and adverse birth and mental health outcomes, providing examples from California epidemiologic studies. Her own research quantifies heat-related



Piedmonter Dr. Rupa Basu will lead the Climate Speaker Series talk on health impacts on February 8.

health disparities, primarily by race and ethnicity, and identifies reasons for these disparities.

Dr. Basu will discuss risk perceptions as an element of vulnerability and offer heat prevention guidelines. Most importantly she

will provide advice on preventing heat-associated risks to improve quality of life.

Register in advance and receive a Zoom-link to attend at: lwvpiedmont.org/content.aspx?page_id=4008&club_id=601389&item_id=1892762.

NEXT TALK

On Wednesday, March 1, Piedmont Connect and the LWV of Piedmont will welcome Dr. Daniel Sperling, founding director of the UC Davis Institute of Transportation Studies. He will speak on the climate impacts of transportation and the changes needed to stabilize transportation’s role in climate damage. For a background of Dr. Sperling, visit its.ucdavis.edu/people/daniel-sperling.

Piedmont Connect and the League look forward to welcoming community members to these free, educational Zoom events on Wednesday afternoons, from February 8 to April 5.

The Speaker Series Youtube channel is at: [Youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqediPQuZm-DgqFS5cIWPk2EUX2cC-5IBL](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqediPQuZm-DgqFS5cIWPk2EUX2cC-5IBL)

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