

**Sonoma County General Plan Update 2020:**

The Sonoma County General Plan has been under review for the past two years. The General Plan process is one of local government's most public processes, and it is critical that environmental and progressive ideas enter the debate. Conservation Action has joined a coalition of local organizations that are committed to ensure that our General Plan create progressive guidelines for the management of our county's resources, and serve as a model for other counties in California.

There are several elements in the General Plan Update 2020 that Conservation Action has taken a stand on with the coalition. The following are a few of our stances on these critical policies:

**Land Use Element:** Protecting and expanding the current network of community separators. Implementing the strongest protections for Sonoma County's timber forests from agricultural conversions. Encouraging mixed use development in commercial and industrial areas. Preventing break-up of agricultural lands by new residential and commercial development.

In addition to those points, in the summer of 2003 SCCA canvassers generated over 300 letters to the Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) to express our outrage regarding the conversion of our county's timber forests to grape vineyards. The CAC recommended that the Planning Commission adopt policy option 3, which at that time offered the strongest protections for our county's forests. The Supervisor's "fast tracked" the issue, and currently it is at the Planning Commission. The Supervisors are scheduled for a public hearing on June 21<sup>st</sup>. Come be heard!

**Housing Element:** An early victory! SCCA is a member of an Affordable Housing Coalition in the county, bringing environmentalists, housing advocates, labor and social activists together. The Coalition was successful! The Supervisor's are expected to vote 4-1 (with Paul Kelley against) to adopt a model set of policies including an inclusionary zoning ordinance that will require that 20% of all new development is build affordable, and a jobs housing linkage fee, which will require large scale employers to pay fees for workforce housing. Conservation Action submitted public comment as part of the Affordable Housing Coalition to help sway the final vote.

**Water Element:** At present, our canvassers are carrying an action alert regarding the water element of the General Plan. We are working for a comprehensive water management plan for the county, looking at supply, use and replenishment, as well as creating a water budget. We have generated nearly 700 letters to date on the issue, sending letters to the Planning Commission, as well the Supervisors and the State Water Resource Control Board-letting them know that there is a significant constituency in Sonoma County that is concerned about water. We are also advocating for the creation of a comprehensive river management plan for the Russian River, and seek to strengthen existing policy which would allow package treatment plants only when a significant public health hazard is present.

**Transportation Element:** Coordination of local, regional, and express busses to provide intercity and commute routes, as well as increased bus frequencies. Establish transit-oriented development design standards to encourage a mix of development around

*See General Plan (Continued on page 4)*

**Union of Concerned Scientists CA Director Jason Mark To Be Highlighted at Dinner, and At Pre-Dinner Reception**

Jason Mark, who is the California Director of the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS) and serves as UCS's Clean Vehicles Program Director, will be the keynote speaker at SCCA's 10<sup>th</sup> annual Grassroots Gourmet Gala and Silent Auction. The Gala will be held on Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> at 5 PM at the Odd Fellows Temple, 545 Pacific Ave., Santa Rosa.



He will also be speaking at a pre-dinner reception, where participants will be able to speak with him one-on-one. All sponsors of the main dinner who donate \$250 or more will gain attendance to the pre-dinner reception. It costs \$100 for individuals wishing to only attend the pre-dinner reception.

Jason Mark researches advanced vehicle technologies and alternative fuels for the UCS. He has authored several studies in the transportation and energy field, including two recent UCS reports, *Greener SUVs: A Blueprint for Cleaner, More Efficient Light Trucks* and *Zeroing Out Pollution: The Promise of Fuel Cell Vehicles*.

Before joining UCS in 1995, Jason worked as a consultant on transportation policy analysis and mobile source modeling. His experience also includes work at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, where he focused on various renewable energy and

*See Union of Concerned Scientists (Continued on page 4)*

**Train Picking-Up Speed for '06**

The Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) passenger train is on the ballot for November, 2006! It's about time we support long-term solutions for transportation and vote **YES!**

**SMART: It's about time...**

**It's about time** we had a real alternative to being stuck in 101 traffic, or, having our neighborhood streets filled with overflow traffic from 101.

**It's about time** we did something to reduce our dependence on the automobile and the costs of oil, air pollution and sprawl that come with it.

**It's about time** that we want to spend relaxing in a quiet comfortable seat on the train instead of gripping the steering wheel staring at the brake-lights in front of us.

If you think "**It's about time!**" we had a passenger train alternative, here are some things you can do:

**1) Attend local City Council and/or Board of Supervisor's meetings on the SMART Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and let your representatives know that you support the train.**

This summer, the SMART Environmental Impact Report will be released and made available for comment at public hearings held by the SMART Board and during briefings at City Council and

*See SMART (Continued on page 3)*

## Accountable Development Efforts Gain Momentum *By Sabrina Ross*

In April, more than 30 Sonoma County leaders convened in Santa Rosa's SEIU Local 707 for an accountable development workshop led by the California Partnership for Working Families and hosted by New Economy, Working Solutions. The workshop brought labor, environmental and community-based organizations together to discuss accountable development strategies and ways to implement them in Sonoma County.

Led by facilitators which have negotiated accountable development agreements in many other California cities, the workshop focused on the Community Benefits Agreement (CBA), a tool enabling many communities to secure environmental building standards, living wages, affordable housing agreements, childcare center space and funding, creation of parks, and a host of other community benefits from developers. CBAs allow communities to achieve smarter and more equitable growth, rather than the sprawl and hour glass economy which characterize growth patterns in most communities.

Developers of large projects have a particular social responsibility, not only because they're entering existing communities, but because taxpayer dollars subsidize their projects. According to the nonprofit California Budget Project, California alone devoted more than \$8 billion last year to state economic development incentives, and local governments spend billions more. Cities and states have long offered free land, tax breaks, grants, and other incentives to entice new development. Increasingly, however, community advocates, local governments and even the developers themselves are acknowledging that projects receiving public dollars should be asked to deliver community benefits that fit the local circumstances and needs. "We're looking forward to bringing more accountable development to Sonoma County," said Living Wage Coalition coordinator Ben Boyce, "Making clear what the community expects from its developers early in the process should make the process of appropriate development easier and more positive for all involved."

In the negotiation process, the developer agrees to shape the development in a certain way or to provide specified community benefits. In exchange, the community groups support the proposed project before government bodies that provide the needed permits and subsidies. Cities, in turn, can get guarantees of timely construction and funds for city-provided services. The training leaders also explained measures that effective CBAs include for monitoring and enforcement of developers' agreements.

CBAs are not the only tools for achieving accountable development however. Presenters also described how communities can participate even earlier in the development process: by crafting the Request for Proposals (RFP) document that cities write when commencing the process of scouting for developers in areas where some public funds will be used. Indeed, the RFP itself can include some of the criteria so that developers will understand from the outset the parameters of their role. In a recent Los Angeles RFP, the city included affordable housing, funds for public art, a living wage standard, and active energy conservation measures in the development requirements.

While Sonoma County has yet to see any project-level accountable development, the County Board of Supervisors, in a 4 to 1 straw vote, with Paul Kelley voting no, recently passed a Workforce Housing Ordinance, a progressive policy-level development measure that requires new commercial developers to participate in the county's affordable housing program. SCCA took part in the coalition by entering public comments in support of this Ordinance.

The timing of the Accountable Development training is apt: key redevelopment areas in Santa Rosa and Petaluma are poised for development. In Santa Rosa, the RFP for 5.5 acres of critical redevelopment in Railroad Square is scheduled to be crafted in June and July. This is a pivotal property in the county not only because it lies at the heart of downtown Santa Rosa, but because its planned to house the primary Sonoma County station for the Sonoma Marin Passenger Rail on the November '06 ballot. The Basin Street area of Petaluma is also undergoing significant development for which community leaders hope to accomplish accountability.

According to SCCA Board Member Marty Bennett, who is chair of the group New Economy, Working Solutions, "This is an opportunity and a challenge. People need to have a voice in these development decisions, and developers need to address human needs as well as corporate needs. Working families, environmentalists, housing advocates, city governments and developers need to find development options that work for the whole community. That's what 'accountable development' is all about."

*For more information, or to get involved, call Marty Bennett at (707) 545-7349 ext. 221 or e-mail [mbennet@vom.com](mailto:mbennet@vom.com).*

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## Water Agency Proposes Another Flawed Plan

The Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) has released a proposed Water Supply, Transmission, and Reliability Project (WSTRP) for public comment and review. This project document is intended to guide the Water Agency as it assesses current and future demand on the existing water supplies available and the transmission systems that carry water to its customers. This is obviously another water grab by the SCWA that will promote sprawl.

The Sonoma County Water Coalition, which Conservation Action is an active member of, has submitted public comments on behalf of the 25,000 residents whom are members of supporting organizations within the coalition.

Included in this plan is an increase of 35% in our pumping of Russian River water, or 101,000 acre feet of water each year. This unnecessary increase was proposed over 12 years ago. Since then, population expectations have *decreased* for the next 20 years. Increased pumping would stimulate demand and encourage growth. We are able to meet the expected demand of the 27% increase in water allotments through rigorous conservation methods and increased re-use of water. To achieve this level of conservation, all new housing projects in the county should require double plumbing, beneficially re-using tertiary/advanced treated wastewater for yards, gardens, etc.

There are several areas of concern regarding this project, chief among them are the grouping of supply with transmission and reliability. It is arguable that we must perform major improvements on our transmission system. The SCWA argues that we need more supply. Again, we must get serious about conservation to fulfill our supply needs. While we improve the transmission capabilities of the system the SCWA is attempting to slip in approval for more supply, opening the floodgates for development.

The WSTRP mentions the possibility of drilling new SCWA wells to supplement the transmission system with more groundwater. The

*(Continued on page 3)*

***(Please consider sending us your email address so we can send your newsletters to you in a PDF format)***

## Field Organizers Needed for Canvass Team

Looking for progressive work? Do you know someone who is? SCCA is currently hiring trainees for our canvass team. We are looking for friendly and outgoing people to go door-to-door. Experience in political organizing and fundraising a plus, but we will train qualified people.

**Full and part-time available, plus health benefits.** Contact SCCA at 571-8566 or email [scca@conservationaction.org](mailto:scca@conservationaction.org).

## H2O (Continued from page 2)

three so-called SCWA 'emergency wells' in the Laguna de Santa Rosa are already pulling for a city equivalent to 45,000 people. There are no groundwater management plans in Sonoma County and we lack a water budget. It is simply irresponsible to add additional wells without a groundwater management plan, and precipitous to do so several years before USGS studies of the County's major groundwater basins are complete.

One of the most glaring realities of the proposal is that if SCWA pump 35% more water from the Russian River, and sells that to our homes and businesses in the county, that water will end up as wastewater, placing an enormous additional strain on our already stressed wastewater treatment facilities. What level will this water be treated to, and where will it be discharged? The geysers are at capacity, and Santa Rosa continues to look at increased discharge into the Russian River and Laguna, which are both impaired.

***Santa Rosa continues to deny the need for advanced treatment beyond tertiary levels.***

Another factor the water agency fails to consider is the diversion of water from the Eel River through the Potter Valley tunnel to the Russian River may be further curtailed or even terminated. This may be the result of a judicial ruling that emphasizes the public trust value of keeping the water in the Eel River. SCCA has worked for years to preserve the Eel River watershed, to keep its own water. The water in Lake Sonoma should be allowed to remain there, to be used instead of water from the Potter Valley diversion.

## Take Action Now!

Write your Supervisor and express your concern regarding the SCWA's Water Supply, Transmission and Reliability Proposal. Include the fore mentioned points in your comments.

They are at: 575 Administration Dr. Santa Rosa, CA 95403. or email them at [sonoma-county.org](mailto:sonoma-county.org), click Board of Supervisors.

Look to Santa Rosa's Board of Public Utilities, soon be conducting hearings on an Environmental Impact Report to yet again dump wastewater in the Russian River.

## See our website for more information and updates.

### Extreme Makeover of SCCA's WEBSITE!!

We've got Spring Fever over our brand new website, a long awaited development and one we're mightily proud to announce! Marty Roberts, one of our founding advisory board members, has directed us to cyber utopia! Don't waste a second, GO TO

**<http://www.conservationaction.org>**

Visit and see how easy it is to donate online!  
**TELL YOUR FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS TOO!!!**

## SMART (Continued from page 1)

Board of Supervisors meetings. The schedule for these meetings will be released sometime in early June. Even if you can't attend the meetings, you will be able read about the EIR on the SMART website ([www.sonomamarintrain.org](http://www.sonomamarintrain.org)) and then let your local representatives know what you think. For contact information on your local representatives, see below.

**2) Stay informed. Subscribe to "SMART EMAIL Updates" (send an email that says subscribe to [info@sonomamarintrain.org](mailto:info@sonomamarintrain.org)), an easy way to get up to date information on what's happening.**

**3) Get involved. Join SCCA and become a part of a rapidly growing group of friends and neighbors who are organizing their neighborhoods saying....it's about time we get SMART!**

## Canvass Report By Andrew Goodman

Conservation Action canvassers are trading in their umbrellas and rubber-boots for shorts and sandals as spring fades away and summer creeps in over the horizon.

This year, SCCA's ability to involve and connect with the community is growing by leaps and bounds. Our canvasser crew is twice the size that it used to be, allowing us to more thoroughly cover the county. We've moved to a new office giving us more elbowroom to expand our educational and organizational resources.

To help us cover the difference in the rent, SCCA is now holding seasonal yard sales. For our first one ever, folks from all over the county showed their support by donating their previously loved possessions and stopping by on sale day to peruse the selection. The Sunday rainstorm closed the sale early, yet so much support was shown Saturday that it was a tremendous success anyway.

As the canvass staff continues their trek through the County, they encouraged local residents to write letters to the Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors, and State Water Resources Control Board in support of a comprehensive groundwater management plan. Folks recognize this issue as critical and canvassers have been putting forth amazing effort generating nearly 700 letters into the mailboxes of these departments. With such a large amount of public involvement, local officials are taking notice.

March came in like a lion as we went full steam ahead into Bennett and Rincon valleys. Our momentum carried us out to Sonoma, Glen Ellen, and Kenwood. April showers didn't slow down our canvassers even a step as they swept through the Valley of the Moon in anticipation of May flowers. Penngrove and Geyersville showed us tremendous support as mobilization of groundwater management letters continued throughout the county.

The response from local citizens in the Larkfield/Wikiup area of Santa Rosa was amazing. SCCA canvassers made sure to get folks fired up about the privatized water situation there. On May 7, in a meeting that was packed to the brim, the residents all got together to brainstorm on how to get more local control of their water resources. Cotati also came together as a community to voice their support and give us their input about the Land Use Code Update which will involve redeveloping part of their downtown and a new Green Building Code.

When the summer arrives full force the canvass will be doubling their efforts as we hit the streets in the West County, beginning our campaign for a GE Free Sonoma County, and continuing to build the long-term support for the rail in 2006.



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**SCCA's 10th Annual Dinner & Silent Auction-Saturday, June 18th, 2005, 5:00PM**  
**Grassroots Gourmet Gala**  
 Odd Fellow's Temple, 545 Pacific Ave. Santa Rosa -To Purchase Tickets Call: 571-8566 or email scca@conservationaction.org

**General Plan** (Continued from page 1)

transit stops and assure that these areas are safe and easy to use for pedestrians and bicyclists.

**Open Space Element:** Demanding riparian setbacks along all waterways in the county. Discouraging the further fragmentation of wildlife habitat areas by utilizing the Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space Fund.

**Agriculture Element:** Increase the percentage of local agriculture content processed on agricultural land from 50% to 75%, and discourage non-rural land uses for rural land.

Currently, the Citizen's Advisory Committee has made their recommendations to the Planning Commission, who will begin reviewing these elements this summer. A draft EIR is due out in Mid May/Early June. Conservation Action trusts that you will join us in submitting public comments as this process moves forward! See our new website for updates on these critical policy issues! [www.conservationaction.org](http://www.conservationaction.org)

Also, you can send a letter right now to the County Planning commission, calling for any and all of the points mentioned in this article that inspire you. Write to: *Attn: PRMD*  
*Sonoma County Planning Commission*  
*2550 Ventura Avenue*  
*Santa Rosa, CA 95403*

**Union of Concerned Scientists** (Continued from page 1)

transportation technologies, and the Center for Energy and Environmental Studies at Princeton University.

A native of Vermont, Jason developed an appreciation for the great outdoors early on. He holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from Princeton University and a master's in energy and resources from the University of California at Berkeley. A recognized expert on advanced vehicle technologies, Jason regularly appears on network news programs such as the *CBS Evening News* and in newspapers such as the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

In addition to the keynote by Jason Mark, we will be awarding the annual *Dick Day Community Activist Award*, and the *Upstream Swimmer Award*, which goes to a local official in the face of adversity. This is a great chance for Conservation Action members to meet our environmentally savvy Local, State, and Federal elected officials, and the activists behind so many effective local progressive groups.

The event typically sells out early, so reserving a spot is suggested. Tickets to the dinner are \$40, and can be reserved either by sending a check for the number of tickets desired to our office with "Dinner Tickets" written in the memo space, or by calling the office (571-8566) and reserving tickets with your credit card.

**SUPPORT CONSERVATION ACTION!**  
 SCCA is sustained entirely by the contributions of local concerned citizens. Please sign up or renew today. Thanks!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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*Contributions to SCCA support our advocacy and grassroots Organizing work. They are not tax-deductible.*

**Please circle your preferences!**

<b>Regular</b>	\$25 Entry Level	\$36 Individual
<b>Membership:</b>	\$52 Family	\$75 Supporter
	\$120 Sponsor	\$250 Patron
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*Please join our growing list of **Sustaining Members** who give Regularly-scheduled donations via credit card. Call us at the office at **571-8566** for more information*