



environmental
DEFENSE CENTER

SPRING 2017 NEWSLETTER

EDC: FORTY YEARS YOUNG

Forty years ago, Jimmy Carter was sworn in as our 39th President, Star Wars was the nation's biggest film, and the first Apple II Computers were on the shelves. 1977 was also the year that the EDC came into being. Formed as a response to the great Santa Barbara Oil Spill of 1969, our founders wanted EDC to stand strong for our local values, empowered by the new discipline of Environmental Law.



Over the years, much has changed around us, but EDC remains the only nonprofit, public interest environmental law firm between LA and San Francisco. Our mission has always been to provide free and low cost legal services to fellow nonprofits, and over time we have represented almost 120 different groups! As we celebrate our 40th anniversary year, we are proud that we have dedicated staff members that have been with us for 10 years, 20 years, and even 28 years of this journey! We are equally proud that several of our founders continue to be close members of the EDC family. And we are especially proud of all that we have accomplished with our clients, alongside our partners, and with the support of this incredible community.

Of course, as has become abundantly clear, this year is about far more than our anniversary. Among other unanticipated threats, the Trump administration is seeking enormous, debilitating cuts to the budgets of critical agencies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, and the specter of new offshore oil lease proposals is on the near horizon. So there is no time to rest on our laurels. While it is still important to celebrate and remind each other of how much we have accomplished together, our work is not done.

Throughout 2017, we will be looking back. Each month we are highlighting different victories and voices from across our 40 years. Please visit www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org and click on the Our Stories tab to see them all!

Thanks for your incredible support over our first 40 years. We are all excited to see what we can accomplish together over the next four decades!

COMMITTED TO STOP TRUMP'S PUSH FOR NEW OFFSHORE OIL DRILLING

As this newsletter was going to print, the Trump administration announced its intention to attempt to open up the Santa Barbara Channel to new offshore oil drilling. EDC is committed to fighting this misguided effort every step of the way.

DIRTY AND DANGEROUS OIL DRILLING:

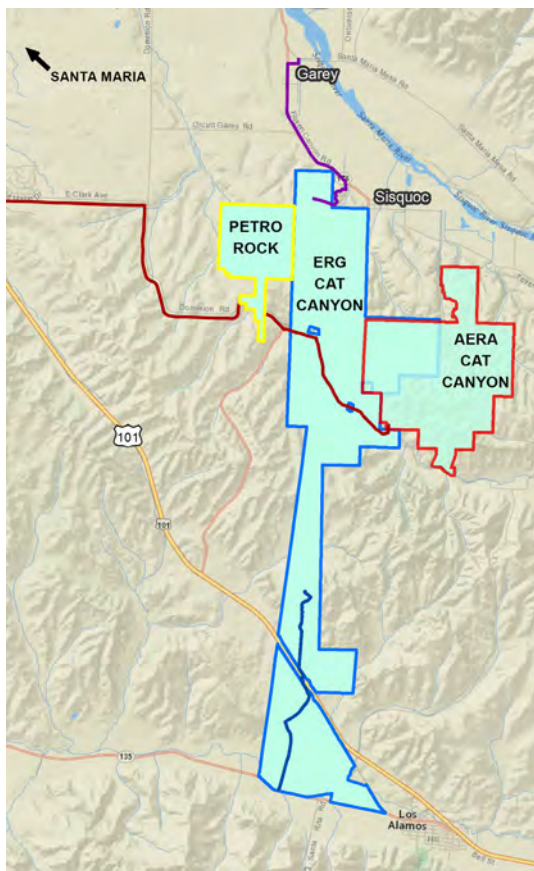
The era of easy to access oil across California's south central coast is over. After more than a century of conventional drilling, oil companies are turning to riskier and less understood technologies to attempt to coax oil from the ground. While much has been said about hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and acid well stimulation (acidizing), the practices through which chemicals and acids are used to shatter or eat away at rock formations to increase oil and gas production, the biggest threat to Santa Barbara County right now is a controversial process called cyclic steam injection.

Cyclic steam injection involves super-heating enormous quantities of water to around 500 degrees and then pumping it underground at high pressure. The steam then loosens up oil which is sucked up to the surface. Unfortunately, the climate implications alone are enough of a reason to be concerned by cyclic steam injection as this procedure is much more energy and carbon intensive than conventional oil drilling. But it also uses massive quantities of water and has a high well casing failure rate. Finally this process has been linked to new oil seeps and contaminated groundwater as the boiling water and oil mixtures have been known to seep out of control, following any path of least resistance including through old wells or newly created ruptures.

THREE MASSIVE CYCLIC STEAM PROJECTS THREATEN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

EDC, our clients and partners were successful in stopping Pacific Coast Energy Company's (PCEC) plans to add 144 new cyclic steam injection wells near Orcutt last fall, but there are three larger proposals which will be moving toward the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors soon.

If successful these three projects would bring online a total of more than 750 new wells – a more than 50% increase over the current number of active wells in the County.



ERG Cat Canyon

This project would bring online 233 new steam injection wells in the Cat Canyon Oil Field about 10 miles southeast of Santa Maria. The application for this project was completed in the fall of 2014 and a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is being prepared for release this summer, at which time the public will be invited to submit comments.

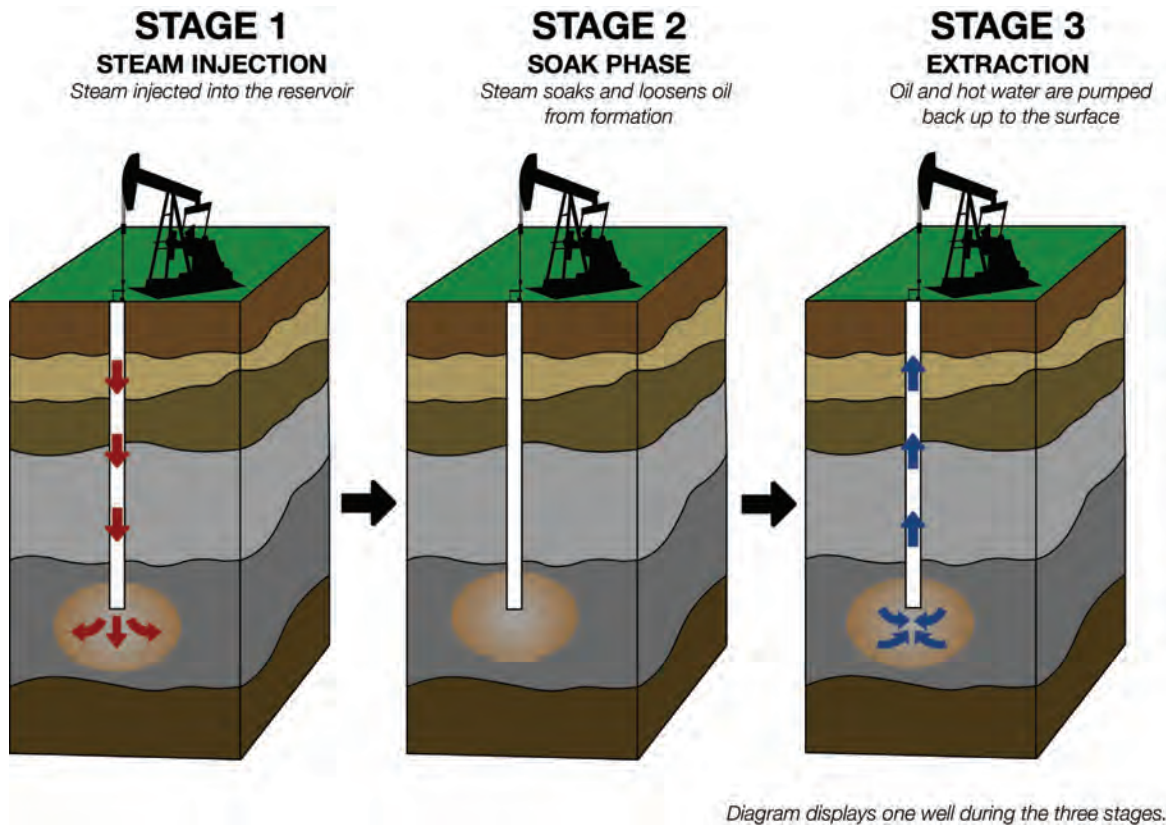
AERA Cat Canyon

This project would be the largest of the three we are currently tracking in Santa Barbara County, with 296 proposed new wells also for the same Cat Canyon Oil Field. This application was also completed in 2014 and we expect to see a Draft EIR this fall.

Petro Rock

This project is not quite as far along as the other two and the application is still incomplete. Nevertheless, this 230-well project would tap the same field southeast of Santa Maria.

CYCLIC STEAM INJECTION



HOW YOU CAN HELP

STAY INFORMED

Be sure you are on EDC's email list. Sign up at EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org to get updates on how to best take action.

LEND YOUR VOICE

We expect the Draft Environmental Impact Reports for the ERG and AERA proposals to be released this year. Having letters submitted from the public will be most helpful.

FILL THE ROOM

Attend public hearings. Each of these projects will present opportunities for the public to raise concerns. Having our supporters join us to speak or simply stand with us is an important way to ensure decision makers know that constituents are concerned and following this issue.

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW



Jeff Foott

SEA OTTERS : BRING THEM HOME

EDC and our clients, The Otter Project and Los Angeles Waterkeeper, have continued our fight to ensure the threatened southern sea otter is free to move about its native range. Back in 1987, a “no-otter zone” was initiated as part of a failed sea otter recovery program that ultimately harmed the very species it was meant to protect. This spring, for the second time in two years, a federal judge ruled in our favor denying a challenge by commercial fishing groups. Otters have reclaimed the ability to travel throughout the California coast, helping restore depleted kelp forests and improving the overall health of our marine ecosystems wherever they go.

NEW BOARD DIRECTORS

EDC is fortunate to have a powerhouse Board of Directors populated with talented and experienced individuals giving their time, energy, and skills to help our mission. This spring we are proud to have added two new people to this impressive list: Joyce Howerton and Rob Tadlock.

Rob has served as an attorney for intellectual property, litigation, marketing and advocacy with Patagonia since moving to our region from the Bay area almost three years ago. Joyce served on EDC's Board as recently as 1992, and we are thrilled to have her back. The former Mayor of Lompoc, Joyce also served on the boards of SBCAN, the Santa Barbara Foundation, and the Women's Political Committee. Together they are powerful additions to EDC's board!



THE BLACK SNAKES

EDC has won a number of battles this year against one of the most dangerous and polluting oil projects facing our entire region: the Phillips 66 Rail Spur. Phillips' proposal would facilitate transport of multiple 80-car trains carrying crude oil through Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties each week. These trains would threaten our coastal environment and the millions of Californians in the blast zone. EDC and our clients at Sierra Club, Surfrider Foundation, Stand.earth, and Center for Biological Diversity have won at the San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, and in the courts, and we're not giving up now. Phillips did not file their expected appeal to the California Coastal Commission, opting instead to continue to fight in court. EDC will remain strong in the fight to protect our region's sensitive habitats, air and water quality, and human health and safety.



SOUTH MOUNTAIN OIL FIELD - CLEANING UP THEIR ACT

For at least 5 years, polluted storm water runoff from the South Mountain oil field has threatened two key Ventura watersheds."

– Maggie Hall, Staff Attorney

For at least five years, California Resources Production Corporation (CRPC) consistently reported storm water runoff containing pollutants at levels that exceeded legal limits at its 5,757-acre South Mountain oil field in Ventura County, posing risks to fish, wildlife, and human health. After filing a lawsuit for violations of the Clean Water Act, EDC successfully negotiated a settlement requiring CRPC to implement controls at its drilling pads, access roads, and other pollution sources to reduce the contaminants in its runoff. Located near the City of Santa Paula, runoff from the oil field drains into the Santa Clara River and Calleguas Creek watershed, and eventually runs onto popular public beaches. The settlement also helps facilitate a transfer of CRPC property rights at the Canada Larga Property to be acquired by Trust for Public Land for permanent conservation, thereby eliminating potential new oil development.

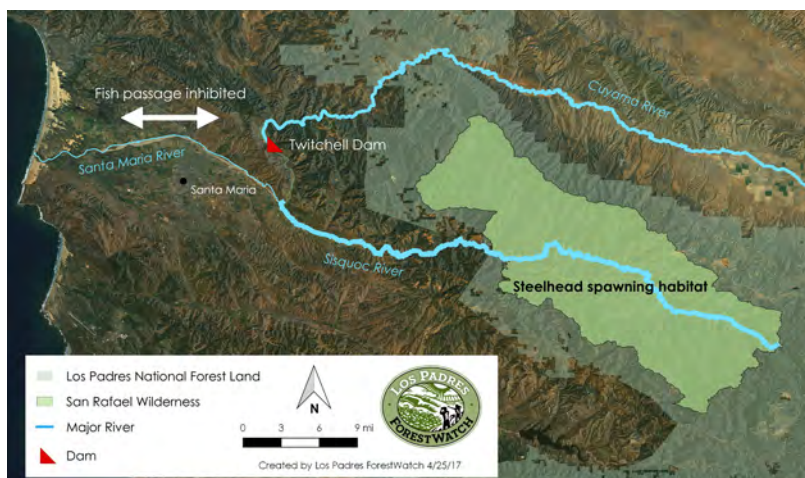
PROTECTING AGRICULTURAL LAND IN THE SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

Just last month, EDC won a significant victory helping protect the incredible Rancho La Laguna that overlooks the Santa Ynez Valley. With rolling hills, deep canyons, oak forests, and being home to fifty-six rare animal and plant species, the ranch was proposed to be split into smaller lots for development. On behalf of our clients, Santa Ynez Valley Alliance and SBCAN, we successfully convinced the Santa Barbara Planning Commission to deny this project and preserve the agricultural integrity and 4,000 acres of incredibly rich and scenic farmland.



Mark Oliver

TWITCHELL : MORE DAM PROBLEMS



EDC has always prioritized the protection of endangered Southern California Steelhead Trout, a keystone species which used to number in the tens of thousands across our region. The Twitchell Dam, located east of Santa Maria on the Cuyama River, has been identified as a major problem, preventing steelhead from reaching their historic breeding grounds. This month, EDC and our client Los Padres ForestWatch, along with our partner San Luis Obispo Coastkeeper, filed a lawsuit to compel the Santa Maria Valley Water District to modify its operations of the Dam to ensure sufficient water is available to protect this endangered species while replenishing groundwater.

A BETTER HORIZON - PLATFORM HOLLY TO COME DOWN

In a tremendous victory for our coast, EDC and our clients are excited to announce that not only have we helped stop what would have been the first new or expanded drilling in California waters since the 1969 Oil Spill, but in fact Platform Holly will now be decommissioned! The Ellwood Onshore Facility, which processes oil and gas from Platform Holly, will also likely be removed. For decades, EDC has fought plans to expand oil drilling from Platform Holly – the only offshore oil platform within the Santa Barbara Channel that is in California waters, visible from Goleta and UCSB. In April, Venoco announced that they have given up on their expansion plans and released their existing leases in state waters.



Photos by Erin Feinblatt



WELCOME HOME STEELHEAD



After several years with zero sightings of the critically endangered Southern California Steelhead Trout, five adult steelhead were spotted – including three in our region's creeks - after our rainy winter.

Photo by Moe Gomez

POWER PLANT VICTORY

EDC and our co-clients at Sierra Club, Los Padres Chapter and the Environmental Coalition of Ventura County celebrated an important victory this March in the effort to stop another polluting fossil fuel power plant from moving forward along the coast of Oxnard. After lengthy hearings, EDC helped persuade the California Energy Commission to pause the process of evaluating the Puente proposal and demand additional review of the project's impacts to wildlife as well as its risks posed from sea level rise. Look for more on this important issue this summer.



The coast of Oxnard is already burdened with 3 power plants - we do not need a 4th.
Photo by Linda Krop

COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT THEM

It may be EDC's 40th year protecting our local environment, but that is not the only anniversary we are celebrating. In 2017, two of EDC's best celebrate important milestones. Communications Director Betsy Weber has been with EDC for 10 years now and our Environmental Analyst & Watershed Program Director, Brian Trautwein, has reached the 20 year mark! This spring we were very proud to honor their combined three decades of brilliant work for EDC, our communities, and environment. We are so lucky to have them with us!



Linda Krop, Betsy Weber, Brian Trautwein & Owen Bailey

REFUGIO OIL SPILL ANNIVERSARY



May 19th marks the two year anniversary of the devastating Plains All American Refugio Oil Spill which sent more than 140,000 gallons of heavy crude oil onto our Gaviota Coast and into the Santa Barbara Channel. Two years may have passed, but EDC continues working to this day to ensure our coast is fully restored to pre-spill conditions, to prohibit the pipeline from reopening until and unless it can be operated safely with sufficient oversight, and to ensure adequate mitigation and restoration through the Natural Resource Damage Assessment process.

IT'S THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR: TGIF



tgif!



MAY 12

JUL 14

SEPT 8

TGIF is always one of the hottest community events in Santa Barbara - with live music, great local wine and beer, and tasty hors d'oeuvres. On Friday, May 12th, EDC kicked off the 2017 tgif! season with nonprofit partners sharing the latest environmental news and ways to get involved. We also gratefully introduced our four fantastic underwriters - Accountability Plus, Allen Construction, SunRun, and Swell Energy - whose generous support helps make this season possible. This year there will only be three summer tgif! happy hours. So if we missed you in May, we hope to see you at tgif! in July and September!



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EDC STAFF

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Maggie Hall, *Staff Attorney*
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Linda Krop, *Chief Counsel*
Pearl Lee, *Accounting Manager*
Chloe McConnell, *Development Coordinator*
Kaleena Quarles, *Office Manager/Event Coordinator*
Alicia Roessler, *Staff Attorney*
Brian Trautwein, *Environmental Analyst & Watershed Program Director*
Betsy Weber, *Communications Director*

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Linn Bumpers, *Intern*
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Monique Schafer, *Intern*
Renee Sellers, *Volunteer*

MISSION STATEMENT: The Environmental Defense Center protects and enhances the local environment through education, advocacy, and legal action.

FOCUS: Since 1977 we have empowered community-based organizations to advance environmental protection. Our program areas include protecting coast and ocean resources, open spaces and wildlife, and human and environmental health. We primarily work within Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties.

EDC LAUNCHES LEGACY SOCIETY



In April, we formally launched EDC's Legacy Society with an intimate reception to thank some of the generous supporters who have committed themselves to our long-term sustainability. By making a commitment to include EDC in their estate planning, these wonderful friends are helping to ensure future generations will continue to benefit from EDC's work for a clean and healthy environment. What extraordinary generosity!

A BIG YEAR TO CELEBRATE



For 40 years, EDC has stood strong to protect our Green & Blue, this beautiful place that our founders charged us to defend – our clean water, open space, sustainable agriculture, and the majestic Santa Barbara Channel. Join us for Green & Blue on June 4th to celebrate the environmental victories we have all won together.

June 4

2:00-5:30 PM

Rancho La Patera & Stow House

Food – Drinks – Live Music – Silent & Live Auctions

Tickets available at www.EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org/GB