



## SPRING 2019 NEWSLETTER

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### THE FIGHT FOR OUR FUTURE



Photo: Mark Oliver

Cat Canyon, located about ten miles southeast of Santa Maria, is a rolling, oak covered landscape which has been the site for decades of oil drilling existing side-by-side with vineyards, farms, schools, and homes. But what oil companies, including ERG, are planning now would be like nothing this area has ever seen before. Project plans include massive expansions of some of the dirtiest and most dangerous oil operations found anywhere on Earth, with intense carbon emissions, water use, air pollution, and other significant threats to our environment and our communities.

ERG's proposal is the first of three enormous oil projects to be considered. The Santa Barbara County Planning Commission has already held two public hearings on ERG's proposal, and there remain so many unanswered questions about the threats to our water, air, climate, public health and safety, and local environment. A third hearing has been scheduled for May 29th in Santa Maria and we need your help.

EDC and our clients, Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter and SBCAN, are working with a broad coalition of environmental and community groups to oppose ERG's plan which, if approved

alongside the other two projects, would permit more than 760 new wells, tripling oil production in Santa Barbara County. Facing the clear, existential threat of climate change might seem an adequate reason to deny these dangerous plans, but if allowed, they would also place hundreds of oil tanker trucks on local roads every day, require millions of gallons of fresh water annually, and cut down enormous numbers of oak trees, threatening communities and the plants and animals with which we share this region.

At the first two hearings on ERG's proposal, EDC, Sierra Club, SBCAN, and our allies carefully listed the multiple inadequacies of the plan's environmental impact report. We outlined the tremendous risks to water, air, public health and safety, biodiversity, climate, and community. We carefully examined and commented upon the multiple legal and scientific issues. **On May 29th, we need your help** to be sure the Planning Commission knows this community is committed to the denial of this dangerous project. We will send out details for how you can participate in the coming weeks, but for now please save the date and be sure you are receiving EDC's email alerts regarding these dirty projects.



# THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S PUSH TO CHANGE THE CHANNEL

The 1969 Santa Barbara Oil Spill marked a turning point in how our nation viewed the protection of natural resources. That disaster, 50 years ago this year, led to the passage of a series of laws including the Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act, and the California Coastal Act, each designed to protect our environment from future harm. EDC was formed in the wake of this newly created discipline of environmental law to fight for the enforcement of these laws and to protect the waters and lands on California's south-central coast. Our work was borne of an oil industry-created marine catastrophe, and to this day, protecting the Santa Barbara Channel and our surrounding region remains an organizational priority.

For more than four decades, EDC has played a lead role in fighting to stop the advance of, and to roll back, the industrialization of the marine environment. We have retired offshore oil leases, fought off multiple attempts to import liquefied natural gas, prevented expanded slant drilling from existing platforms, and prevailed in litigation against the federal government for inadequate permitting of offshore fracking and acidizing. Oil and gas, however, remains one of the most powerful economic and politically connected industries on the planet, and it shows no signs of giving up regardless of the impacts of climate change or the number of setbacks that are suffered. Since 2016, this industry has had very powerful allies in the White House and the Trump Administration has ignored the threat of climate change and the lessons from past devastating oil spills, and has pushed to increase fossil fuel development of all kinds, including off our coast. EDC is at the forefront of efforts to push back.

## OFFSHORE LEASES

As this newsletter goes to print, we are still awaiting the next iteration of Trump's offshore oil plan. Shortly after taking office, President Trump decided to initiate a new five-year oil leasing plan that was declared to open more than 90% of our nation's coastline to new oil drilling. If the Administration is successful, this plan

would allow the first new leases sold offshore California since Ronald Reagan was president. The release of the Proposed Program and Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) have been delayed several months by the partial government shutdown, agency turnover, and unfavorable court rulings, but we expect it soon and fear that California's coast, and especially the Santa Barbara Channel, will continue to be at significant risk. The release of the Program and the PEIS will initiate a 90-day public comment period during which time EDC and our clients Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter and Get Oil Out! will analyze and comment on the significant impacts to our region. We need our supporters from Ventura through San Luis Obispo Counties to also weigh in, sharing their perspectives as the entire central coast will be threatened. Stay tuned!

## OFFSHORE FRACKING

In 2011, EDC uncovered that oil companies were fracking and acidizing from platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel with inadequate federal government oversight and evaluation of the risks the practices pose. EDC first successfully filed and settled a lawsuit against federal agencies for the failure to conduct environmental review of the potential impacts of these risky techniques and to provide for public engagement. Then, after a second successful suit on behalf of ourselves and our client Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, a federal judge issued an order declaring that the federal government violated environmental laws by failing to consult with wildlife agencies. The judge temporarily halted fracking and acidizing off the West Coast until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of California can weigh in.

Subsequently, a judge ruled in EDC's favor denying a request from DCOR, an oil company with a history of fracking offshore, for an exemption from the temporary ban and to continue fracking. Additionally, we await California hearings on offshore fracking, so stay tuned for details on how you can help.

IMAGE IS A RENDERING AND DOES NOT REPRESENT THE CURRENT STATE OF THE SANTA BARBARA CHANNEL





Photo: Claire Fackler, NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries

### OUR UNDERWATER PARKS

Since 2001, EDC has been working with our partners, including the Santa Barbara Channel Marine Protected Area (MPA) Collaborative, to educate our community and build support for our local MPAs – special protected places in the ocean designated to safeguard our ocean wilderness. The Collaborative recently produced the following resources available to help educate and guide the public:

- **Interactive MPA Map:** Interactive map that includes photos, videos, and descriptions of the unique habitat found in every MPA in Southern California. Coming online soon.
- **Fishing in MPAs Brochure:** Provides photos of MPAs to

help anglers identify boundaries when GPS or other tools may not be available.

- **Invasive Asian Kelp Prevention Guide:** Intended to assist boaters in implementing best practices to avoid spreading invasive Asian Kelp (*Undaria pinnatifida*).
- **MPA Monitoring Poster:** Located at Coal Oil Point Natural Reserve Nature Center, this poster and interactive toolkit communicate how scientists monitor MPAs in our region.

These products are available at EDC and can be requested for a business or organization by contacting Kristen at [khislop@environmentaldefensecenter.org](mailto:khislop@environmentaldefensecenter.org).

### TARGET SHOOTING

Nintey-four target shooting sites are scatted throughout the Los Padres National Forest, where individuals have been shooting at informal tagets including clay, paper, furniture, and household appliances. These unregulated shooting sites are one of the most serious threats to natural resources and public health and safety. In 2005 the Forest Service placed a forest-wide ban on target shooting except in designated areas and ranges, however that ban was never implemented. Unmanaged shooting sites are often located near fragile waterways, public trails and recreation areas, and can cause serious impacts to the environment, wildlife, human health, and can cause wildfires. On behalf of our client, Los Padres ForestWatch, EDC along with co-counsel at Earthrise Law Center recently reached an agreement with the Forest Service that provides for a temporary ban on dispersed target shooting as well as Endangered Species Act consultation to ensure protection of threatened and endangered species that are put at risk by this practice.



Photo: Los Padres Forest Watch

### PROTECTING GOLETA'S CREEKS

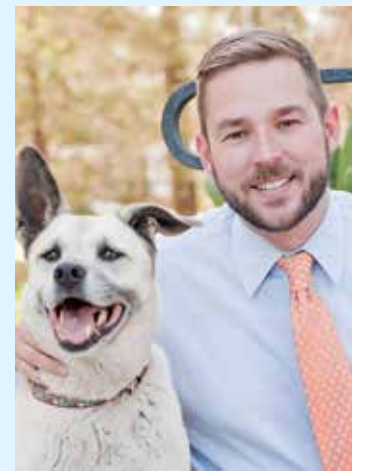


Our creeks and watersheds are some of our most precious community resources, connecting our mountains to our coastline, and are vital to clean water, recreation, and restoration of wildlife such as California steelhead. One of the largest ongoing challenges facing Goleta's creeks is from development built too close to the creeks disturbing soil, impacting plants and animals that depend on the creeks, and increasing the risk of property damage from floods. While the City of Goleta currently has a policy that requires at least a 100-foot setback for new development, reduced setbacks can be approved if 100 feet is deemed infeasible. Unfortunately, the process for determining when a setback may be reduced is not laid out. EDC and our client, Santa Barbara Urban Creeks Council, have drafted an ordinance that sets forth this process and are urging the City of Goleta to approve this as part of its new Zoning Ordinance.

### EDC'S BOARD GROWS



EDC is very pleased to introduce the two newest members of our board of directors: Vijaya Jammalamadaka and David Andreasen. Vijaya spent her career as an environmental specialist, working for many years with the Santa Barbara Air Pollution Control District. She has also served the community as a board member with other great organizations including the Fund for Santa Barbara and the Community Environmental Council. David runs a private law practice in Santa Barbara dedicated to helping people who have been unfairly convicted of crimes. A lifetime resident of Santa Barbara County, David has supported EDC for years in addition to being a longtime advocate for civil rights and access to legal services. Vijaya and David bring great skills and expertise to our already strong board, and we are excited to have them join our team.





**70 OIL TRUCKS PER DAY?**



ExxonMobil seeks to restart oil production from three offshore platforms that have been shut down since the devastating 2015 Refugio Oil Spill that spewed more than 140,000 gallons from the Plains All American Pipeline on to the Gaviota Coast and into the ocean. To do this, the company needs permits from Santa Barbara County for 70 round-trip tanker transits, moving up to 470,000 gallons of crude oil on our local roads and Highway 101 every day for up to seven years. EDC and our clients, Get Oil Out! and SBCAN, are deeply concerned by threats from accidents and more spills, risks to air quality, and traffic impacts, and are urging the County to protect our public safety and the local environment by denying ExxonMobil's application.

**LEAVING A LEGACY OF A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**



*"The last time we looked at our estate plan, our son was very young and his long-term care had to be our focus. Over the last decade and a half, our lives have changed considerably, and now with our son away and living his own life, it was time to reevaluate our estate plan: and we thought of EDC. Now, being a part of EDC's Legacy Society, we know that our estate plan is going to help keep our local environment safe and healthy for our family and for generations to come."*

– Laurel & Mark Heintz

For more information on EDC's Legacy Society, please call Owen Bailey at (805) 963-1622 or visit our website.

**50 YEARS LATER – A MESSAGE OF HOPE**



Photos: Sarita Reils Photography

Fifty years ago, the Santa Barbara Oil Spill released more than four million gallons from Platform A, fouling 35 miles of coastline, killing as many as 115,000 seabirds, and poisoning marine life. This disaster captured the attention of the nation and changed the way Americans thought of our environment. Kicking off the modern day environmental movement, laws were established at the state and federal levels and critical community organizations were founded to ensure these laws are enforced and our natural resources are protected. In January, four of these groups—the Community Environmental Council, EDC, Get Oil Out!, and UCSB's Environmental Studies Program—hosted an event to look back on the disaster, to celebrate the progress that has been made, and to prepare for the critical work ahead. More than 1,800 people joined us at the Arlington Theater for music and inspiration with special guests including Greenpeace Executive Director, Annie Leonard, Sierra Club Executive Director, Michael Brune, USCB sophomore and Sunrise Movement activist, Rose Strauss, and musical artists, Glen Phillips, Zach Gill, Soul Majestic, and No Simple Highway. The event provided a message of hope, and together we recharged and committed to making a powerful difference toward a clean energy future.



**TGIF! – 20 YEARS STRONG**

May 10th kicked off EDC's 20th year of our TGIF! happy hour season here in our downtown courtyard. Celebrating the return of these warm summer nights, guests enjoyed refreshing drinks, light appetizers, some of Santa Barbara's finest local musicians, and good conversation with a couple hundred friends. We are thankful for the support of Brighten Solar, Energy Independence Now, and Toad&Co as this season's underwriters, and to the nonprofit partners and clients who sponsor at each event. We hope you mark your calendar to join us on **July 12, September 13, and October 11.**





**environmental**  
DEFENSE CENTER

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Kristen Hislop, Marine Conservation Program Director  
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Chloe McConnell, Development Coordinator  
Tara Messing, Staff Attorney  
Kaleena Quarles, Officer Manager/Event Coordinator  
Alicia Roessler, Staff Attorney  
Brian Trautwein, Environmental Analyst & Watershed Program Director  
Betsy Weber, Communications Director

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Alexandra Eisinger

#### 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.



## GREEN & BLUE HONORS LOCAL HERO

Green & Blue has grown to be one of Santa Barbara's "must attend" events of the year. Not only does it support EDC's work and ensure our ability to stay engaged even when we don't have a paying client, it is always fun and full of surprises. After last year's overwhelming success honoring Jane Fonda and local environmental filmmaker Gail Osherenko, this year we will honor local environmental hero Abe Powell for a life and career as a community and environmental leader. **Please join us on Sunday, June 2** at the Stow House to honor Abe, enjoy delicious food by Duo Catering, local wine and beer, and experience the most exciting live and silent auctions you will find anywhere.