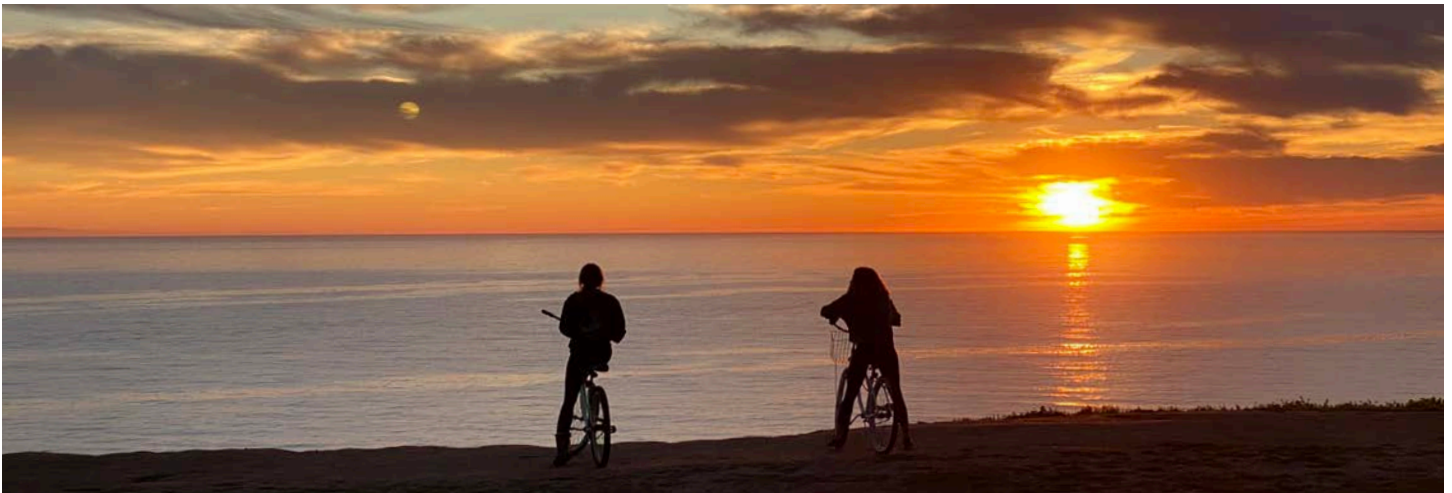


## SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

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### WHAT REALLY MATTERS



Our community has been through so much. In recent years we have experienced senseless acts of violence in Isla Vista, a massive oil spill on the Gaviota Coast closing beaches and fisheries, seemingly endless drought, massive wildfires followed by a devastating debris flow, and now the isolation, fear, and loss of life caused by a pandemic. And all of this has taken place alongside a growing understanding of how the global emergency of climate change will impact the people, creatures, and places we love.

As this newsletter heads to print, we do not know how quickly we will emerge from COVID-19. There are still a number of weeks of social distancing ahead of us as we continue to flatten the curve. But here at EDC we are confident in this community's ability to rise beyond this threat, because we have seen it time and again.

This is a community of vision and values, and everywhere we look, we see leaders looking ahead, targeting solutions. In the advent of the 1969 Santa Barbara Oil Spill, EDC's founders and others did not allow the blackening of our beaches, the overwhelming destruction of marine life, and the stifled tourism economy to forecast the decline of the central coast. Rather,

people banded together around the promise of a Declaration of Environmental Rights and the creation of vital environmental nonprofit organizations. That is but one example of the resilience and strength of character that defines who we are to this day.

Coronavirus will not be the last challenge our community will need to navigate together. Climate change alone assures that. But as we have in the past, we will come together and find a path forward. We will redouble our efforts to stop irresponsible oil projects and to ensure strong policies to help minimize sea level rise, conserve water, and protect open space and wildlife. We will be there for one another and we will celebrate the heroes who keep us safe—from medical professionals, to grocery store and restaurant employees, to activists advocating for the changes we need for a healthy and livable future.

This community has been through a lot. But beyond the stress and damage, we have also seen glorious wildflower blooms, witnessed the resurgence of Lake Cachuma and our other local reservoirs, and observed friends and businesses coming together (if at a distance) to support those in greatest need. You all make us proud every day.



# CLEARING THE AERA

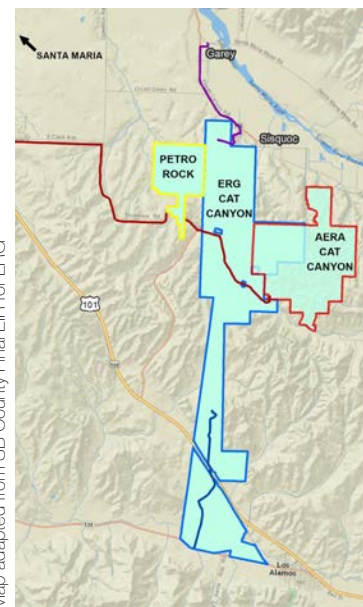
## PREVENTING MASSIVE AND DANGEROUS OIL PRODUCTION IN CAT CANYON

EDC represents Sierra Club Los Padres Chapter, Santa Barbara County Action Network, and our own membership working to stop massive oil drilling in Santa Barbara County's Cat Canyon.

### THEN THERE WERE TWO

Up until this spring, there had been three oil companies pushing projects which would have more than tripled onshore oil production in Santa Barbara County. In April, one of them withdrew its application. An oil company called PetroRock had planned to drill 231 new wells, develop twenty-nine well pads, construct five dirty steam generators, and add significantly to the number of oil tanker trucks traversing our local roads. PetroRock stepping back is a significant victory for our climate and community health, made possible after three years of relentless community opposition.

### EDC'S WORK CONTINUES



Aera Energy, which is jointly owned by ExxonMobil and Shell, and TerraCore are the two remaining oil companies pursuing massive oil development in Cat Canyon. Aera's project is now moving the fastest and will be the next one addressed by Santa Barbara County. Together, the two projects could lead to around 500 new wells, hundreds of tanker truck transits every day, and significant risks to clean water and community health. And what these companies propose is not

conventional oil drilling, which would be risky enough. Aera and TerraCore are proposing to extract oil using methods which more closely resemble tar sands operations. The oil companies are proposing cyclic steam injection, steam flooding, and acidizing – among the most water and energy intensive ways to extract oil anywhere in the world.

### OIL AND DRINKING WATER DON'T MIX

Both Aera's and TerraCore's projects will generate billions

of gallons of highly toxic wastewater which would need to be disposed of. The oil companies' solution – inject this chemical and oil polluted brine into our local aquifers. However, to move forward with this dangerous scheme, they will need an exemption from federal drinking water protections, something EDC and our clients are strongly opposing.

### ORWELLIAN "CONSERVATION" PLANNING

Numerous threatened and endangered species inhabit the Cat Canyon area, including the California red-legged frog and the California tiger salamander. In order to drill in this habitat, the oil companies would normally need permits from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Instead, the Service has drafted a "General Conservation Plan" which is designed to streamline the permitting process under the Endangered Species Act for these oil projects and would essentially allow the companies to destroy hundreds of acres of critical habitat. It is essential that EDC and our clients continue to push back against this dangerous plan which has nothing to do with conservation.

### NEXT (TO) STOP: AERA

Aera's proposal will go before the County Planning Commission next, and we expect to see the final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the project sometime in June. There are so many issues of concern to EDC and our clients that it is hard to believe this project is being given serious consideration. Among the many areas on which EDC's attorneys and analysts are focusing are:

- Climate-changing carbon emissions
- Threats to our clean drinking water
- Air pollution
- Risks from hundreds of tanker trucks on local roads every day
- Noise pollution 24 hours a day
- Removal of mature oak trees
- Significant grading for roads and wellpads



Photo: Mark Oliver

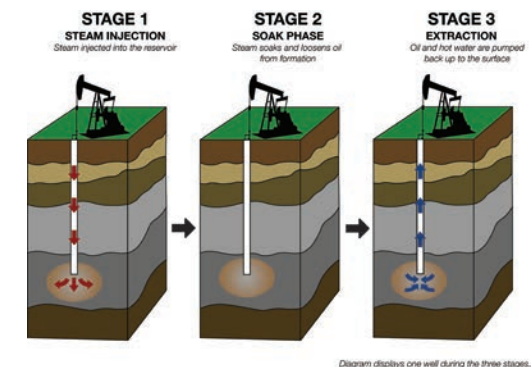
### HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Follow EDC on social media and be sure that you are receiving our emails. If you haven't seen one of our emails in a while, please check your junk folder or let us know. Perhaps they have been going to the wrong address?
- When the EIR comes out, lend your voice by sending comments to the Planning Commission.
- If the current "stay-at-home order" has been lifted, join us in person for the Planning Commission hearing. If not, you will be able to monitor and participate from home.
- Contact your Planning Commissioner. Let them know you oppose Aera's plan. You can find your commissioner by visiting [www.countyofsb.org/plndev/hearings/cpc.sbc](http://www.countyofsb.org/plndev/hearings/cpc.sbc).
- Support EDC financially. This is a very important year for our local environment, and due to the novel coronavirus and the impact it has had on our community, EDC needs your help now more than ever as we continue to face these immediate threats. You can give through the enclosed envelope or by visiting [www.environmentaldefensecenter.org/edc-donate](http://www.environmentaldefensecenter.org/edc-donate).



Photo: Jeremias Salazar

### CYCLIC STEAM INJECTION



**ACIDIZING** – Like fracking, acidizing injects dangerous chemicals mixed with water into the well to eventually enter into the surrounding rock formations. But acidizing, while far less well known, uses a much higher concentration of toxic chemicals than fracking.

**CYCLIC STEAM INJECTION** – Enormous quantities of water are super-heated and then steam is injected to heat and loosen the oil. Then, the oil and water are pumped back to the surface. Steam injection is known to create a high rate of well casing failure and can result in contamination of groundwater.

**STEAM FLOODING** – This dangerous technique is very similar to cyclic steam injection except it requires far more water and uses even more natural gas as it requires the constant injection of steam using injection wells. This technique also requires a separate set of wells to inject and extract the steam and oil.





Photo: Mark Oliver

The town of Solvang sits at the heart of the Santa Ynez Valley, a truly special place with rich and scenic agricultural land, rolling hills sprinkled with oak forests, prime wine country, and the beautiful backdrop of the Santa Ynez Mountains. EDC has been working with Save Our Solvang to draft a ballot initiative defining an Urban Growth Boundary for the City – essentially a line around the City to protect its rural character and preserve ag

and open space while preventing sprawl, and to promote infill. If established, the Urban Growth Boundary would require a vote of the people before urban development is allowed outside of the City limits, with certain exceptions. In early May, Save Our Solvang submitted signatures to certify the ballot measure and hopes to bring the initiative before the City Council this summer to either adopt the measure or put it on the November 3rd ballot.



Photo: Erin Feinblatt

### ILLEGAL DESTRUCTION OF SENSITIVE HABITAT AT NAPLES

In January of this year, around 300 acres of grasslands and environmentally sensitive habitat were illegally disked on the Gaviota Coast by the owners of Santa Barbara Ranch (aka Naples), destroying habitat and impairing public access to the ocean. Disking is an agricultural process that uses a machine to cut into and turn over the top layer of land. For at least the past two decades, this property has been grazed, and the conversion of ag land using disking required permits. Unfortunately, the habitat destruction was also executed right before an expected storm, causing additional erosion and increasing sediment runoff into the Naples Marine Protected Area. On behalf of Surfrider Foundation and our members, EDC is working with Santa Barbara County and the California Coastal Commission to ensure proper enforcement and restoration.



### EDC WILL KEEP ON TRUCKING

Of the seven platforms in the Santa Barbara Channel that have been shut down since the 2015 Refugio Oil Spill, three are operated by ExxonMobil. Since 2017, the company has been working to jumpstart production from these platforms and has now applied to truck crude oil from the Las Flores Canyon processing facility on the Gaviota Coast to refineries in Northern Santa Barbara County and Kern County. EDC, on behalf of Get Oil Out! and SBCAN, is working to protect Santa Barbara County from this risky project that would allow 70 roundtrip truck transits, transporting more than 460,000 gallons of oil every day for seven years. EDC is urging the County to deny this project and protect our community and environment from the threats of more oil spills, traffic impacts, and impaired air quality. The final Environmental Impact Report is due to be released sometime this summer.

### RESTORING OUR COASTLINE

It has been almost five years since the Plains All American Pipeline spilled what UCSB scientists now believe was around 450,000 gallons of heavy crude oil onto the Gaviota Coast and into the Santa Barbara Channel. Today, EDC continues to participate in the Natural Resource Damage Assessment (NRDA) process to ensure the pipeline company fully restores our precious coast to pre-spill condition. A public workshop in Santa Barbara took place in early May to explain the Draft Restoration Plan. Be sure to check your EDC emails to learn how you can engage in the comment period moving forward.



### WHAT WILL BE YOUR LEGACY?

EDC has been preserving precious open space, protecting endangered species, preventing dangerous industrial development, and ensuring healthy communities since 1977. If you share this passion and want to ensure this work will continue for the next four decades and beyond, you might want to consider a planned gift to support this work. By adding EDC to your estate planning and joining EDC's Legacy Society, your home, life insurance, IRA, investment real estate, or business interest will help ensure that EDC will continue this critical work for our children and our children's children.

For more information, contact Owen at [OBailey@environmentaldefesecenter.org](mailto:OBailey@environmentaldefesecenter.org).



A CLIMATE REFUGE

In the coming decades, the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and the wildlife and habitats it supports will face increased pressure from climate change and human use. Ocean acidification, marine heat waves, oil and gas development, marine debris, shipping, and other impacts will continue to challenge the management of Sanctuary resources. As such, EDC is engaged in the Sanctuary Management Plan Review process to encourage Sanctuary staff to take this opportunity to further focus on conservation of marine resources. EDC submitted comments highlighting the ability of the Sanctuary and its Marine Protected Areas to serve as a refuge from climate impacts and human use. While we await the release of the Draft Management Plan, EDC will continue our work to protect the Channel, one of the most ecologically rich and important marine regions in the world.



Photo: Katie Koehn



Photo: Roland Williams and Light-Hawk

H2OVER THE MOON

Protecting clean water is a core priority for EDC and one where we have secured some significant victories in recent months. In March, we reached a final settlement with the Pacific Coast Energy Company (PCEC) for alleged violations of the Clean Water Act. Polluted runoff from the company's 5,400 acre Orcutt Hill oil operation had been flowing into nearby creeks and eventually to the ocean, threatening endangered species including the red-legged frog and steelhead, as well as public recreation. PCEC has agreed to clean up its pollution sources and establish a \$115,000 fund for projects to enhance the local watershed. We also received positive news in another recent case. In 2017, EDC achieved a similar settlement with the Ventura Regional Sanitation District over polluted runoff from the Toland Road Landfill near Santa Paula. In that case, the District agreed to a series of improvements and recent data shows these measures are making a positive impact on water quality.

UP A CREEK

EDC has been working closely with the City of Goleta to help ensure protection of its vital creeks and riparian habitat. For more than a year, EDC staff, on behalf of Urban Creeks Council and our members, worked to strengthen creek protections, ensuring effective implementation of the City's 100-foot development setback that is part of Goleta's General Plan. In February, the City Council restated its support for creek protection and—at our request—directed City staff to coordinate with the California Coastal Commission to enhance protections for creeks and natural resources in the coastal zone. While this process gets underway, EDC continues to serve on the City's Technical Advisory Committee, which is assisting with the preparation of a new City-wide Creek and Watershed Management Plan.

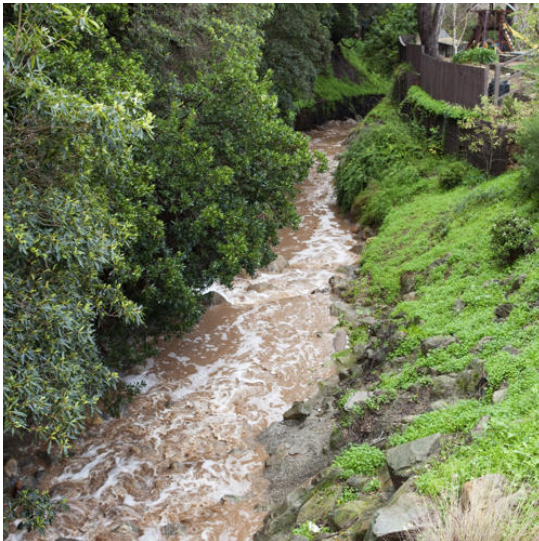


Photo: Erin Feinblatt

TO BE (TOGETHER) OR NOT TO BE (TOGETHER)

As you know, here at EDC we do love our events. All year long we look forward to TGIF! season and plan to gather all our friends together for Green & Blue. Not only are events an important way for us stay connected, but they are a critical part of EDC's fundraising each year. Unfortunately, at this point due to COVID-19, we are uncertain about any of these events.

Right now, we are looking carefully at each of our proposed event dates and hope to make a final decision soon about how and when we will all be able to get together this year. Please be sure to sign up for EDC's email alerts to be the first to know.

We hope to see you soon.



Photos: Laurie Bailey





### EDC STAFF

Owen Bailey, Executive Director  
Jessica Dias, Development Coordinator  
Daniel Elkin, Officer Manager & Event Coordinator  
Elizabeth Fisher, Staff Attorney  
Maggie Hall, Staff Attorney  
Kristen Hislop, Marine Conservation Program Director  
Linda Krop, Chief Counsel  
Pearl Lee, Accounting Manager  
Tara Messing, Staff Attorney  
Brian Trautwein, Environmental Analyst & Watershed Program Director  
Betsy Weber, Assistant Director

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Jinmy Milani, Intern  
Kathryn Parsons, Intern  
Tyler Runsten, Law Clerk

### 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 NEEDS YOUR HELP

COVID-19 has impacted our lives in so many ways. Our hearts go out to all our friends afflicted by the disease or suffering from associated challenges. Unfortunately, the nonprofit sector has also been very hard hit. EDC is not immune to these challenges. This is the time of year when we are normally gearing up for Green & Blue, our big annual event. Normally, we would be seeing sponsorship contributions and ticket sales for a fundraiser which would carry us through the summer months. Now, our ability to hold an in-person event is in question, but our work must continue. Threats to our climate and local environment are not on hold for COVID – in fact, quite the opposite. EDC staff are working harder than ever to ensure clean water, clean air, protected wildlife, preserved agricultural lands, and healthy communities.

Please consider helping out now. You can use the envelope included in this newsletter or give online at <https://www.environmentaldefensecenter.org/edc-donate/>.