



FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

45 YEARS OF WINS

In September, the Environmental Defense Center celebrated our 45th Anniversary with 250 of our devoted supporters in our downtown courtyard, a gathering place for the community for as long as it has been our home. From near and far, we were joined by not only our loyal supporters, but also passionate activists, dedicated clients and partners, current and former board members, staff, legal fellows and clerks, interns, and volunteers. And while the faces of the incredible group of people joining us in our courtyard have changed over the past 45 years, one thing has not: EDC is here for the long haul, continuing our winning track record as an environmental watchdog, providing free and low cost legal services to protect our communities and the environment of the south central coast.

EDC was founded after the 1969 oil spill, and the creation of numerous environmental laws to provide the people of our region an environmental advocate and a legal voice to counter the power of oil companies and other corporate polluters. Today, we continue to stand up against Goliath, securing critical protections for our communities. This summer, EDC and our client, Santa Barbara Channelkeeper, had a huge win in court securing protections for our sensitive coastline and marine waters, local communities, wildlife, including threatened and endangered species, and our tourism industry from the risky practices of offshore fracking and acidizing. In a groundbreaking decision, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals prohibited the federal government from issuing permits for these well stimulation techniques taking place from platforms off California's coast until it complies with environmental protection laws.

After EDC discovered in 2013 that more than fifty fracking and acidizing permits had been issued by the federal government without any public or environmental review, we filed a lawsuit that we eventually settled in 2014, securing the first ever environmental review of these risky offshore practices as well as a new level of public transparency. Unfortunately, the government still failed to conduct full environmental review or consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on impacts to wildlife, so we filed another suit in 2016 with Santa Barbara Channelkeeper. This recent win forces the government to analyze the impacts of fracking and acidizing on endangered and threatened species, the unique geographic area that would be affected, including the Santa Barbara Channel, and to further evaluate the risks associated with discharging toxic chemicals into the ocean. In the meantime, no new permits for fracking and acidizing can be issued by the federal government.

As can be seen with our work on offshore fracking, many of EDC's cases go on for years, sometimes decades. But EDC never gives up the fight to protect our clean air and safe drinking water, to ensure everyone has access to our beaches and open space, to safeguard critical habitat for the wildlife with which we share this space, and to ensure a healthy climate for generations to come. Together, with you by our side, EDC will continue this work for the next 45 years.



THE WHO OF EDC

IN MEMORY OF OWEN BAILEY

In June, EDC and our community lost a dear friend, champion, and warrior, our former Executive Director of nine years, Owen Bailey. Owen had an impact on everyone who had a chance to meet him, with his relentless passion, determination, and unmatched ability to tell the story of our work. He was a fearless leader in our community and voice of inspiration, teaching us all how to be effective advocates and to understand how important our individual contributions are to the fight. Owen was always out front connecting EDC with the communities throughout our service area, from Oxnard to Cambria. Whether we were working to stop dangerous oil trains in San Luis Obispo County, prevent a new fossil-fueled power plant on the coast in Oxnard, protect the health of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, or defending wildlife in the ocean and our local watersheds, Owen was there as our fearless leader, providing strength, hope, and much needed laughter. We miss Owen dearly, and will forever be fueled in continuing this work that was so important to him.



MATTHEW CAMPA, Legal Fellow

Matthew has been a loyal supporter of EDC's work since childhood, having a front row seat while his mom worked for the organization. Matthew has since graduated from Lewis and Clark Law School where he took first place in the National Environmental Moot Court competition and received the 2022 Wyss Scholarship. He is currently working with our attorneys to protect critical agricultural land near Lompoc and in the Santa Ynez Valley. In his free time, Matthew enjoys spending time with his partner and daughter, fishing, reading, and playing poker.

JESSICA DIAS, Development Director

Jessica supports all aspects of EDC's fundraising from helping manage our grants program, to managing our donor database, to donor cultivation, to overseeing our big annual event, Green & Blue. Originally from South Carolina, Jessica joined EDC in 2019 and now lives in Goleta with her husband and cat, Bebe, and can be found exploring the foothills of Santa Barbara County in her free time.



MAGGIE HALL, Senior Attorney

Maggie is EDC's lead attorney in our recent win in court preventing fracking and acidizing off the California coast, as well as our case to protect steelhead with adequate flows from the Twitchell Dam. Maggie grew up in the Santa Ynez Valley and returned to Santa Barbara after completing law school at Lewis & Clark. Maggie, her husband, and two daughters can often be found enjoying our local trails and beaches.

KRISTEN HISLOP, Senior Director, Marine Program

Kristen directs our ever-growing Marine Program working with partner groups across the state on critical issues affecting the Santa Barbara Channel and beyond. Whether it's advocating for responsible offshore renewable energy production, an innovative program to protect great whales from fatal ship strikes, or working in support of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary, Kristen is a leader in our region. A former Bren School grad, Kristen enjoys hiking Santa Barbara trails, paddling along our coast, and exploring the Channel Islands.



AZSHA HUDSON, Marine Analyst

A recent graduate with a Master of Marine Biodiversity and Conservation from Scripps Institution of Oceanography, UCSD, Azsha joined EDC this summer and is helping support our marine program with research and analysis on issues affecting the Santa Barbara Channel region and beyond. While at Scripps, Azsha worked with the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation as a research analyst. A resident of San Diego, Azsha enjoys hiking, paddle boarding in San Diego Bay, and reading at parks with her dog.

Rachel joined EDC in 2021 and is currently leading our work on ensuring proper creek setbacks and protection of wildlife habitat at Heritage Ridge, a proposed housing development in Goleta. She is also working to protect threatened and endangered species from the mis-named General Conservation Plan for Oil & Gas. Rachel lives in Ojai with her husband, their dogs and some select farm animals, and can be found hiking in the Los Padres National Forest in her free time.



RACHEL KONDOR, Staff Attorney



LINDA KROP, Chief Counsel

Linda has been with EDC for more than 30 years and is widely respected throughout the state for her work fighting offshore oil and protecting open space for the public to enjoy. She has consistently won protections for some of our region's most beloved open spaces including Hearst Ranch, Ellwood Mesa, Carpinteria Bluffs, and Sedgwick Reserve. Linda also teaches an environmental law class at UCSB, and is an avid hiker.

PEARL LEE, Accounting Manager

Pearl has managed EDC's finances since 2015. For decades, she has provided bookkeeping services for many nonprofits and local businesses in the Santa Barbara area. When she is not at work you will find her with her two golden retrievers at the dog park or on the beach.



MATT RAMIREZ, Legal Fellow

A relatively new face to EDC, Matt studied environmental law at UC Irvine and UCLA, after earning his bachelor's degree in Ecology & Evolutionary Biology from Princeton. Matt is currently supporting our attorneys on protecting threatened and endangered species from oil and gas activities in Santa Barbara County. A southern California native, Matthew is eager to fight for people's rights to a healthy environment, the right to access open spaces, and the rights of the trees and other natural entities themselves.

ALICIA ROESSLER, Senior Attorney

Alicia's commitment to EDC goes back a long way as a previous Board President and Staff Attorney. In her current role, Alicia was the lead attorney on our recent Clean Water Act settlement with the City of Lompoc that will help reduce pollution in San Miguelito Creek and the Santa Ynez River, and is working to prevent a massive logging proposal in the Los Padres National Forest. Alicia enjoys exploring the beautiful outdoors with her husband and two boys in her free time.



LANA SANDS, Office Manager & Event Coordinator

Lana joined EDC in July and keeps us running smoothly. Lana recently coordinated our 45th Anniversary Celebration and is now helping execute a series of smaller outreach events. She also oversees our facilities, our volunteer program, and provides support on development and outreach activities. Lana grew up in Carpinteria where she lives with her husband and two cats, and is the owner of a local eco-friendly and sustainably made swimwear line.

BRIAN TRAUTWEIN, Senior Analyst/Watershed Program Director

A Goleta native, Brian (BT) has been with EDC for 25 years and guides all our work to protect creeks, watersheds, and land-based endangered species. Brian was instrumental in the creation of Goleta's first Creek and Watershed Management Plan, which puts the City on track to protect and restore these vital waterways. Brian also runs our annual Creek Cleanup Program, and along with his dog, Sonny, knows all the secret waterfalls and swimming holes in the region.



BETSY WEBER, Assistant Director

Over Betsy's 15 years with EDC, she has worn a number of different hats. She continues to manage EDC's communication, media, and outreach work, assists with development strategy and events, and helps manage EDC's internal operations and facility management. A graduate of UC Santa Cruz (Go Banana Slugs!), Betsy is originally from Wyoming and while she returns to the mountains as often as she can, Santa Barbara has a pretty big piece of her heart.



CLEANING UP ITS ACT

In September, EDC reached a settlement with the City of Lompoc over violations of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) caused by the City's operation of its municipal wastewater treatment facility. EDC discovered that the City has been discharging water contaminated with toxic pollutants for over twenty years into the San Miguelito Creek and the Santa Ynez River. These discharges threaten public recreation opportunities and impact downstream water quality and the health of the Santa Ynez River ecosystem, which is important to snowy plovers and other shorebirds, along with endangered steelhead that travel through the River estuary to the ocean and back upstream to spawning grounds as part of their lifecycle. EDC's settlement will force the City to comply with its permit requirements under the CWA and work to no longer discharge toxic and polluted water into the local watershed. The settlement also requires the City to pay \$260,000 to the Rose Foundation for restoration projects in the Santa Ynez watershed, and a penalty of \$3,000 to the Foundation for any future permit violations.

"After more than twenty years of discharging polluted water into our communities' watershed, we are very pleased that the City has at last committed to complying with the Clean Water Act."

**Alicia Roessler,
Senior Attorney**



ONE STEP CLOSER TO OFFSHORE WIND

As California faces unrelenting heat waves, wildfires, sea level rise, and other climate related impacts, we must look towards opportunities to end our reliance on fossil fuels. Offshore floating wind holds the promise to provide much needed renewable energy, though we must remain steadfast in our efforts to ensure this technology is developed with strong protections for wildlife and coastal communities. In August 2022, the federal government announced its intent to hold a lease sale for offshore wind approximately 20 miles off the coast of Morro Bay and Cambria, in addition to a North Coast location near Humboldt County. EDC submitted comments that offered recommendations to include strong environmental protections within the leases, rather than wait for inclusion of such measures in future permits. It is expected that the final lease sale will take place this fall, followed by surveys to ensure the area is suitable for offshore wind. EDC will continue our close engagement throughout these processes to ensure the best outcome for our climate, marine and coastal ecosystems, and impacted communities.

Photos: Bryant Baker



ANOTHER LOGGING & CLEARING PROJECT IN THE LOS PADRES NATIONAL FOREST

This summer, the U.S. Forest Service (Service) announced its latest logging and vegetation removal plan, misnamed as the "Ecological Restoration Project". But the truth is they plan to remove 235,495 acres of native chaparral, forest, riparian habitat, and other ecosystems across the Los Padres National Forest spanning from southern Big Sur into Ventura County. Massive fuel breaks would be made using heavy machinery, even in remote areas away from communities, and sixty stands of forested areas are targeted for large-scale clearing, chopping trees of all ages and sizes. This project will impact endangered and threatened species like the California condor and red-legged frog, thousands of acres of proposed wilderness and roadless areas, and popular hiking and recreation areas such as Figueroa Mountain, Davy Brown Trail, Mt Pinos, Pine Mountain (again), Camino Cielo, Cuyama, and the southern Big Sur Coast. Unfortunately, despite this being the largest project of its kind ever proposed in the Los Padres National Forest, the Service does not intend to complete a full Environmental Impact Statement. EDC, on behalf of Los Padres ForestWatch, will work to ensure full environmental review is completed of all the potential impacts of this massive project that threatens our wildlife, recreation, and critical habitat.

KEEPING OIL OFF OUR COAST

In 2018, the Trump Administration proposed to open more than 90% of our nation's waters, including the entire California Coast and Santa Barbara Channel, to new offshore oil and gas development. As an organization that has led the fight against risky oil practices for the past 45 years, EDC immediately responded in opposition. With coordinated resistance, the environmental community successfully warded off lease sales that would result in new oil and gas projects off our coast. In 2021, the Biden Administration immediately scrapped this ill-fated plan, and in July 2022, released a new plan that did not include the Pacific Region. While EDC supports the exclusion of the California Coast, we strongly believe the era of offshore oil should be behind us and are grateful for our colleagues who join us in this work in the Gulf and Arctic.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUMMER LAW CLERKS



Cynthia Kane



Andrea White

This summer, EDC's legal team had the privilege of working with two law clerks, Cynthia Kane and Andrea White. Cynthia just completed her second year at Vermont Law School where she is a member of the Vermont Law Society and Staff Editor of the Vermont Journal of Environmental Law. Cynthia assisted our attorneys on our Clean Water Act case in Lompoc and in our efforts to advance appropriately located offshore wind energy projects on the California coast. Andrea just finished her second year of law school at UC Berkeley and was the editor of Ecology Law Quarterly. She has been involved in many pro bono campus organizations, including Clean Energy Leaders in Law and Environmental Conservation Outreach. Andrea worked with EDC's legal team to fight ExxonMobil's continued effort to restart three platforms offshore and truck oil along our precious coast.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are so delighted to announce the newest member of our Board of Directors, David Powdrell. While David is a Certified Public Accountant by trade, preserving and protecting our incredible open spaces are among his greatest priorities. David has served on a number of nonprofit boards, most recently as board chair of the Carpinteria Arts Center for 10 years, and has served on EDC's Investment Committee since 2020. Photography, playing music, writing books, and adventure travel are his "happy places".

We also want to thank Judy Pirkowitsch and Lee Heller for their incredible service on the EDC board. Judy served on our board for a total of 12 years, first as Treasurer and most recently as our President. Her dedication, passion, and leadership has had a significant impact for the organization and we are very grateful for her hard work and guidance. Lee recently completed a second round of service on our board from 2019-2022, serving as Secretary, co-chair of our Development Committee, and also as chair of our Green & Blue Event Committee, playing a critical role in ensuring EDC has the funds to continue our important work. Lee's involvement with EDC goes back nearly 20 years as a clerk, volunteer, and donor.



David Powdrell



Judy Pirkowitsch



Lee Heller

Judy served on our board for a total of 12 years, first as Treasurer and most recently as our President. Her dedication, passion, and leadership has had a significant impact for the organization and we are very grateful for her hard work and guidance. Lee recently completed a second round of service on our board from 2019-2022, serving as Secretary, co-chair of our Development Committee, and also as chair of our Green & Blue Event Committee, playing a critical role in ensuring EDC has the funds to continue our important work. Lee's involvement with EDC goes back nearly 20 years as a clerk, volunteer, and donor.

BACK IN THE STOW HOUSE GARDENS FOR A SUCCESSFUL GREEN & BLUE

We had a lovely afternoon on June 5th with nearly 500 guests joining us for Green & Blue, our annual fundraiser in the gardens at the Stow House. Guests enjoyed delicious food and drinks, exciting silent and live auctions, and the presentation of our 2022 Environmental Hero Award to Chairwoman of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, Violet Sage Walker, and her father, Fred Collins (in memoriam), for their leadership in protecting our coastal resources, in part through their nomination of the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary. And we will never forget the moving and inspirational comments from Owen Bailey, our Executive Director of nine years who we lost to cancer just a few weeks later. Thanks to all of you who attended, who donated, and to our generous event sponsors for helping raise critical funds to ensure EDC can continue our work protecting this special region.



Photos: YfYu



Photo: Betsy Weber

PROTECTING NAPLES, ONE OF THE CENTRAL COAST'S MOST TREASURED LANDSCAPES

EDC continues to represent Surfrider Foundation and our members in the decades-long fight to preserve Naples on the Gaviota Coast. This area and its rich ecosystem are part of what is often referred to as the Galapagos of North America. Naples, an iconic property that straddles scenic Highway 101 and includes wildlife habitat, breathtaking views, historic agricultural operations, and public access to the beach, has become a prime target for developers eager to profit from the irreparable exploitation of this pristine coastline. Although the County of Santa Barbara approved development of 71 mansions in 2008, we have been able to stop the project from moving forward. Our current efforts are focused on achieving permanent protection of this unique landscape, seeking restoration in the aftermath of illegal diking that destroyed important grasslands and wetlands, and enforcing a requirement for creek restoration.

GIVING STOCK BENEFITS BOTH EDC AND YOU!

As you begin to think about your year-end giving, we wanted to share with you a powerful way you can support EDC to protect our climate and local environment while saving on your taxes. Transferring appreciated assets is one of the most tax savvy ways to give. By donating stock rather than selling it, you will avoid paying capital gains tax and can take an income tax deduction for the donation. When you sell appreciated stock, you have to pay capital gains taxes on what you earned and depending on your income bracket, you could be taxed up to 20%. If you have owned the stock for less than a year, it could be taxed even more since it's treated as regular income. However, if you give this stock to a charity, neither you nor the charity have to pay taxes on it. Stock donations are also tax deductible so when you file your federal taxes, if you itemize deductions, you can deduct the donation made to EDC from your taxable income. When you lower your taxable income, you pay less overall in income taxes, saving you money again, all while supporting the work of EDC. If you are interested in learning more or making a gift, contact Jessica Dias at JDias@EnvironmentalDefenseCenter.org.



Photo: Betsy Weber

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 Maggie Hall, Senior Attorney
 Kristen Hislop, Senior Director, Marine Program
 Azsha Hudson, Marine Analyst
 Rachel Kondor, Staff Attorney
 Linda Krop, Chief Counsel, Acting Executive Director
 Pearl Lee, Accounting Manager
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Elijah Baker, Intern
 Cynthia Kane, Law Clerk
 Andrea White, 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.

FOLLOW EDC

CELEBRATING 45 YEARS



After a 2.5 year hiatus, it was heartwarming to be back together in our courtyard with 250 friends to celebrate our 45th Anniversary on September 10th. Looking out from the deck where Ensamble Vientos del Sur serenaded us with live music, it was a sea of smiling faces with community members from near and far. Nick Welsh, Editor of the Santa Barbara Independent known for his “Angry Poodle” column, took the stage for an engaging and of course humorous reflection on the

unwavering work of EDC and the impacts the organization has had on our region. The crowd was then “wowed” by Legal Fellow, Matt Campa, who had just completed his first week on the job, inspiring us through the challenges and opportunities we face for the next 45 years.

Guests enjoyed empanadas cooked fresh on the wood fire by local favorite Buena Onda and were entranced by Gene Urban’s magic while sipping wine by Lief Ranch and refreshing beers from M. Special Brewing Co. We want to thank not only those of you who were able to celebrate with us, but each and every one of you who has been an important part of the EDC community over the past 45 years. You all have played an important role in the success of this organization.

“As we gather here to celebrate 45 years of leadership and advocacy, grit and determination, that has resulted in such profoundly important victories on behalf of the environment and this community, let us not forget it is the next 45 that will be most consequential.”

Matthew Campa, EDC Legal Fellow