

November Newsletter

ECO-LOGIC

The Official Newsletter of the Tri-City Ecology Center



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“Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I’m not sure about the former.”

Albert Einstein

It has been a challenging time to follow national election news as we prepare for “drill, drill, drill”. Nevertheless, the sun continues to rise each day. Despite increasing levels of CO₂ - 423.52 today (up from 419.32 last year and up from 414 about ten years ago, there ways to help the environment and Steve Skala offers the following.

As many lament the recent federal election and the anticipated fallout, we all can take steps to quickly help the environment and protect ourselves economically. Trump and his cohorts want you to pay \$1000 per year to the fossil fuel companies just to meet their profit goals. Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, which broke the fossil fuel profit chain, will be on the chopping block. You still have time to set yourself free and also save the planet. Go triple zero by installing solar with a battery, ditch the gasoline car for an EV and install heat pumps for HVAC and hot water. All of these actions will provide tax credits or rebates from the Inflation Reduction Act. The average person spends \$65000 for energy in a 15 year period (\$4300 per year). Going triple zero will cost less than that for new equipment that will last for at least 15 years and bring your energy costs to a few \$100 per year – almost zero. You can probably guess that since you’re

not spending any money for fossil fuels, your carbon footprint becomes near zero, thus saving the planet.

So what are the steps can you take? Here's three - **Solar, heat pumps for HVAC and hot water and an EV for driving (if you drive much).** Most people know what solar is. Those that didn't get solar soon enough to be grandfathered into NEM 2.0 will need to get a battery to make solar financially viable and a battery also reduces your carbon footprint.

EVs are also well known, though understanding the tax credits requires some research. This website does a good job explaining the tax credit for EVs.

<https://www.nerdwallet.com/article/taxes/ev-tax-credit-electric-vehicle-tax-credit>.

Heat pumps can be a bit harder to understand, but the April 2023 TCEC letter had an article on heat pumps for HVAC. HVAC heating uses the most natural gas in your house so is thus the most important to replace. Second highest natural gas usage is for hot water and many hot water heat pumps are available now. Expect a heat pump for HVAC to cost about \$20000 if you now have a standard ducted heating system and you can get a \$2000 tax credit or a \$8000 rebate if your income is low enough to meet eligibility requirements. A hot water heat pump will run close to \$3500 to install depending on need for electrical work. The total installed cost of a heat pump water heater will be eligible for at least a 30% tax credit up to \$2000 and maybe more rebates if one qualifies.

The rebate details were just announced and are now active. A household of two in Alameda County can get the full rebate for heat pumps if annual income is less than \$96,650 and ½ of the full rebate if income is less than \$186,850. The best resource for rebates is The Switch is On website. www.switchison.org/ca There are also some programs for low-cost financing for energy upgrades if one qualifies. A lot of this can be complex. Feel free to contact me if you have any specific questions. Steve.Skala302@gmail.com.



Controversial Ardenwood Development Raises Environmental and Zoning Concerns

– by Kelly Abreu

Park supporters and bird enthusiasts are sounding the alarm over a proposed development project in Ardenwood that appears to circumvent established zoning and environmental review processes. The project, marketed as a "light industrial/R&D" facility, bears all the hallmarks of a large-scale office park that could impact the adjacent Coyote Hills Regional Park.

The project appears to shortcut the usual zoning and environmental review requirements, since it exceeds "light industrial" zoning limits in both size (450,000 sq ft vs. 370,000 sq ft max) and parking spaces (1,400 vs. 1,000 max). To better utilize our shared community resources, weekend parking should be provided to park visitors at no cost.

The project is getting a big tax break. The city could slash its standard development impact fees by \$1 million, from \$3.7 million for office buildings to \$2.3 million under the "light industrial" classification.

The project has enjoyed limited planning reviews and scanty environmental oversight since it will bypass planning commission approval. The city has also instituted a sky-high

non-refundable fee (\$2,500) for zoning-hearing appeals that may deter public scrutiny.

The existing environmental review only applies to the light-industrial zoning, not a large office park. The development's larger size and increased traffic impact could negatively affect local Ardenwood residents.

The city's "Trojan horse" development strategy appears intended to undermine long-standing zoning regulations and environmental protections. Allowing this project to proceed under its current classification could set a dangerous precedent as a blueprint for future projects to bypass CEQA review.

Community members can ask the planning commission (counsel Heather Lee, hlee@fremont.gov) and city council (councilmeetings@fremont.gov) for a proper review process that considers the full environmental and community impact of the proposed Ardenwood office park development.

(List of city development impact fees, page 17)

<https://www.fremont.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/14623/638382316336000000>

3,000 new Meta-Facebook Jobs Across From Coyote Hills



Project Site
(bounded in red)

Any facility
upgrades at
Coyote Hills
Regional Park?

Warrant analysis
for new traffic light

New sidewalk

Gophers are wildlife too!

-By Dan O'Donnell



Note: this advice may not save the environment but it will save wildlife!

Many gardeners strive to create habitat for wildlife. However, by doing so, some destructive creatures such as gophers might show up. Although they are wildlife, they are not welcome. Many people with an organic mindset do not want to kill them but might think that setting a lethal trap is the only option. It is not. There are many things that can be done to protect the plants and discourage gophers.

A single gopher can consume 60% of its body weight in vegetation per day and while doing so, disrupt the garden by creating numerous holes and mounds of soil. Gophers are vegetarian. One nonlethal way of deterring them from eating certain plants is to fertilize with fish emulsion. It is an excellent organic fertilizer and the strong smell will keep the gophers at bay for a few days or a week until the scent dissipates. The hope is that the gopher will have moved on by then. Cotton balls soaked in peppermint oil and placed down the gopher's hole will also encourage it to move along.

A more permanent way to protect plants and trees from gophers is to plant using Digger's Root Guard Gopher Baskets. These heavy-duty baskets come in a number of sizes and protect a large portion of the plant's roots. Rolls of gopher wire can be purchased to protect larger areas such as the bottom of vegetable beds and even entire lawns. Gophers can squeeze through the holes in chicken wire so it is important to specifically use gopher wire.

There are also a number of devices that transmit ultrasonic sounds to repel gophers. Nikand makes a solar powered stake that in most cases will drive gophers away unharmed in about two to four weeks by emitting ultrasonic pulses every thirty seconds. One Nikand stake repels gophers for about ninety feet so when using multiple stakes, make sure that the gophers have a wide pulse free path to use to evacuate the garden. The Nikand stakes are also waterproof so they can be used any time of the year. The ultrasonic pulses travel underground and will not harm other wildlife, pets, or people.

Another way, perhaps the most sensible, to protect plants from being consumed by gophers, is to only plant gopher resistant and gopher repellent plants. Gopher repellent plants are ones that actually make gophers leave the vicinity due to their smell. Gophers generally do not like strong scents whether sweet or foul. This gives gardeners the opportunity to plant an array of desirable edible and ornamental plants that are safe. Among them are Scented Geranium, Lavender, Rosemary, Society Garlic, Artemisia, Lantana, and Mexican Sage.

More and more people are making decisions about the food they eat, the clothes they wear, and the products they purchase based on animal welfare. Adding techniques to discourage and repel gophers instead of killing them is yet another way to respect animal life.



The Gopher cage

Tree Planting News

In November UFF (Urban Forest Friends) planted 22 trees. The next tree planting will be Nov. 23rd at Silliman Park

REACT (Rotary Environmental Action Team) planted 32 trees by Lake Elizabeth

Letter to Editor – How to Plant 3,333 more trees –

How to have fun slinging mud and save the environment

There are ways to scale up our political process in Fremont – here's how. Given the progressive direction of negative campaigning that bruises egos and reputations and denies the public of real strategies that set policy, a better way is possible. The cost of mailers probably approaches \$100,000. With 2 candidates that's \$200,000. The wholesale cost of a 15-gallon tree ready to plant is about \$60. That means you can plant around 3,333 trees if the negative campaigning money is spent on Fremont's canopy. That's easy.

The fun part is the mudslinging contest! An appropriate piece of open land, with good water supply, must be selected by impartial members of City management (is that possible?). Then the candidates must stand at a 15-yard distance as their campaign managers hand them soft mud balls. Let the mudslinging begin. Once it is finished each candidate must gather his received mud balls and insert acorns from the tree of his choice. He or she will then need to toss their mudballs in an appropriate location in the

confines of our fair city. I suggest EBRPD but others may have a better location. Please not next to our sewer infested bay or the protected wetlands!

It may take years, but we will know eventually which candidate has achieved the best environmental goals. My take on this year's candidates is that they are all outstanding individuals that for unknown reason have chosen a poorly paid and difficult job, and that they spend lots of money to arrive at this demanding position. Their details of how they will function with city management are hard to discern based on their mailings, so this is an alternative for the years ahead that we can all enjoy.

Submitted to Tri City News by who? – the editor of Ecologic – Local Fremont Mud Salesman

BECOME A MEMBER

WANT TO JOIN TCEC?

If you want to become a member please click [HERE](#) to fill out this form and mail a check to 3375 Country Drive, Fremont, CA 94536. To know more about TCEC please visit our website at <http://www.tricityecology.org>

Board meets on the first Thursday of each month on Zoom due to Covid-1. Please call to verify. If you wish to speak on a subject, please call 510.793.6222 or 510.790.1685.

If you have any suggestions or want to contact us, please fill out [THIS](#) form.

Tri City Ecology Board

Chair	Caroline Harris	415 377 9200
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Special for TCEC Members - Compostables

7" plate - was \$3.70 - now \$3.20

10" plate - now \$5.16

11.5 oz bowl - was \$2.70 - now \$2.95

8oz no tree hot cup - now \$3.45

9" cold cup - now \$3.84

10 oz cold cup - \$6.25

16 oz cold cup - now \$5.98

Teaspoon, fork or knife - now \$1.60

3 gal kitchen pail bag - now \$2.85

and 13 gal kitchen pail bag - \$3.15

Orders May be picked up at 3375 Country Drive, Fremont, on Thursdays between 11 AM – 2 PM, or by special arrangement. When purchasing please fill out an order form and pay by cash or check. Sorry, we don't have change. This benefit is for TCEC members only.

Questions? Please text Bill Palleschi at 510 396 6694 or email her at billpalleschi@gmail.com, and please cc: Caroline Harris at caroline.harris@earthlink.net