

7-5-23 WATER RIGHTS

[ANCHOR:]

Indigenous leaders and environmental groups gathered today [Wednesday] at California's Capitol to rally for better access to clean water. CapRadio's Manola Secaira has more.

[CutID: <Cuts> WATERSALMONACTION-1.wav

Time: 54s

Title: WATERSALMONACTION-1

Description: WATERSALMONACTION-1

In-cue: (Ambi) Advocates expressed support...

Out-cue: SOC]

[
BODY

Advocates expressed support for a trio of bills that would revamp the state's approach to senior water rights. Senior water rights refers to those given prior to 1914. Claimants of these rights are given priority to divert water over more junior water rights holders.

Brandon Dawson is the director of Sierra Club California. He says California's current water rights system leaves Tribes and communities of color at a disadvantage.

DAWSON: When you think about who colonized California, who had the ability and the opportunity and the privilege to go to the government and say we were here first and we actually have the water rights systems, then you can get at exactly who how inequitable that system is that they've taken advantage of. [14]

Dawson says the trio of bills would allow California officials to better assess existing water rights and penalize illegal diversions.

SOC

7-10-23 WILDFIRE VETERINARIANS

[INTRO]

A new team is in place to help victims of wildfires in California...animal victims. CapRadio's Drew Sanders has more on the California Veterinary Emergency Team...or CVET [C-Vet]...that's headquartered at UC Davis. [:11]

[CutID: <Cuts> WILDFIREVETS-1.wav

Time: 1m 17s

Title: WILDFIREVETS-1

Description: WILDFIREVETS-1

In-cue: CVET was formed...

Out-cue: SOC]

[OPTIONAL ANCHOR TAG:]

Those interested in volunteering for CVET can use the "join us" tab at C-VET-U-C-DAVIS-DOT-ORG [cvetucdavis.org].

[:1:21 CVET was formed through legislation and works with government agencies like the California Office of Emergency Services to fill an often overlooked and underfunded area of disaster response.

WILDFIREVETS5/Burke: "In recent disasters, twice actually, the state had to request a veterinary team from Texas to come out and provide veterinary support."

William Burke is the associate director of planning for CVET. He says the team is activated when local veterinary resources have been exhausted. Burke says CVET is equipped with 22 and 24-foot trailers that will serve as mobile in-field hospitals and exam rooms for animals with a variety of injuries and health problems.

WILDFIREVETS1/Burke: "Lacerations, burns, injuries to limbs, it really just depends, but anytime you're introducing a large number of animals into a new space, like you would during a disaster/shelter scenario, you're talking potential for infectious disease as well as almost certainly, greatly increasing the stress of those animals which has a who host of issues."

Burke says CVET is modeled after another team at UC Davis that helps rescue and treat injured wildlife during oil spills.

He says CVET is still recruiting veterinary professionals,. Drew Sanders, CapRadio News.

7-18-23 SENIOR HOMELESS SHELTER

[INTRO :17]

Sacramento County has opened a small shelter serving adults 60 and older ... who have fallen into homelessness for the first time. It's a growing population.

CapRadio's Chris Nichols reports Nottoli [nuh-TOLL-ee] Place also serves as a safe house for victims of abuse or neglect.

[CutID: <Cuts> SENIORSHELTER-1.wav
Time: 1m 13s
Title: SENIORSHELTER-1
Description: SENIORSHELTER-1
In-cue: (Cut) It's your own room....
Out-cue: SOC]

[BODY 1:13

[AMBI] "It's your own room and your own space ... and I love that."

Seventy-four-year-old Herschel Walthall got connected with Nattoli Place through the County's adult protective services ...

... Though he's faced hardship, the former school bus driver says ... the shelter ... offers him a new beginning ...

Herschel BITE 1: "There's not a lot of places like this. It's very unique. But if you take advantage of it, it's got a lot to offer. This has an actual program to actually help you."
(:12)

That help includes meals, case management and connections to housing.

The facility is named after recently retired Sacramento County Supervisor Don Nottoli, who helped spearhead the project.

Nottoli says the inspiration came from an eye-opening report that found the County ... due to its lack of safe house beds ... was turning away an average of two people every day who qualified for placement ...

Nottoli BITE 1: "You do the math and that's well over 700 people a year who were seniors, abused, neglected, homeless. " (:06)

Several residents at the shelter have already lined up housing, including Walthall, who expects to move into a senior apartment later this week.

Chris Nichols, CapRadio News.

7-19-23 LEGISLATIVE STAFF CAN UNIONIZE

Legislative staff in California's State Capitol have long been banned from unionizing and efforts to grant them the ability to organize have been shot down. As another bill to allow staff to unionize makes its way through the state legislature, CapRadio's Laura Fitzgerald explains why this year might be different.

[CutID: <Cuts> AB1LEGUNION.wav

Time: 3m 26s

Title: AB1LEGUNION

Description: AB1LEGUNION

In-cue: Legislative staff are...

Out-cue: SOC]

[HOST TAG:]

The bill recently passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee and is now headed to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

[BODY:

Legislative staff are responsible for shepherding bills through the Capitol. They also help Californians navigate state bureaucracy to get the services they need.

Many of these workers say they got into the job to make a difference.

But multiple current and former staffers say the job's unique demands take a toll: they work long hours without overtime pay and some experience hostile work environments.

MOORE 1: There are members in here that are classified as yellors. We know they yell at their staff.

That's former legislative aide Alan Moore.

He says staff are also pressured to volunteer on campaigns each election cycle... they're even asked to use vacation days to do so.

MOORE 2: And people are afraid that if they don't go out and put in this time and effort, that they're going to be blackballed or, you know, they're not going to be the first in line for the next promotion.

Labor unions play a large role in California politics.

They're among top donors to Democratic legislators, who in turn have passed laws to expand rights for workers across the state. This is a point of frustration for some staffers, like Jessica Lawrence.

LAWRENCE 1: I think it's very hypocritical to ask for campaign support and funding from the police unions, the firefighter unions, the teachers unions, and then turn around and deny your own staff the right to unionize.

California's over 200,000 public employees can unionize, but legislative staff are notably excluded. Assembly Bill 1 is the fifth attempt in recent years to change that. And while this bill doesn't have any formal opposition, legislators themselves have been the main roadblock in prior years. Last year Senator Kelly Seyarto, a former Assemblymember, spoke against a similar bill. It died when it didn't get the votes it needed to pass a key committee. He said a union wouldn't fix inappropriate behavior.

SEYARTO 1: They shouldn't need to feel like they form a union to address issues like that. We should be addressing issues like that. And if we have legislators who can't behave, and can't assemble a staff and take care of them and treat them with respect, well they shouldn't be here.

GONZALEZ 1: You can't force a culture change.

Former Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez authored three staff unionization bills during her tenure.

She now heads the California Labor Federation.

She says the legislature is a unique place to work... and that's why a union is needed.

GONZALEZ 1: You can't reprimand a member for being bad. Right. Their constituents elect them. You're not getting rid of a member because they're a jerk. Unfortunately, that's just not part of the way the system works.

Last year the Capitol saw a wave of new lawmakers. That was due to redistricting and term limits.

Assemblymember Tina McKinnor says that turnover could account for the progress this effort has made.

She's the author of AB 1 and a former staffer.

McKINNOR 1: It just shows that the legislature has actually changed. We're willing to make progressive moves to take care of our staff.

Workers in other state capitals, and even in Washington, D.C. have been fighting similar battles.

Legislative staffers in Oregon and Maine are unionized and workers in the U.S. House of Representatives can also join a union.

Alan Moore says this proves a blueprint does exist for California.

MOORE 3: But the institution itself has always looked out for itself first. Employees come second.

As the deadline for passing bills approaches in September, staff hope that this is the year the institution puts them first.

SOC: Laura Fitzgerald, CapRadio News.

7-24-23 STATE TRAVEL BAN IMPACTS

[INTRO :20]

California bans state-funded travel to other states that discriminate against LGBTQ people. That list has ballooned as legislation targeting trans people sweeps the country. Now Democratic lawmakers want to change tactics.

CapRadio's Nicole Nixon examines the impacts of California's travel ban and whether it's accomplishing its original goal.

[CutID: <Cuts> STATETRAVELBAN.wav
Time: 3m 39s

Title: STATETRAVELBAN

Description: STATETRAVELBAN

In-cue: In 2016, North Carolina...

Out-cue: SOC]

[BODY 3:39

In 2016, North Carolina passed an anti-transgender law that required people to use public restrooms that correspond with their sex assigned at birth. There was major fallout. The NBA All-Star game was relocated from Charlotte to New Orleans. Entertainers and film productions boycotted the state. And California passed a law banning state-funded travel to states with anti-LGBTQ laws on the books. At first, this travel ban only applied to four states. But in the seven years since...

[TRAVEL BAN WATERFALL]

California Attorney General Rob Bonta recently brought the total to 26 states. It means California state employees, researchers and public university athletic teams either can't travel to those states or they have to use private funding to get there.

ATKINS: I think we find that it isolates us from being able to be present, be visible and show examples of inclusivity and success. <<:09>>

Democratic State Senate leader Toni Atkins is proposing a tactical shift. She is lesbian and has a bill to repeal California's travel ban and replace it with an outreach campaign for LGBTQ communities in conservative states.

ATKINS: Because it really is personal relationships, direct communication and contact that change hearts and minds. <<:07>>

Marc Stein is a history professor at San Francisco State University. He had an early run-in with California's travel ban while researching trans issues.

STEIN: I needed to go to North Carolina to do that research. And when I applied for reimbursement on my return, the foundation that holds my research funds put a stop on payment based on the policy. <<:13>>

Stein eventually got reimbursed because he had booked the travel before the ban took effect. Aside from complicating research trips and conferences, Stein says the travel ban ends up limiting the topics graduate students research. For example, he says if a student wanted to research the Tulsa Race Riots or Florida's anti-gay Johns Committees from the 1950s, they'd have to get private funding to go to those places. Despite that, Stein is not getting behind Sen. Atkins' proposal to end the ban.

STEIN: I think it sends an unfortunate message that the arguments that are coming at us from Florida and Texas are working and that we need to change our value-based policies because of economic costs. <<:16>>

Instead, he'd like to see an exemption for research or higher education generally. California passed the travel ban to put economic pressure on states that pass discriminatory laws. The fact that the list keeps expanding means it's not accomplishing what it set out to do. But it has been effective in another way.

TUTTELL: It definitely had an impact on the state, a negative impact. Wit Tuttell is the director of Visit North Carolina, the state's tourism bureau. But measuring the economic impact of a ban on state-funded travel is difficult.

TUTTELL: You know, it's one thing if an organization is looking to host a convention here and they tell us, hey, we're not hosting it here because of this travel ban. But what you don't know is how many meetings didn't even consider you because of it .<<:14>>

Tuttell also points out North Carolina's anti-trans law that started all of this was repealed in 2020. The state's Democratic governor also recently vetoed three anti-trans bills. And despite these political shifts, North Carolina is still on California's banned travel list.

SOC

8-21-23 SMOKE TAINTED WINE

[ANCHOR:]

A growing number of California winemakers have seen their crop ruined in recent years by wildfire smoke.

The impact is huge: After fires in 2020, the California Association of Wine Grape Growers estimated that up to 325-thousand tons of grapes weren't usable, leading to over three-billion dollars in losses. CapRadio's Manola Secaira has more.

[CutID: <Cuts> SMOKETAINT.wav

Time: 3m 42s

Title: SMOKETAINT

Description: SMOKETAINT

In-cue: (Tractor nat) It's a hot...

Out-cue: SOC]

[ANCHOR TAG:]

For pictures of the vineyard and more on the research, go to capradio-dot-org.

[BODY

[sound of the tractor]

It's a hot August morning at a vineyard in Davis. We're about a half hour from Sacramento. The air smells faintly of cinnamon. It's one of the ingredients of the polymer-based solution being sprayed over the grapes by a slow-moving tractor.

This product is typically used to protect plants from fungus. But today, researchers with UC Davis are testing to see if it might help protect the grapes from exposure to smoke.

Naomi Kampen is one of the Ph.D. students lending a hand in the experiment. She's tasted her fair share of smoke-tainted wine.

KAMPEN: the thing that I pick up most in the really bad smoke tainted wines is like stale cigarette smoke. [5s]

In a couple of weeks, Kampen says the team will cover a portion of the grapes in a cloud of smoke. After that, they'll turn them into wine and test how effective the spray was at reducing the level of smoke taint.

KAMPEN: I don't think any of us are hugely optimistic that this will be the silver bullet, but it could be a piece of a larger mitigation attempt. [8s]

In previous tests, they've found similar sprays only offer about 10% protection for the grapes. But right now, winemakers are desperate for any help they can get.

OBERHOLSTER: They just want to do something to feel like they're protecting their grapes, but you can actually make it worse, so that's really, really important. [8s]

That's Anita Oberholster. She's a wine researcher at UC Davis who specializes in the study of smoke taint.

Previously, she's found that spraying the grapes when smoke is in the air could actually increase the level of taint. So at the very least, her research helps winemakers from creating an even bigger problem.

OBERHOLSTER: A lot of what I do is also just screening.[3s]

Research on smoke taint is pretty new. The first academic paper on the topic came out of Australia about two decades ago. It wasn't until wildfires hit California in 2020 that the broader winemaking community began to understand that smoke taint was more than a freak accident.

Deb Cahn learned that lesson earlier than most. She and her husband Ted own Navarro Vineyards in Mendocino County, which was hit by wildfire smoke in 2008. In more recent years, Cahn says she's had to reject shipments from growers she's worked with for decades. Some, facing rejection from many vineyards, have quit.

CAHN: they have just said, you know, this has been too many years of not being able to make money on my vineyard. I don't think I want to do this anymore. [10s]

Cahn describes farming as a form of crisis management, even under normal conditions. But she sees smoke taint as one impact of climate change that will transform the industry permanently.

CAHN: we're old, we don't have to worry about it too much longer, but our kids and our grandkids do. [5s]

Oberholster says she's noted an uptick in funding for her research since 2020. In June, California Senator Alex Padilla introduced a bill in Congress that could provide over \$32 billion for research over five years.

So far, some of the research has looked at what can be done to protect the grapes before smoke hits, like sprays. But Oberholster says the most promising solutions are those that treat wine made from tainted grapes through methods like reverse osmosis.

OBERHOLSTER: it will be very valuable to get a treatment option that is not too expensive and can actually treat wine and not impact the overall quality greatly so that that wine can actually be sold and perhaps sold in the bracket it was aimed for originally. [16s]

Oberholster sees the possibility for better options in the next couple years. In the meantime, she says researchers have to investigate every possible solution – even the ones that might only help a little bit.

[closing sound from field]

SOC

#

(7) 8-28-23 WEST NILE OUTBREAK

INTRO:

The Sacramento Yolo Vector Control District has been spraying a diluted insecticide this week throughout the region to kill mosquitoes. This comes as both counties, Sacramento and Yolo, report their first deaths linked to West Nile virus [Wed & Thurs respectively].

CapRadio's health care reporter Kate Wolffe has more on why this season has been particularly bad... and what residents can do to fight in their own backyards:

BODY

Ambi under...

Field technician David Smith stands in the green front garden of a home in Elk Grove.

He's been catching and cataloging mosquitos in the area for the past 16 years.

SMITH: One of the things that we do is we'll come out and set these big traps to kind of see what we're finding in a given area...

Roll ambi under

The traps are soft blue and white cylinders, about two feet high.

They use dry ice and a lure stick that mimics the human scent. [sends human scent into the air around them]

When mosquitos get close, an inverted fan sucks them in.

David opens the trap and pulls out a mesh net.

SMITH: There's not too much actually. I think you've got like two adults in there and these actually look like our Culex Pippin mosquitoes...in general terms that are one of our vectors for West Nile virus.

West Nile virus originates in birds and is transmitted to humans and other mammals by mosquitoes.

For the majority of people who get it, there are no symptoms...

For those who do experience symptoms - they're flu-y..a fever, headache, joint pain, body aches.

For an even smaller fraction, the disease is neuro-invasive - and causes brain and spinal cord inflammation.

Since 2004, California has seen hundreds of cases and deaths, but this year is shaping up to be intense:

Robles: Not only did we have a record amount of rain, very wet winter, so many different mosquito breeding sources. We've also had, you know, very warm temperatures that are ongoing.

Luz Robles is a spokesperson for the Vector Control District.

Robles says they've been seeing abnormally high numbers of mosquitos and dead birds, and human cases are inching up too.

Sacramento is investigating 17 cases of the disease, including one death and about a dozen hospitalizations. [According to a county spokesperson, the person was in their 70s with an underlying condition.]

These high numbers have compelled the district to..for the first time since 2018...spray a diluted insecticide called Dibrom from low-flying planes.

Robles: we do them when it's absolutely necessary. Well, we know that we have to act quickly to interrupt the virus transmission cycle and to be able to protect public health.

The CDC says the active ingredient in Dibrom, naled, presents minimal risk to humans, plants and animals

However it is prohibited in the European Union because it's deemed more risky than effective.

Barker: I think the decisions you make in one environment versus another are not always exactly the same.

UC Davis Epidemiologist Dr. Chris Barker says Europe's population is at a much lower risk of getting these mosquito-transmitted pathogens than we are.

He says California has a different climate than many parts of Europe, and has loads of irrigated farming that helps breed mosquitoes. Naled is the best option right now.

Barker:: I think if there were alternative tools to achieve the same effect and eliminate all mosquitoes, everybody in public health and mosquito control would love to hear about them. And unfortunately, we don't have enough of those. And that's one of the sticking points.

But there are ways to prevent adult mosquitoes from multiplying...and they involve you taking action in your backyard...

Back at the Elk Grove home, technician David Smith is demonstrating how residents can play their part.

He points to some shallow brown liquid at the bottom of a laundry basket outside.

Smith: Just that little amount of water right there, if there's eggs in there already or if the mosquitoes decide that, hey, there's a good spot, they're laying there, egg raft, it only takes about three days for those exit to hatch off.

Smith says the best course of action is to flip over anything that could be holding water - and if you're propagating plants outside, to not let the water stand for more than 3 days.

So check out swimming pools, buckets, potted plants, bird feeders...But before you head outside, spray on some repellent.

Kate Wolffe, CapRadio News.

In Sacramento, I'm Kate Wolffe

9-12-23 MICRO HOUSING

Some housing developers in Sacramento are thinking small – really small – to solve the region's lack of affordable homes. They're building "micro apartments," ... some smaller than 300 square feet. Cap Radio's Chris Nichols takes us on a tour ...

[CutID: <Cuts> MICROHOUSING_Clip_1_ARC1635522142.mp3

Time: 3m 47s

Title: MICROHOUSING

Description: MICROHOUSING_Clip_1

In-cue: AMBI ... That's Caesar ...

Out-cue: SOC]

To see pictures and a floor plan, go to CAP-RADIO-dot-org.

[Caesar AMBI: "It is a little crowded in here. It's a tiny little space." (:09)

That's Caesar LaVey [SEE-zer luh-VAY] ... inside his 267-square-foot apartment at Sonrisa, a new affordable housing community in downtown Sacramento ... two blocks from the state Capitol.

... LaVey's space is tiny ... but he makes the most of it ... His Murphy bed folds up into the wall ... and transforms into a couch ... leaving him just steps from his fridge, microwave and induction stove ...

Caesar AMBI 2 Steps To the Kitchen: "Two steps to the kitchen ... and I think that's kind of the way I prefer it at the moment." (:05)

At the moment, the 20-year-old LaVey says ... he's lucky ... just to have this small space ... He pays a little more than 800 dollars a month in rent ... about a thousand

dollars below the average apartment rent ... in a region that has a shortfall of tens of thousands of affordable homes.

LaVey, who makes 17 fifty an hour as a tailor, says he and other young renters ... don't have a lot of options right now ...

Caesar BITE Dreaming for Touching the Stars

"It's not that nobody wants to have a big house and kids and things like that. It's that it's become so completely unaffordable and so far out of anybody else's reach that we literally just cannot touch it. That's like dreaming for touching the stars." (:16)

Housing experts say micro apartments CAN help with the affordability crisis

But as projects like Sonrisa move forward, cities should make sure they maintain health, safety and quality of life standards ... says Laxmi Ramasubramanian [LOX-mey ... RAHMA-subra-MOHN-ian]
an urban planning professor at San Jose State

Laxmi BITE 1 "I think we do have to think about 'How small is too small?' Because the way people use their home has changed over the past several years. It's amplified through the pandemic: People work from home." (:14)

But UC Davis law professor Chris Elmendorf ... researches California's housing crisis ... says given the state's dire lack of affordable homes, going small makes sense.

Chris BITE 1: "I don't see size as being a health or safety issue. Particularly when the alternative is a tent. We know that it's not safe to live in a tent on the street." (:07)

Sacramento's city code requires a minimum of 150 square feet of living space in so-called "efficiency units" ... they must also provide a kitchen and bathroom ... and house no more than two people.

Supporters of micro apartments say they help more than just young renters. They're also an affordable option for older residents on a fixed income ... for single parents ... and for people with disabilities who need to access downtown services.

Danielle BITE 6 Project Critical to Crisis: "I think we have a lot of one- and two-person households that are looking for affordable places to live and it's really hard to do without a second income or a roommate." (:12)

That's Danielle Foster. She heads the public agency that developed Sonrisa ... and opened it in March.

To live at the complex, tenants must make between 40 and 60 percent of the area median income.

Foster says there's nothing small about the demand for the project's 58 apartments, which are all full ...

Danielle BITE 5 Big Demand: "We have a waiting list of over 860 households right now just for this location. And so we know there's a great need and a great demand for more housing of this type." (:12)

Back inside his apartment, LaVey says that massive waiting list reinforces how fortunate he is to have a home ...

Caesar BITE Last: ... this was like a diamond, literally, in the rough. I could not have found something better ... (:06)

LaVey adds ... he can't afford ... to leave ... anytime soon.

Chris Nichols, CapRadio News.]