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Subject: Sierra Climate Change News June 2009



SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE

Keeping light in the range.

Climate Change News June 2009

Including Campaign
Updates, Taking Action for
the Sierra, Relevant News

Articles, Useful Reports and Resources and Cool
Websites and Blogs

Campaign Updates

SIERRA NEVADA ALLIANCE LAND USE SUMMIT MATERIALS NOW ONLINE

On June 12th the Alliance co-hosted its annual Land Use Summit at the Sierra Health Foundation in Sacramento. The event ran from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and featured speakers from California's Natural Resources Agency, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the Planning and Conservation League, among others. The speakers covered topics such as SB375 and its implications to rural areas, the California Adaptation Strategy, and septic in the Sierra.

If you were unable to attend the summit in person, all of the presentations are available online at the [Alliance's Land Use Program's website](#).

Many thanks to the [Sierra Health Foundation](#) for hosting the well-organized and successful event.

Taking Action for the Sierra

YOUR VOICE – SIERRA ENVIRONMENTAL LAW WORKSHOP

Alliance Events

July 10, You're your Voice – Sierra Environmental Law Workshop
Renewable Energy Development in the Sierra Nevada Region. Head the [website](#) for additional details or see the longer description in the body of the newsletter.

October 16-18, 16th Annual Sierra Nevada Alliance Conference at the North Tahoe Event Center in Kings Beach. Mark your calendar! Check back at our [website](#) for more details!

Other Events

July 23, Environmental and Water Resources Institute of the American Society of Civil Engineers
Are California's Communities Sustainable. Register by July 3 to receive a discount. Visit www.floodplain.org for more information.

“Renewable Energy Development in the Sierra Nevada Region Legal and Environmental Issues”

This one-day program will present experts in appropriate renewable technologies, project finance, and transmission requirements for an expanded alternative energy system. The program will also focus on the environmental impacts of these technologies and the planning and permitting process for potential projects. A concluding session will help Sierra Nevada residents find ways to participate effectively in decisions affecting the location and operation of renewable energy projects in their vicinity.

July 26, 6th Annual Garden Tour to benefit the Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum. Tickets are \$20 and can be picked up at select locations. For more information call (530)-541-5458.

This is an opportunity for Sierra officials, agencies, non-profits, individual citizens and practicing attorneys to learn about the steps required for successful development of renewables in this region.

The workshop will take place on July 10, 2009 at the Lake Natoma Inn, 702 Gold Lake Drive, Folsom, California. Cost of the event is \$85 for members, \$160 for non-section members, \$65 for government/non-profit, and \$50 for the general public. For more information, a complete agenda, and a schedule of events, head to the State Bar of California’s Environmental Law Section [website](#).

AB32 AND SB375 WORKSHOPS

The Local Government Commission, the Governor’s Office of Planning and Research, and Senator Darrell Steinberg will host workshops to discuss the following topics related to AB32 and SB 375:

- How AB32 and SB375 relate to local governments
- Strategies for local government compliance
- Economic benefits
- How to take advantage of the new CEQA rules and exemptions
- Funding opportunities for planning and implementation
- Model programs and best practices that result in the reduction of the most greenhouse gas emissions for your money

Speakers will include top staff from the sponsoring organizations as well as regional and local experts, who will showcase some of the best and most innovative steps that local governments are taking. Register for the workshops at <http://www.lgc.org/events/sb375.html>.

See below for dates and locations nearest you:

- July 15 – Oakland
- July 30 – Sacramento

ADAPTATION SPOTLIGHT: EL DORADO IRRIGATION DISTRICT'S *DROUGHT PREPAREDNESS PLAN*

As a public water utility, the El Dorado Irrigation District (EID) is taking actions to both reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to existing and predicted changes in climate. As global warming reduces the local snowpack, changes the timing of peak run-off and alters precipitation patterns, EID is ensuring that their customers will continue to get the water they need and that their natural and built infrastructure is resilient in the face of climate change. In addition to EID's installation of 3.2 acres of solar panels at one of its wastewater treatment plants and its goal to purchase fuel-efficient vehicles to replace its existing fleet, EID has developed adaptation strategies. Those strategies include expanding its public education and outreach process, modeling the potential effects of climate change on its watershed, and integrating efforts with a variety of stakeholders in its service region.

EID's [Drought Preparedness Plan](#) is an action plan for preparing for, identifying, and responding to drought. With the assistance of the Stockholm Environmental Institute (SEI), EID developed a Watershed Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) model. WEAP uses a range of possible scenarios about future climate up until 2030 and the associated hydrologic regimes as model input. Using WEAP as a tool, EID already identified a suite of water management changes it may need to implement in the future. This model has enabled EID to start planning now for these types of contingencies, rather than waiting for them to occur, allowing for a cost effective solutions rather than trying to respond in a crisis situation.

Below lists the adaptation strategies EID has undertaken:

- Education outreach on Climate Change impacts
 - Co-hosted a public climate change symposium with a neighboring water agency, the Nevada Irrigation District in April 2009
- Identify future changes through modeling
 - Created the *Drought Preparedness Plan*
 - Development of a Watershed Evaluation and Planning (WEAP) model
- Integrate and coordinate local efforts to adapt to climate change
 - Contributed to the development and implementation of the Consumnes, American, Bean, Yuba (CABY) Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (IRWMP), which looks at climate change adaptation strategies

You can find more information about the El Dorado Irrigation District on their [website](#).

Relevant News Articles

Local

[Tahoe depths reveal mysteries](#) by Jeff DeLong, Reno Gazette-Journal, Jun. 17. Recently a two-person submersible made more than 40 dives in Tahoe and Fallen Leaf Lake to examine earthquake faults, submerged trees, and invasive species. The crew discovered evidence of dramatic historical climate change in the Tahoe region.

[El Dorado water district may get IRS help for power projects](#) by Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee, Jun. 23. The El Dorado Irrigation District is looking to tap the IRS' Clean Renewable Energy Bonds for help in funding several small hydroelectric projects.

[Tahoe becomes place to study global warming](#) by Annie Flanzraich, Tahoe Daily Tribune, Jun. 25. With Lake Tahoe temperatures up by a two-degree average since 1939, scientists are studying how warmer weather could affect the lake's environment and ecology.

State

[DWR named climate action leader](#) by DWR Press Release, Jun. 2. The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) has been named a "Climate Action Leader" by the California Climate Action Registry for calculating, disclosing, and independently verifying its GHG emissions.

[Ag and water: making do with less](#) by Sasha Khokha, KQED, Jun. 6. As precipitation patterns change in California, the state may see a shift in the composition of its crops, from alfalfa and cotton to drought tolerant plants, but will likely remain an agricultural "powerhouse" according to UC Davis agricultural economist Richard Howitt.

[California's water woes threaten the entire country's food supply](#) by Scott Thill. AlterNet, Jun. 6. Nearly a third of the country's food supply comes from California, but drought there may be a catastrophe for farmers and the rest of the country.

[A wake up call on water use](#) by Gloria Goodale, Christian Science Monitor, Jun. 10. As water in the west becomes an increasingly scarce resource, many expect "water footprints" to become as important as "carbon footprints."

[U.S. EPA awards State Water Resources Control Board \\$2.8 million](#) by U.S. EPA, Jun. 15. As part of the ARRA, the EPA has allocated funds to the SWRCB to improve water quality and create jobs. A slice of the money is earmarked for climate change adaptation research and projects.

[Climate change could severely impact California's unique native plants](#), NASA Earth Observatory, Jun. 24. The native plants unique to California are so vulnerable to global climate change that two-thirds of these endemics could suffer more than an 80 percent reduction in geographic range by the end of the century.

[A climate change for Tracy growth](#) by Eric Firpo, Tracy Press, Jun. 26. Tracy and other cities are coming under pressure to move away from "business as usual and toward a low-carbon future," as California's AG Edmund Brown said in a state document.

National

[House passes bill to address treat of climate change](#) by John Broder, New York Times, Jun. 26. Recently, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Clean Energy and Security Act, legislation intended to address the way the nation produces and uses energy.

[Water supply shifts as global climate changes](#) by Scott Canon, Miami Herald, Jun 15. New research shows that as climate change shifts precipitation patterns, wet regions will become wetter and arid regions will become drier, further adding to the water woes of California and the West.

[Colorado's early flow may be issue](#) by Colleen O'Connor, the Denver Post, Jun. 17. Colorado's peak water flow from snowmelt came a few weeks earlier than normal this year, already causing water storage problems and likely meaning less water later in the summer.

[Climate most significant factor in fanning wildfire flames in warming West](#) by RedOrbit.com,

Jun. 26. A new study finds that climate's influence on the production of forests and the drying of fuels, not higher temperatures or longer fire seasons alone, are a critical determinant of wildfire burned area.

[Government study warns of climate change effects](#) by John Broder, New York Times, Jun. 16. Even if the nation takes steps to slow emissions, the impact of global warming is expected to become more severe in coming years, a new government study says, affecting farms, forests, coastlines, floodplains, water, energy, etc.

[Not so windy: research suggests winds dying down](#) by Seth Borenstein, AP, Jun. 10. The wind, a favorite power source of the green energy movement, seems to be dying down across the U.S. The cause may be global warming – the very problem wind power seeks to address.

[Critics say cash for clunkers bill is a lemon](#) by Janet Hook, LA Times, Jun. 13. The \$1 billion bill, backed by the auto industry, would pay consumers to trade in gas guzzlers, but opponents say criteria are so lax that the government could subsidize trading one gas hog for another.

[Water technology, climate change highlighted at governors' meeting](#), AP, Jun. 15. The three-day Western Governors' Association meeting focused on key issues that affect states throughout the West, including water use, climate change, and energy. The governors approved a resolution calling for a national policy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

International

[USAID giving \\$1 million to Africa climate project](#) by Micheel Theriault, Associated Press, Jun. 25. The U.S. Development agency has committed \$1 million to a project that aims to help people living along southern Africa's Zambezi River cope with worsening natural disasters because of climate change.

[2.1 million year high measured for carbon-dioxide in the atmosphere](#) by Jeremy van Loon, Bloomberg, Jun. 18. Drilling into the ocean floor for shells of marine animals that contain climate records, a team of researchers has shown that atmospheric CO2 levels are at a 2.1 million year high.

[Climate catastrophe getting closer, warn scientists](#) by Space Daily, Jun. 18. A new 36-page document summarizing the international climate change conference held in Copenhagen in March warns that the world faces the growing risk of an abrupt and irreversible climatic shift as the pace of global warming quickens.

[U.S. says it will not demand binding carbon cuts from China](#) by David Adam, The Guardian, Jun. 12. Progress towards a global treaty to fight climate change took an important step forward today when the U.S. said it would not demand that China commit to binding cuts of its GHG emissions.

[Science academies warn of threat from ocean acidification](#) by e360 Digest, Jun. 1. Rising carbon dioxide emissions are causing the world's oceans to become dangerously acidic threatening the health of coral reefs and shellfish, according to a statement from the national science academies of 69 nations.

[Green energy overtakes fossil fuel investment, says UN](#) by Terry Macalister, The Guardian, Jun. 3. Clean technologies attracted \$140 billion compared with \$110 billion for gas, coal and electrical power in 2008.

[Forest carbon market already shows cracks](#) by Gerard Wynn and Susanda Creagh, Reuters, Jun. 4. The plan to pay tropical countries not to chop down trees, often referred to as the carbon offset market, risks being discredited by opportunists and corruption before it starts.

Useful Reports and Resources

[New Hampshire Climate Action Plan](#) focuses on achieving reductions in greenhouse gas emissions through mitigation, while also suggesting some adaptation strategies. The plan stresses the need for establishing a high degree of coordination and integration across all

sectors of society for a successful implementation of the plan.

[Towards a Sustainable and Secure Water Future: A Leadership Role for the U.S. Geological Survey](#) by the National Resource Council provides recommendations to the USGS for how the federal agency can lead the country in the scientific assessment of water quality and supply as the resource becomes scarcer in the coming decades. The report addresses the USGS' Water Resources Discipline's past and present performance, leadership management, their interaction with other agencies and stakeholders, as well as areas for improvement.

[Ask the Climate Question: Adapting to Climate Change Impacts in Urban Regions](#) by the Center for Clean Air Policy highlights the innovative measures local governments are beginning to implement to adapt to the inevitable impacts of climate change. The report offers best practices for how cities and counties across the country should begin thinking about the actions and strategies that can reduce their community's vulnerability to the dangers of climate change.

[Adaptation of Forests and People to Climate Change – A Global Assessment Report](#) presents information regarding the current and projected future impacts of climate change on forests and people. It assesses the ability of forests to adapt to climate change. The report also provides knowledge for enhancing the adaptive capacity of both forests and people to the impacts of climate change.

[Climate Science Literacy: The Essential Principles of Climate Sciences](#) presents information for individuals and communities to understand Earth's climate, impacts of climate change, and approaches for adapting to and mitigation change. It informs about the essential principles of climate systems. The guide also promotes climate science literacy by providing some basic education frameworks of climate concepts.

[Framing Vulnerability and Adaptive Capacity Assessment](#) by Ben Preston and Mark Stafford-Smith provides definitions and explanations of key concepts relating to adaptation. It introduces some of the commonly used methodologies for assessing vulnerability, adaptive capacity, and risk. The paper also provides summaries of recent Australian vulnerability and impact assessments to illustrate some of these different approaches and the resulting outputs.

[Cool Websites and Blogs](#)

[Rural Climate Change Policy](#) is a web resource that provides monthly updates on climate change websites, articles, and reports that focus specifically on rural communities of the Western U.S.

[Pew Center on Climate Change TechBook](#) is a guide to low-carbon technology options. Since greenhouse gases come from diverse sources across the economy, a portfolio of solutions is needed to comprehensively reduce carbon emissions. The TechBook features a chart of the greenhouse gas emissions from the five leading sectors of the U.S. economy and information on the low-carbon technology options for each of those sectors.

[Mapping the Green Economy](#) is an interactive map from the Environmental Defense Fund that draws attention to companies in the greater Los Angeles region that are working towards climate change mitigation in the four sectors of transportation, energy efficiency, energy generation, and green buildings.

[ChicoEco](#) is a Butte Environmental Council Website that pulls together communal knowledge of eco-projects, shares a directory of local green businesses, and hosts a full calendar of action events for the purpose of global cooling.

[Sierra Club's Climate Crossroads](#) is a new social networking site for like-minded individuals in search of a climate answer. Join the network to discuss climate legislation, learn about new climate change science, swap eco-recipes, and more.

[Grist.com's Guide on How to Get Involved in Climate Action](#) is a website that lists national climate-focused groups, climate-focused coalitions, and environmental groups with climate

programs. Organizations listed include 350.org, 1Sky, Environmental Defense Fund, and Friends of the Earth. Head to the website to find more organizations committed action on climate change.

The purpose of the Sierra Nevada Alliance Climate Change Electronic Newsletter is to provide you with relevant information, news, media, events and resources combed from local, state, national and international sources regarding Climate Change. If you have any suggestions or contributions, please feel free to email them to robert@sierranevadaalliance.org.

Climate Change Campaign Background

Climate change is occurring now. The Sierra's precious resources including flora, fauna and rural communities are feeling the impacts now and will continue to be negatively affected unless we make greenhouse gas emissions reduction and adapting resource management practices to climate change high priorities. The Sierra Nevada Alliance is committed to educating the general public, resource planners and community leaders of the Sierra about climate change impacts while empowering them to take the necessary actions to reduce emissions and adapt to this new future. For more info, check out our [Climate Change Campaign Website](#).

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