

# Siskiyou Democrats Grassroots News

Issue #9 – September 2019



## Elizabeth at the Siskiyou Golden Fair!

Elizabeth Betancourt (above center, on left) met with voters at the Siskiyou Democrats booth at the Golden Fair and everyone loved her! She will be a great “New Voice for the North State.” Visit her website at [betancourtforassembly.com](http://betancourtforassembly.com). We also had a strong turnout of volunteers for our booth, informing and registering voters. Left above, Alice Rogers greets voters; right above, Neldena Anderson and Diane Deckard talk with Elizabeth and a voter who stopped by to chat.

### In This Issue

Our key article, “*The Wrecking Ball: Environmental Protections in Trump Time*,” provides insight into the far-reaching efforts of this administration to decimate our public lands and environment. It describes the impact on seven key environmental agencies, whose new leaders are running a smash and grab operation behind the scenes.

### What’s Happening

#### DCCSC Grassroots Committee Meetings

**Tuesday, September 3, 2019: Yreka YMCA or Tuesday, September 10, 2019: Mt. Shasta Library**

Meetings begin at 6:00pm, with the same agenda for both meetings. Everyone is welcome! Join us and get involved.

#### Democratic Central Committee Meeting

**Wednesday, September 11, 2019 6:00pm to 7:30pm Siskiyou YMCA, Yreka**

All DCCSC meetings are open to the public, and you are encouraged to attend. We meet on the second Wednesday of each month from 6:00pm to 7:30pm, alternating between Mt. Shasta and Yreka.

**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, October 12 – Fall Fundraiser  
Paint Siskiyou Blue #2 – Sons of Italy Hall in Weed  
Audrey Denney and Elizabeth Betancourt will be there!**

### HELP SUPPORT OUR EFFORTS!

*Meet and support your fellow Democrats!*

Attend our **October 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**“Paint Siskiyou Blue #2” Fundraiser!**  
Sons of Italy Hall, Weed 5-8pm

**AUDREY DENNEY &  
ELIZABETH BETANCOURT  
will be there.**

Ticket Info: [siskiyoudemocrats.org](http://siskiyoudemocrats.org)

### Special Election Results

It’s on to November 5<sup>th</sup>! It will be Elizabeth Betancourt vs. Brian Dahle’s wife, Megan Dahle. We deserve good representation – not two state legislators from the same household in Lassen county! **So remember to vote!** Below are the election results as of August 30. It was, again, a very low turnout election (only about 35%).

Candidate	Siskiyou Co %	AD1 %
Elizabeth Betancourt	40%	39%
Megan Dahle	30%	36%
Patrick Henry Jones	22%	18%
Lane Rickard	2%	5%
Joe Turner	5%	2%

# THE WRECKING BALL: Environmental Protections in Trump Time

We're wrapping up our summer series on the environment and climate change with an overview of federal environmental agencies to which the current administration is taking the wrecking ball. Masters of double-speak, the former lobbyists for the oil, coal, gas, and mining industries who now head these agencies are talking "efficiency," and "fulfilling original agency mandates," while decimating 100 years of science-based conservation and protection.

Here is a quick look at each agency, it's leadership and recent actions, and links for readers wanting to go deeper. Whatever the action, the aim is always the same across all these agencies: to put "economic," i.e. corporate, interests ahead of environmental action, and to minimize or deny the origins and impacts of climate change.

As we know, our **Congressional candidate Audrey Denney** supports strong environmental protections while encouraging green solutions from the private sector, and increased efficiencies in regulatory processes. And Doug LaMalfa? While he voices support for regulatory streamlining, his votes and public comments suggest he's all in with what you'll find below, including radical deregulation.

Like many rural areas, Siskiyou County and CA District 1 are on the frontlines, in both suffering the impacts of this administration's assaults on the environment, and in holding rich possibilities for a sustainable future. But we can't get there as long as Doug LaMalfa is in office.

**VOTE for AUDREY DENNEY, persuade 10 others, and we CAN get there in 2020!!**

**Department of Agriculture:** Secretary Sonny Perdue, veterinarian, Georgia state senator and two-term Governor. Originally a blue-dog Democrat, he switched parties in 1998. He is an outspoken climate denier, and recently called Minnesota farmers "whiners" for protesting the damage of Trump's trade war with China. As for his destructive tenure at USDA, see the Grassroots News, July and August, 2019 (available on the Siskiyou Democrats webpage: [siskiyoudemocrats.org](http://siskiyoudemocrats.org)).

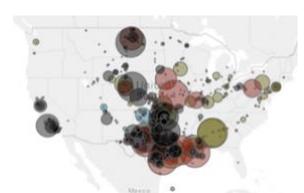
**Environmental Protection Agency:** Secretary Andrew Wheeler, former coal and uranium industry lobbyist, who led the effort to de-classify the Bears Ears National Monument. Numerous lawsuits are pending. For a comprehensive and chilling look at the EPA's frontal assault on environmental protections, see this recent New York Times report: [83 Environmental Rules Being Rolled Back Under Trump](#)



*Removing environmental protections leads to destruction. Above from left: The pristine Appalachian Mountains; Coal mining causes habitat loss for wildlife, devastation of the landscape, and toxic runoff into rivers and streams.*

**Department of the Interior:** Secretary David Bernhardt, former DOI solicitor under George W. Bush. From there he went on to lobby for corporate giants in oil, gas, water, and mining. Opening the Arctic Wildlife Refuge to drilling is one of his primary goals. Among dozens of regulatory rollbacks, the DOI has just announced damaging changes to the Endangered Species Act. The obvious purpose here is to open protected habitat to oil and gas drilling. Legal challenges are underway.

Here's some coverage: [U.S. Significantly Weakens Endangered Species Act – New York Times](#)



*The focus shifts from saving our beautiful, species-rich landscapes to exploitation by corporations. From left: The Pristine Arctic Refuge; If a Pipeline ran through it; A catastrophic oil train derailment in Iowa; A graphic of oil spills across the US.*

## THE WRECKING BALL: Environmental Protections in Trump Time Continued

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:** Nominated in July, 2019, Acting Director Aurelia Skipwith is awaiting confirmation. Formerly of AVC Global (agribusiness) and Monsanto, she holds degrees in biology, animal science, and law. Although the impact of this appointment remains to be seen, David Bernhardt said of her nomination: “Aurelia is a leader within the department who has helped us execute our initiatives as outlined by President Trump.” However, the Service’s official website hasn’t been updated since Jan. 11, 2017, and so human impacts on climate are front and center. A breath of fresh air from the previous administration.



From left: 1) The Hawaiian Marine Reserve could be like 2) the Gulf of Mexico dead zone with 3) a huge dead zone die-off.

**Bureau of Land Management:** Acting Director Michael Nedd has worked his way up through BLM’s ranks. His education is in Information and Systems Management. In a recent House Natural Resources Committee hearing, he reiterated that under David Bernhardt, BLM’s “...top priority [is] to develop the vast domestic energy resources on public lands in an environmentally responsible manner... .” Given the Orwellian speech of most Trump appointees, “environmentally responsible” may well mean “minimally regulated.”



From left: The Bears Ears Monument. Decertification will open it to uranium mining, shown at right.

**National Park Service:** Deputy Director Dan Smith (Acting, not Senate confirmed), former NRA lobbyist, is perhaps best known for his role in bypassing environmental surveys to permit the cutting of 40Ksf of old-growth trees impeding the Potomac River view of Washington Redskins owner Daniel Snyder. Most recently NPS scientists have been blocked from using the language of climate change, even in routine predictions of climate impacts on vulnerable parks. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jul/25/trump-administration-climate-crisis-denying-scientist>



From left : Vulnerable Cape Hatteras National Seashore; Outer Banks eroded by monster storms; a normal day in Miami.

**U.S Forest Service:** Chief Vicki Christiansen is a Forest Service lifer, and so far seems to offer hope for sensible solutions to what Audrey Denney feels is the unnecessary conflict between environmental regulation and commercial (here logging and recreation) interests. However, with this administration what they do often contradicts what they say. Here’s a non-partisan opinion piece on some current FS actions under Christiansen’s leadership: <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/449857-how-environmental-analysis-inadvertently-drains-the-forest-service>

Finally, for a head-spinning lesson in Trumpian double-speak, here’s Henry Darwin, EPA’s Deputy Secretary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcNbo92LVRg>.

## Resource of the Month: An Interactive Feature

**A reminder: the *Siskiyou Democrats Grassroots News* invites readers to submit ideas for educational resources such as books, podcasts, and videos. We'll choose those that best align with the theme of our current issue. Send suggestions to: [siskiyoudems@gmail.com](mailto:siskiyoudems@gmail.com).**

Fall is coming, with (maybe) cooler nights and (certainly) shorter days. Time to put together the winter reading list. The interlocking books below address the same issues from three different perspectives. At a glance these titles may not seem the most uplifting way to pass a fall evening, but all of them are refreshing in their honesty, boldness, and insight.

**Book/Podcast Resource of the Month #1:** *The Fifth Risk*, by Michael Lewis, W.W. Norton & Co.

Brilliantly conceived, Lewis's book focuses on the staggering incompetence and willful ignorance of those now blindly blowing up the US Government. Contrary to the views of Deep State conspiracy peddlers, the book makes clear that the government's real job is to manage complex and often existential risks. Like nuclear accidents. And climate change. It makes crystal clear why Donald J. Trump, his crew, and his Congressional supporters must be removed from office. For a great podcast exchange with Lewis: Chris Hayes's *Why Is This Happening*, 4/30/19. Also Lewis's own podcast, *Against the Rules*.

**Book Resource of the Month #2:** *The Sixth Extinction*, by Elizabeth Kolbert, Henry Holt & Co.

Evidence is overwhelming that now, in the last 200 years of the anthropocene epoch (the period dominated by humans), biodiversity loss is accelerating at a rate seen only five times before in earth's history. In captivating prose, Kolbert explores how our singular ingenuity could destroy us and the web of life that formed us. This is a time like no other in human history, and we will or we won't wake up to it.

**Book Resource of the Month #3:** *Collapse*, by Jared Diamond, Penguin Paperbacks

Now 15 years old, Diamond's analysis of how societies make the choice between self-destruction and success is more important than ever. Here's just one timely quote, under the sub-chapter title Rational Bad Behavior: "Throughout recorded history, actions or inactions by self-absorbed kings, chiefs, and politicians have been a regular cause of societal collapse..." Good news, though—the book contains prescriptions for success as well. **(Thanks to a reader for this recommendation.)**

**Film Resource of the Month:** *Burned: Are Trees the New Coal?* by Alan Dater & Lisa Merton

This documentary explores "the accelerating destruction of our forests for fuel, and probes the policy loopholes, huge subsidies, and blatant green-washing of the burgeoning biomass industry." A cautionary tale of how one industry is co-opting environmental solutions. Find it at [burnedthemovie.com](http://burnedthemovie.com).

### **Your Democratic Central Committee of Siskiyou County (DCCSC):**

Officers: Carolyn Miller - Chair, Alice Rogers – Vice Chair, Katherine Shelton – Secretary, Robin Richards – Treasurer  
Members: Neldena Anderson, Kate Coggin, Rick Green, Ann Herfindahl, Al Lugo, Larry Marks, Bill McKillop, Karina Pollard, Maggie Robeson, Steve Robeson, Daniel Soltis, Abigail Van Alyn Booraem, Dolly Verrue, and Karen Zeigler. For more information on the DCCSC, visit our website: [siskiyoudemocrats.org](http://siskiyoudemocrats.org) or our Facebook page: [SiskiyouCountyDemocrats](https://www.facebook.com/SiskiyouCountyDemocrats). Send mail and donations to: DCCSC, Post Office Box 4, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067.