



CRC's GREEN SCENE

A bimonthly newsletter of the Sustainability Committee at Cosumnes River College

Déjà vu all over again? Riki Ott to Speak on Oil Disasters

Sandra Carter reports...

The Exxon Valdez oil spill in Prince William Sound in 1989? The BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico in 2010?

If that gives you an unsettling feeling of déjà vu, come hear Riki Ott, PhD—marine toxicologist, environmentalist, activist, and author—explain the health, legal, economic, and environmental issues that tie these tragic environmental disasters together here at Cosumnes River College on Monday, October 18.

Author of several well-regarded books, including *Not One Drop: Betrayal and Courage in the Wake of the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill* and *Sound Truth and Corporate Myth*, and founder of three nonprofit organizations that deal with the lingering harm from man-made environmental disasters, Ott warns us of the true cost of our nation's addiction to oil and calls for the transition to more sustainable sources of energy.

Ott came to national prominence in 1989 in the course of her work to improve oil-handling practices around drilling sites for both workers and wildlife. Weeks after the historic Exxon Valdez spill, Ott became a strong



voice in holding the Exxon Corporation accountable for environmental cleanup, livelihood compensation, and ecosystem repair. As she plans to report in her presentation at CRC, the Exxon Corporation has yet to make good on its obligations and responsibilities.

Now, in the Gulf of Mexico, British Petroleum has committed a similar travesty and, from all indications, is following the same irresponsible playbook used by the Exxon Corporation in 1986. When the Deepwater Horizon well blew up in April, Ott was there to hold BP accountable to the public for the hazardous effects of the dispersants used to dilute the oil.

Riki Ott will speak at 10:30 am and again at 1:30 pm in the Recital Hall, on Monday, October 18. Between her talks, from 12:00 to 1:30 pm, the movie *Black Wave* will be shown.

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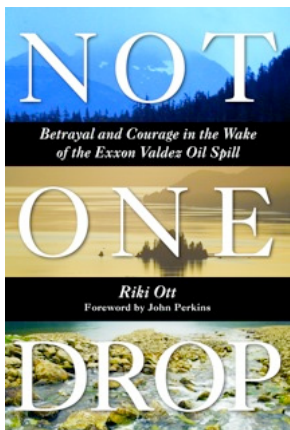
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How 'green' can we go?

John Ellis reports...

The Winn Center for Construction and Architecture, recently awarded to the design/build team of DPR Construction and Lionakis Architects, is expected to redefine the image of the CRC campus from the east.

This new CRC facility (to be located adjacent to the Bruceville entrance and the Learning Resources Center) will be a model in green technology. The design/build team guarantees that the building will be LEED Gold certified—with the possibility of LEED platinum certification as the design progresses. The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System™ is the nationally accepted benchmark for the design, construction, and operation of high performance green buildings.

“The Winn Center is designed to be a living laboratory, demonstrating multiple construction techniques and sustainable design,” said Jonathan McMurtry, Project Manager at



Lionakis. “Some of the design features include chilled beams, an energy recovery system, solar panels, energy efficient windows and glazing, maximum use of natural day lighting by using skylights and lighting controls, renewable materials, and recycled materials.”

The 36,000 sq. ft. building is named after the Winn Family, prominent Northern California developers and contractors. Their generous

donation, the largest private gift in the history of Cosumnes River College and the Los Rios Community College District, helped launch the financial support of the project, and Mike Winn continues to show his commitment to the success of the project as co-chair for the Capital Campaign.

Construction is expected to begin in July 2011 and to reach completion by the end of 2012.





Children's Center Enjoys New Gardens

Lora Wardlaw reports...

The Child Development Center's School-Age Program has created three new outdoor environments—thanks to a mini-grant from the Cosumnes River College Foundation and donations from Atlas Disposal.

The three new areas consist of a sustainable community gardening area, a school-age sand box, and a butterfly garden. The school-age children, teachers in the center, ECE student teachers, and college students have all been actively involved in the creation of these areas, which will provide ECE students and the children with new learning opportunities while also increasing their awareness of sustainable gardening and the environment.

A recent discovery by one of the seven-year olds at the center has the school-age group investigating solar energy. She noticed the butterfly garden has a small solar panel that supplies energy to a pump in the pond of the garden, prompting such questions and observations as "Is it magic? How does it do that? Wind makes energy too!" Who knows? Such curiosity at their young age might lead to solutions for tomorrow.

The children and I would love for everyone interested to stop by, share their expertise and visit the beautiful new learning environments.



TOP: The school-age sand box is a hit with (left to right) Ajah N, age 6, Alejandro age 5, Katherine S, age 7, and Katherine P, age 7. CENTER: Aumrey O, age 9, checks out the butterfly garden's solar-powered waterfall. BOTTOM: Zachary J, age 5, plants in the new community garden. (PHOTOS BY LORA WARDLAW)



GreenForce's new Clean Electron Trainer Showcases Wonders of Clean Energy

Torence Powell reports...

CRC has acquired a new piece of equipment that will help teach students about clean energy production.

The Clean Electron Trainer is an educational tool that demonstrates how clean energy is generated, converted, stored, and used to power everyday electrical appliances. The trainer generates energy from three different clean sources—solar photovoltaic, wind, and hydrogen. Energy generated from these three sources is converted into alternating current and stored in batteries, which can be used to power just about anything.

"I'm still learning how this thing works myself," remarked Ryan Connally, Chair of CRC's Construction Department and the faculty member who acquired the trainer. Connally,

with the help of several student volunteers, has been assembling and preparing the trainer.

"The thing is a beast, a big clean energy beast," said Jaime Gonzalez, CRC student and GreenForce volunteer, who has been working with classmates to get the trainer ready for use in the classroom and at community events. "We're confident that it's going to be a great tool to help educate the community about clean renewable energy sources," he added.

Once assembly is completed, the Clean Electron Trainer will be available for in-classroom demonstrations. Faculty or students who would like to learn more about the trainer or who would like to schedule a time to see the new tool are encouraged to contact Director of GreenForce Projects Torence Powell at powellt@crc.losrios.edu or 691-7913.



At the Green Oak Park! community event on September 10, CRC Students Jaime Gonzalez (left) and Zai Vang show kids how the new Clean Electron Trainer works. (PHOTO BY TORENCE POWELL)

Science Area Native Garden Gets a Makeover at Faculty-Student-Staff-Powered Work Days



During the five-year remodel of CRC's Science building, the native garden on its east side languished.

Since May, a dedicated group of student and employee volunteers, led by horticulture professor Dave Andrews and biology professor Julie Oliver, have been working to clear out debris, build a new fence, install irrigation lines, spread compost and mulch, and finally plant hundreds of water-efficient native plants.

Botanical name tags will be added soon—as will benches. Come out and enjoy nature in this tranquil spot!

(MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 6)



TOP: Weeds took over during the Science remodel construction. ABOVE: Amanda Walcott and Jena Bills prepare the ground for September's planting day. RIGHT: Julie Oliver and Dave Andrews coordinate the planting event.



(PHOTOS BY JULIE OLIVER AND JOHN RUSMORE)



Volunteers restore garden



ABOVE: Horticulture student Lonnie Horsley gets ready to move mulch. RIGHT: Horticulture students, along with Christina Ocrant, plant natives on September 30.



Higher Ed Sustainability Conference Raises Stakes

Torence Powell reports...

On a muggy, hazy LA morning in June, I set out on foot for the 2010 California Higher Education Sustainability Conference at Los Angeles Trade Technical College in the heart of downtown LA.

The 8th annual meeting gave California community colleges, universities, and green-industry professionals the opportunity to share best practices and innovative ways to incorporate sustainability into daily campus operations, curricula, and culture.

From faculty- and administration-driven efforts to reduce college energy consumption to student-led efforts to raise awareness of environmental issues amongst their peers, the ideas were both enlightening and inspiring. California's increasing number

of green industries also showed off innovative green products from geothermal heating and cooling to LA County vanpools.

I was particularly impressed with the sense of advocacy and environmental stewardship displayed by community college students, many of whom are struggling to get by. In spite of the current economy, students across the state have been helping their local environment—and bank accounts—in simple ways, such as setting up school garden plots (at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo) and advocating for campus bike-sharing programs (at USC).

Presenters also discussed how colleges can help students live more sustainably and frugally by incorporating such

ideas as book buyback programs, free or reduced-cost public transportation passes, and lease agreements with surrounding housing providers to encourage near-campus residency for students and faculty alike.

The conference location reflected the sustainability theme. Just a few feet south of the 10 Freeway and the downtown central district and along a major light-rail line, LA Trade Technical College doubles as a major public transportation hub, allowing students to bus or bike to campus instead of driving. Hosted in the heart of the most decentralized major city in the US and demonstrating sustainable living within this car-dominated urban environment, the conference

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Cosumnes River College Sustainability Committee

Members:

- Steven Coughran
- Julie Elliott
- John Ellis
- Cindy Erickson
- Cath Hooper
- Christina Ocrant
- Julie Oliver
- Torence Powell
- Andrea Salmi (Chair)
- Susan Scott
- Debra Sharkey
- Linn Violett

Student Members:

- Chrystia Cabral
- Elizabeth Gaylord
- Jesse Rodriguez
- Veronica Vogan

Newsletter:

- Cindy Erickson
- Cath Hooper

Sustainability Conference

FROM PAGE 6

left me thinking, if they can do this in LA, we can definitely do even better in Sacramento.

By the time I left the conference on the final evening, the misty brown haze had returned, but so had my hopes for the future of California. With so many amazing people doing so many wonderful things throughout the state, I am optimistic that we will continue to lead the nation towards more green innovation and help meet a collective goal of living more sustainable lifestyles.

For Torence's conference wishlist for CRC, tune back in to the next issue of the Green Scene.



News In Brief...

Students to Attend Chico Conference

Prof. Debra Sharkey and CRC students will attend the 6th annual sustainability conference, *This Way To Sustainability*, at CSU Chico and

Butte College in November. The theme of this year's conference is 'Connecting Communities.'



10/10/10 Global Work Party

"Scientists say that 350 parts per million CO₂ in the atmosphere is the safe limit for humanity." The organizers of **350.org** have started a grass-roots campaign to inspire people around the world "to rise to the challenge of climate crisis."

This year, 350.org is staging a Global Work Party on 10/10/10. In Uganda, people are planting trees. In Bolivia, they're installing solar stoves. And in the Sacramento area, a variety of events are planned for October 9 and 10:

- A '100-Mile' potluck in Fremont Park featuring local foods
- Oak tree planting on the American River Parkway
- Cool Davis Climate Action Work Day (10/9) and Green Living Festival (10/10) in Davis
- and many more!

To find an event and get involved, check out www.350.org/en/map.

We're on the Web!
Look for archived issues of the **GREEN SCENE** on the CRC homepage.

Green Scene Awards:



Kudos to...

- Prof. John Ellis and Torence Powell for attending the California Higher Education Sustainability Conference in June.
- Dean Robert Montanez, who got recycling bins made from recycled materials for the Science Area.
- All the volunteers who worked on the SME Native Plant Garden.
- Financial Aid Office for the new OneCard debit card system: no more checks!
- Cindy Petty for choosing an SME Area printer with duplex ability.
- the Professional Development Committee for offering its Flex survey online.
- Prof Ryan Connally and student volunteers in the new Solar Club.