



Energy Blog

How Wildlife Bridges are transforming how Californians interact with the Environment (P 1 of 3)

Over the past year, Community Action Partnership of Orange County (CAP OC) has been committed to sharing information on climate change and environmental issues. This is because CAP OC recognizes climate change is indiscriminate and will affect all of us, regardless of sex, race, class, gender and age. CAP OC is committed to providing readers with information on how our various programs can help mitigate the worst effects of climate change, such as extreme heat and weather patterns.

CAP OC also recognizes that this information can be bleak, which is why we are taking this month to celebrate climate positives. This month's series will highlight climate victories, innovative approaches to building sustainable communities and other amazing things climate activists are doing to fight against climate change. We hope that this blog series will close out an eventful year and bring a bit of hope into your lives.

Over the past couple of years, you have probably seen or heard stories on the news about wildlife causing trouble amongst residential neighborhoods. From bears to mountain lions, to deer and raccoons, wildlife doesn't abide to human life. What we recognize as our normal environment (a suburban neighborhood or an urban city) are foreign to animals.

Before freeways and towns covered most of Southern California, wildlife lived

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How Wildlife Bridges are transforming how Californians interact with the Environment (P 2 of 3)

relatively undisturbed, being able to freely roam and migrate to and from their natural habitats. Nowadays, most wildlife avoid human-populated areas, but it is not unusual to hear stories of deer or other wildlife being struck by vehicles on highways. According to Environment America, “it’s estimated that there are more than 7,000 wildlife collisions per year, leading to more than 400 human injuries” in California alone. This unfortunate circumstance is known as habitat fragmentation, which occurs when large areas of habitats are split into smaller patches that are potentially isolated from one another. Habitat fragmentation is a growing danger to animals and plants around the world.

This has led to conservationists and environmentalists alike to advocate for the state to build what are known as “wildlife bridges.” A wildlife corridor is a strip of land that helps connect groups of animals that are separated. When humans change the land, these corridors link protected areas so animals can move safely between them, even across places that people have disturbed. In California, the California Department of Transportation, also known as Caltrans, has taken the lead in researching, identifying and constructing these wildlife bridges. Caltrans has been building them across various freeways that are known to cut through wildlife habitats.

In Northern California, a couple miles north of Weed, CA on Highway 97. According to the Caltrans website, construction for this project is expected to be completed by 2026. Another wildlife crossing you may have heard about is the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing over the 101 Freeway, across Liberty Canyon. This bridge was constructed as a result of the incredible story of P-22, a mountain lion who successfully crossed two freeways to reside in Griffith Park. Sadly, P-22 has since passed, but his story is what led to the construction of the Wallis Annenberg Wildlife. This bridge “will eventually link the Santa Monica Mountains to the Simi Hills, reconnecting an ecosystem that has long been fragmented by a major freeway,” according to NPR news.

Wildlife bridges are just one step in many conservation efforts to continue to live in harmony with wildlife. This reimagining of urban design (e.g. freeways) has opened

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the door for more sustainable urban development, creating a future in which cities can live harmoniously with wildlife.

Sources:

- (1) [An elk bridge in Northern California](#)
- (2) [The legacy of Hollywood mountain lion P-22 lives on in wildlife conservation efforts](#)
- (3) [US-101 – Wallis Annenberg Wildlife Crossing at Liberty Canyon](#)
- (4) [Caltrans paves the way for safe wildlife crossings](#)
- (5) [Why are Wildlife Corridors so Important for Conservation?](#)



Energy Blog

Renewable Energy Isn't Going Anywhere Anytime Soon (P 1 of 4)

Over the past year, Community Action Partnership of Orange County (CAP OC) has been committed to sharing information on climate change and environmental issues. This is because CAP OC recognizes climate change is indiscriminate and will affect all of us, regardless of sex, race, class, gender, and age. CAP OC is committed to providing readers with information on how our various programs can help mitigate the worst effects of climate change, such as extreme heat and weather patterns.

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All across the country, more and more renewable projects are being established, as most Americans agree that the U.S. should prioritize the development of renewable energy over fossil fuel sources, according to Pew Research. In fact, energy is a bipartisan issue with more and more lawmakers agreeing that the US needs to prioritize a renewable energy transition. Buy why renewable energy?

Traditional fossil fuel burning, e.g. coal or natural gas, produces what are known as greenhouse gases (GHG). These gases enter the atmosphere and react with the

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other organic compounds found in the atmosphere, creating a heat trapping effect, known as the greenhouse effect. Think of a traditional greenhouse, how it is often warmer because light and heat can enter the house easily but cannot escape once in there. This leads to a warmer temperature inside the greenhouse in comparison to the outside. This is what is happening in our atmosphere, which is contributing significantly to climate change.

Renewable energy provides us an alternative to the traditional fossil fuel, one that does not produce large amounts of GHG and contributes significantly to climate change. Energy sources like solar, wind and hydroelectric have the potential to be scaled up significantly in the coming years. Just last year, in 2023, more than 60 million homes in the US ran on alternative energy sources! Solar powered 22 million homes in the US alone. In the state of California, back in 2022, the state supplied 100% of its electricity solely from renewable sources for a period. This set the stage for much bigger milestones to be hit in the following years. In August of 2024, the state was able to provide 100% renewable energy for at least a part of each day for 100 days straight. This means the state of California was able to meet statewide energy demands solely on sources like wind or solar, ranging from a few minutes to a few hours.

This feat could have never been achieved were it not for the bipartisan sponsorship and investment of renewable energy technologies. Additionally, advances in solar battery storage systems have allowed for solar energy use to be prolonged outside of sunny hours.

It is safe to say that renewable energy has been on the rise and will continue to grow. Community Action Partnership of Orange County is dedicated to providing energy relief resources, including promoting other resources that can benefit our clients.

Orange County Power Authority

The passage of Assembly Bill 117 in 2002 established Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) in California, allowing municipalities at the local and county levels statewide to form independent, locally governed and not-for-profit energy providers.

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In 2018, the City of Irvine, at the urging of community advocates, was the first municipality in Orange County to explore a CCA program and the city council ultimately approved the initial funding to formally establish the Orange County Power Authority in 2021. Soon after, the cities of Buena Park, Fullerton and Huntington Beach joined OCPA. OCPA launched commercial and municipal service in April 2022, followed by residential service in October 2022.

Today, residential and commercial electricity customers in member communities have the choice to select the source of their electricity and the amount of renewable energy they want OCPA to purchase on their behalf to put onto the grid. OCPA believes choosing electricity generated from renewable sources rather than traditional fossil fuels – and reducing the world's growing carbon footprint is a powerful step to ensuring a greener tomorrow for generations to come. To learn if you qualify to switch to a CCA such as OCPA, check out their Frequently Asked Questions section (FAQs) [here](#).

GRID Alternatives

GRID was founded during the 2001 California energy crisis by Erica Mackie, P.E., and Tim Sears, P.E., two engineering professionals who were implementing large-scale renewable energy and energy efficiency projects for the private sector. The idea that drove them was simple: free, clean electricity from the sun should be available to everyone. Through GRID Alternatives, they developed a model to make solar PV technology practical and accessible for low-income communities, while providing pathways to clean energy jobs.

The GRID Alternatives Greater Los Angeles (GLA) office opened in 2007 and serves Los Angeles, Orange, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties. They find innovative solutions to use renewable energy to drive economic growth and environmental benefits in communities most impacted by underemployment, pollution, and climate change.

GLA provides and installs no-cost solar systems for homeowners and renters through funding from state programs. With each solar system, they are putting

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money back into family's pockets, helping preserve housing affordability and improving environmental outcomes. To learn more about how to take advantage of GLA services, check out their website [here](#).

All information sourced directly from Orange County Power Authority and GRID Alternative Los Angeles websites.

Sources:

- (1) [Less coal, more oil: Climate pollution trends by state](#)
- (2) [California just ran on 100% renewable energy, but fossil fuels aren't fading away yet](#)
- (3) [Good news for our climate: Renewable energy is on the rise](#)
- (4) [What Americans think about an energy transition from fossil fuels to renewables](#)
- (5) [California reaches historic renewable energy milestone](#)
- (6) [California hits milestones toward 100% clean energy — but has a long way to go](#)
- (7) [California achieves 100% renewable energy for 100 days](#)



Energy Blog

Why the Klamath Dam Removal is Important (Page 1 of 2)

Over the past year, Community Action Partnership of Orange County (CAP OC) has been committed to sharing information on climate change and environmental issues. This is because CAP OC recognizes climate change is indiscriminate and will affect all of us, regardless of sex, race, class, gender, and age. CAP OC is committed to providing readers with information on how our various programs can help mitigate the worst effects of climate change, such as extreme heat and weather patterns.

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The Klamath River, which flows down from Oregon to Northern California was once a flourishing river, home to Chinook salmon and other aquatic species. According to Sustainable Northwest, six federally recognized Native American Tribes lived off the land, relying on the Klamath River and the surrounding forests and grasslands for thousands of years prior to colonists arriving. Following a series of land acquisitions, the Klamath tribes of Oregon signed their land rights away in a treaty. This would mark the beginning of what would soon come to be built, a dam.

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Why the Klamath Dam Removal is Important (Page 2 of 2)

In the early 1900's, construction of one of four dams was completed, blocking off salmon from accessing the upper Klamath basin. By the end, in 1962, all four dams had been constructed, permanently fragmenting the Klamath river and basin. This led to a steep decline in salmon population, which would occur more rapidly in 2001 after a federal water management decisions induced a drought. During this year, more than 60,000 salmon died as a result, causing tensions to rise. Tribal nations had been in a land rights battle for decades, only attaining limited fishing rights in the 80s.

By the 2000s, the dam had become a point of contention as discussions of water allocation and scarcity came to a head. After toxic algae blooms covered the basins in 2006, the CPUPC concluded that it would be in the state's best interest to close the dam rather than relicense it. A decade later, the Amended Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement would be signed, allowing for the dam removal to occur without issue. In 2020, after stalls in the removal process had continued to bar the dams from being removed, California governor Gavin Newsom helped convene leaders to advance the dam removal in addition to returning land to the Shasta Indian Nation.

Now, in 2024, we can officially say the dam has been completely removed and the Klamath River flows freely once again. This is a historic feat that could not have been achieved without the dedication of tribal nations and their advocacy. The removal of the dam also marks a significant victory for tribal sovereignty. As of October 2, 2024, the Klamath river has been able to flow freely, helping restore the land and support wildlife. Restoration efforts are still going strong, as the river does not exist separate from the land around it and will continue to be stewarded by the tribal nations who rely on the river and land.

Sources:

- (1) [Klamath Basin Dam Removal](#)
- (2) [Klamath River dams fully removed ahead of schedule](#)
- (3) [DAM REMOVAL ON THE KLAMATH RIVER](#)
- (4) [Ten things to know about the Klamath dam removal](#)



Energy Blog

Orange County's Climate Action Plan: What it entails for residents (Page 1 of 3)

Over the past year, Community Action Partnership of Orange County (CAP OC) has been committed to sharing information on climate change and environmental issues. This is because CAP OC recognizes climate change is indiscriminate and will affect all of us, regardless of sex, race, class, gender, and age. CAP OC is committed to providing readers with information on how our various programs can help mitigate the worst effects of climate change, such as extreme heat and weather patterns.

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Earlier this year, Orange County supervisor Katrina Foley announced the County's preliminary draft of its Climate Action plan. The Fullerton Observer noted that Supervisor Foley announced that the draft outlines measures for a resilient future through waste reduction, improved air quality, accessible and clean water, and expanded tree canopies countywide. Currently, only eight out of thirty-four cities have drafted climate action plans; The county taking lead on this will hopefully kickstart the rest of the county in drafting their own individual action plan.

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Orange County's Climate Action Plan: What it entails for residents (Page 2 of 3)

Why does this matter?

According to the LAist, Orange County, despite being the sixth most populous county in the US, has lagged far behind in taking action against climate change. A climate action plan (CAP) are plans that include targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and detailed steps for meeting and tracking those targets, though often times they also include energy and resiliency plans as well. A climate action plan is only effective when it is legally binding and is continually followed.

What is in the plan?

Orange County's Climate Action Plan draft wishes to do five things:

1. Conduct an inventory and forecast of local greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.
2. Establish GHG reduction targets.
3. Develop an action plan for achieving emissions reduction targets.
4. Implement the emissions reduction action plan.
5. Monitor and report on progress.

The plan lists out six priority sectors, selecting each sector based on its potential to reduce emissions, co-benefits, available grant opportunities or funding, and alignment with the County's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), and jurisdictional authority. The six sectors are Energy, Mobility, Resource Recovery and waste, Environmental Justice, Natural Resources and Resilience.

CAP OC applauds the County of Orange for taking the initiative to prioritize vulnerable populations in its climate action plan. Within its plan, the county identified areas of high economic disparities, dubbed red zones.

“Red Zones are defined as census tracts where unemployment rates are at least 2.0 percent higher than the national average and average per capita income is less than 80 percent of the national average. [...] Overall, 289,752 Orange County residents (9 percent of the county population) reside in Red Zones.”

Orange County's Climate Action Plan: What it entails for residents (Page 3 of 3)

Additionally, the plan recognizes the other benefits it creates, such as improved public health and health equity and economic growth through the creation of new green jobs. To learn more about Orange County's Climate Action Plan, check out the plan PDF, available online.

Sources:

(1) [OC Supervisor Katrina Foley Announces Publication of the DRAFT Climate Action Plan for the County of Orange](#)

(2) [OC Climate Plans](#)