



The Branch

November 2025
Vol 76 Issue 3



November Branch Meeting

Saturday, November 1

9:30 a.m.

Wharfinger Building, One Marina Way, Eureka (Bay Room Downstairs)

Menu:

Assorted salads with sliced bread. Coffee and Tea \$14.00

Coffee or Tea only - \$8.00

Speaker:

Alicia Hamann, Executive Director, Friends of the Eel River
Why Eel River Dam Removal is Urgent

Removal of the two dams in the Eel River headwaters is nearly assured. However, to secure the benefits of dam removal for salmonid recovery, dam removal must happen soon. This presentation will explore dam safety factors which are both driving momentum for dam removal and also reducing the reliability of Potter Valley Project water supply.

Please make your reservation by clicking [here](#) or calling Carolyn Miller at 707-798-

1503. Reservation deadline either online or by phone call is Monday, October 27. Please make your reservation by the deadline. Late reservations cannot be guaranteed seating or food/beverage.

Alicia Hamann grew up in the Pacific Northwest. She was fortunate to spend her youth exploring the mountains, forests, and rivers of the greater Portland area. Alicia moved to California in 2006 and earned a BA in Anthropology with a minor in Business Administration from Humboldt State University. She was drawn to Humboldt County by the vast wilderness and unique communities.

After serving as Administrative Director for Friends of the Eel River from 2013 – 2019, Alicia now serves as Executive Director. Alicia also has experience volunteering as a board member for several local organizations including SCRAP Humboldt, Big Brother Big Sisters of the North Coast, the Northcoast Environmental Center, and the Same Old People.



How to Show Up for the Planet

Notes from our October 4 Meeting

What happens when the speaker for your meeting fails to show up? If you're AAUW women, you improvise, and that's just what we did when Sarah Ray, the planned speaker for the October 4 meeting, did not appear. We held an open discussion using the themes from Ray's recent book *A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet* as a starting point. So many people contributed so many great ideas! At the end of the meeting, the suggestion was made to share references and links from these ideas, so here goes.

Key messages:

**"The opposite of despair isn't hope: it is action."
(Jane Goodall paraphrasing Joan Baez)**

- Start where you are; small individual actions can add up to important savings. Everyone can make a difference.
- Advocacy and activism are vital; explore strategies to influence policies and change corporate behavior.

Some small-scale individual actions:

- Change your outdoor lightbulbs to be 1,100 lumens or less and in the warm color range, be sure they point down and away from the street, and turn them on less. See a summary of Dark Sky's recommendations: <https://humboldtwaterkeeper.org/images/PDF/LightPollutionFactsheet.pdf>
- Switch from using individual, plastic-wrapped dishwasher and laundry pods to powdered detergent in recyclable packaging.
- Join the Ridwell program that sends bags you can fill with hard-to-recycle plastics and send back via regular mail in pre-paid packages, which then get distributed to specialty recyclers. get.ridwell.com/express-ca
- Be aware of water use; investigate strategies at home that can reduce your consumption.
- Be aware of chemicals in your home; eliminate or reduce use of scented products.
- BYO dishes to meetings (like AAUW's and others too)

Changes that require planning and financial investment:

- Research the most efficient replacement for any new appliance purchases; consider an induction stove, heat pump HVAC, and heat pump water heater and clothes dryer. Most federal incentives for energy-efficient home improvements expire Dec 31, 2025 so act fast if you can.
- Consider insulation, caulking, and weatherstripping for your house. Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) offers no-cost energy assessments, loaner induction burners so you can investigate how they work, and other programs and rebates. <https://redwoodenergy.org/programs-rebates/>
- Consider solar panels and back-up battery systems.
- Consider an EV or plug-in hybrid vehicle.
- Consider walking, using an electric bike, using public transportation, and carpooling.
- Change your gardening habits; use native plants that require less/no water and don't need pesticides. Check out tips from local experts Pete Haggard and Jane Monroe and the North Coast Native Plant Society. <https://northcoastcnps.org/gardening-with-natives/>
- Follow the 5 R's of Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, and Recycle. Shop locally. Check out Zero Waste Humboldt for insights on how to change old recycling habits, given so little actually gets recycled now. Reduce greenhouse gas emissions by emphasizing upstream resource use (before what we use becomes trash). <https://zerowastehumboldt.org>

Advocacy and activism:

- Get involved with get-out-the-vote activities: postcards and emails and related outreach to get climate-aware candidates elected and effective climate bills passed (e.g. Environmental Voter Project) <https://www.environmentalvoter.org>
- Stay abreast of issues by signing up for newsletters like those from Humboldt 350, which provide action alerts and specific ways to make your voice heard via petitions, comments, and emails to decision makers. <https://world.350.org/humboldt/get-involved-copy/>
- Attend local planning commission and agency meetings where environmental and conservation issues are being discussed.
- Join local activism and conservation activities spearheaded by groups like Redwood Regional Audubon, Friends of the Dunes and of the Arcata Marsh, Humboldt Trail Council's Volunteer Trail Stewards, the county's many land trusts (e.g. Northcoast Regional Land Trust), and many more.
- Use your consumer power. Boycotts and other pressure make a difference, especially if you let the company know why you are boycotting. Locally, who are the biggest generators of waste that you do business with? Leave comments in suggestion boxes at Costco and other stores about products you've stopped buying because they come in too much packaging.
"The best thing is to use less plastic; if people stop buying it, companies will make less of it."
- Support climate change/environmental nonprofits financially; consider both local and national/international organizations.
- Don't be quiet anymore. Speak up about climate change and its effect on all of our futures. You are not alone. Be a role model and talk to your family and friends about the changes you are making.

Thank you to Gina Rogers and Deborah Dukes for capturing this important information.

Shall we create less waste?

Perhaps we could even make it a fun tradition—bringing a favorite plate, mug and napkin to share stories about. Small actions like these not only reduces our environmental footprint, but also encourages mindfulness and camaraderie within the group. Every little bit helps, plus it builds sustainable habits as well as reduce waste in our landfills. Our hostesses will always have paper products on hand just in case one is in need. I appreciate you joining me. Alex Stillman

Ready, Set, Donate!

AAUW Scholarship News

As we collect and evaluate applications for this year's Re-Entry Scholarships, our membership is gearing up to ensure that next year we can continue to give significant awards. This is your chance to contribute to the ongoing effort to help women overcome barriers and succeed in their education. We will have a donation flyer ready for the November 1st Branch meeting. You'll receive yours if you attend. Donation envelopes will be mailed to all other members. Please be generous in returning your donation in the envelope provided or bring it to the December Gala.

Together we can make a difference in the lives of some deserving and accomplished women.

Thank you,

Rosemarie Weaver, Autumn Chapman, and Scholarship Committee

Interest Groups

Evening Book

September: *The House of Doors* by Tan Twan Eng. A fictionalized story of two real characters from the 1920's, Chinese revolutionary Sun Yat Sen and British novelist Somerset Maugham. The novel takes place in Malaysia and is partly told in flashbacks. The story is inspired by real events and the short story *The Letter* by Maugham. The novel explores the hidden relationships and constraints of marriage, colonialism and morality. (from Goodreads) We found it boring and the language way over the top. (The metaphors were too dense with several words with over 6 syllables that required looking up!)

Other books we were reading over the summer:

Susan recommends *The Moonstone* by Willie Collins. It is the earliest detective novel written in the 1890's. It was a fascinating look at societal classes and social mores of the day.

The Last Painting of Sara de Vos by Dominic Smith. is the story of a 17th century Dutch painting by the female painter de Vos.

Sharon:

Paris Novel by Ruth Reichl. Beautiful food, clothes etc in Paris.

The Wedding People by Alison Espach

Gina:

The Art Thief by Michel Finkel. non-fiction

The Correspondent by Virginia Evans a newly published work written in letter format where the elderly main character tries to make sense of her life.

Nancy:

Uncle Tungsten by Oliver Sacks - Memories of a childhood in wartime Great Britain.

Sarah's Quilt by Nancy E. Turner, - historical fiction in the Arizona territory in the early 1900s

Edith

My Friends by Frederick Backman- themes of friendship and found family

Marshelle:

Travels With Charlie by Steinbeck. Amazing that we're still facing the same issues in our country after 50-60 yrs.

Chris:

Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys. "Prequel to *Jane Eyre*" featuring the crazy wife locked in the attic. Fever dream of a novel!

Death of an Author Nnedi Okorafor an Afro-futurist novel about a Nigerian-American author and her science fiction novel.

We meet on Zoom the last Monday evening of each month. Contact Chris Stenlund for the link and details

October: "This Is Happiness" by Niall Williams

November: My Friends by Frederick Backman

December: TBD

Do you want your interest group here? Let us know what you are doing, or even better, send a photo of your group doing it. All photos and articles may be sent to [Shelley Mitchell](#)



AAUW California Shares Education-Focused, Nonpartisan Guidance on Proposition 50

by the AAUW CA Public Policy Committee

AAUW California recently released nonpartisan voter-education information to help Californians understand [Proposition 50](#), a statewide ballot measure on the November 4, 2025, special election. Consistent

with the organization's mission and public policy priorities, this resource focuses on how the Proposition would alter the redistricting process for California's congressional districts and provides authoritative, neutral sources for further information.

"Although illegal midterm redistricting efforts outside California may seem like a federal issue, they are now directly relevant to Californians," said Amy Hom, a former engineer and co-chair of AAUW California's Public Policy Committee. "California continues to maintain strong protections for women and girls, marginalized people, free speech, accurate history, sound science, and democratic norms," Hom said. "However, Californians remain subject to the laws, rules, and enforcement actions of a federal government influenced by the directives of Project 2025 rather than the will of the people," she added.

AAUW California shared that Proposition 50 can preserve the state's ability to serve all Californians in the face of overwhelming federal encroachment. The approval of Proposition 50 by California voters can help combat illegal efforts to silence opposition voices and advance an executive agenda heavily influenced by [Project 2025](#)

Approval of Proposition 50 can aid in this endeavor by approving redistricting efforts in California for the subsequent election cycles, until maps are redrawn after the next census in 2030, which will only be triggered as a proportional response. AAUW California supports efforts to preserve and advance democracy, in conjunction with its public policy priorities focused on gender-based equity and social justice.

"While this kind of redistricting response is often framed as an escalation of a partisan conflict, in the current political environment, we should think carefully about what is being labeled as partisan," said Dr. Melissa (Missy) Maceyko, an expert in effective social change and political action, and co-chair of AAUW California's Public Policy Committee. "Partisan labeling can be reductive when the choice has become one of supporting authoritarianism or preserving functional democracy and protecting the rights of all people," she added.

AAUW California seeks to educate voters on Proposition 50. The organization is reminding all Californians that support for Proposition 50 is a non-partisan move to preserve broader democratic norms in California; to oppose the implementation of Project 2025 in

California; and to continue advancing gender equity, including through AAUW California's mission and public policy priorities.

AAUW California offers materials for California voters interested in learning more about the issues. Voters are invited to visit

<https://tinyurl.com/AAUWProp50Media> to access resources, including a one-page fact sheet and an informational flyer. AAUW California encourages everyone to vote. Official election details and voter registration information can be found at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections>.



2026 Women's History Tea Nominations

Each March we celebrate women from the past and present who have made a difference in Humboldt County. If you would like to nominate a recipient of this honor, please complete this nomination form and forward it to ehaynes@mnsi.net by December 31, 2025. The Board of Directors will be selecting recipients in early February. Please nominate a person or persons that you feel should be considered for this honor and explain why.

Your Name _____

I would like to nominate _____

In what way has this person/group made a positive difference in Humboldt County through her activities, education, occupations, or professions?

Please provide the contact information for your nominee:

EMAIL OR MAIL YOUR NOMINATION to:
Elizabeth Haynes (ehaynes@mnsi.net)
2615 N Street, Eureka, 95501

The Branch is published eight times a year by the Humboldt Branch of AAUW. Submissions of articles, news items and photos from members are welcome. Submit them by the 20th of each month to shelleydmitchell@gmail.com.

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