

## STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** April 14, 2020

**TO:** City Council

**FROM:** Ashley Feeney, Assistant City Manager  
Kerry Daane Loux, Sustainability Coordinator

**SUBJECT: 2020 Environmental Recognition Awards (ERA)**

---

### **Recommendation**

Approve nominations from the Natural Resources Commission for the 2020 Environmental Recognition Awards. Originally intended to be presented to the awardees at the April 21, 2020 City Council meeting, the awards can instead be announced at that City Council meeting, with an ERA ceremonial presentation and reception to honor awardees to be held at a later date due to current public meeting restrictions. Additionally, a 2020 Earth Day Proclamation will be available at this meeting, the eve of the 50<sup>th</sup> Earth Day Anniversary.

### **Fiscal Impact**

Incidental award and reception costs are included in the FY19-20 Natural Resources program budget.

### **Background**

Started by the Natural Resources Commission in 1995 and now in the 26<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the City annually conducts the Environmental Recognition Award program to encourage and recognize efforts in the community that benefit the environment and overall sustainability objectives. The three standard nomination categories include businesses; non-profit organizations; and individuals/groups, each requiring residency or work completed in Davis.

An honorary category was added in 2017 to celebrate the City of Davis Centennial. The Environmental Legacy Award is intended to recognize events, programs or milestones that have made a significant difference in Davis' environmental quality of life over the course of our 100+ year history. Awardees in this category are decided at the discretion of the Natural Resources Commission and City Council. The first three Legacy Awards were dedicated to the community engagement that supported creation of Central Park expansion and Central Park Gardens last year; in 2018, Unitrans was recognized on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this UC Davis/Davis community bus service; and in 2017, to Davis bike lanes on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first bike lane installations in the nation.

The ERA applications received for this year's program were electronically conveyed by staff to the three NRC ERA subcommittee members, who then met remotely on March 23, 2020 to discuss and recommend the proposed awardees. Due to the cancellation of the March NRC meeting due to COVID-19 restrictions, the NRC Chair and Vice Chair requested that the

subcommittee recommendations be forwarded to City Council for consent on April 14, 2020, on behalf of the full NRC.

The following are the NRC recommendations to City Council for the 2020 Environmental Recognition Award recipients. Also, attached below is a more complete summary of the NRC subcommittee recommendations. Because there were so many outstanding nominations this year, the subcommittee agreed that all nominations, whether awarded or not, represented deserving organizations and individuals, and that those that are not recommended for an award in 2020 should be encouraged to be resubmitted next year.

**Business:**

Nugget Market, *Nominated by Shea Robinson*

Nugget Market's threefold dedication to sustainability through Social Responsibility, Environmental Stewardship and Economic Vitality is shown through their major strides in energy savings, water conservation, food waste diversion and more. Additionally, their new corporate office location, moving to Davis, will be a model for sustainable design. Nugget Market partners with other local non-profits and government agencies to host events and support environmental quality of life in the Davis community.

**Non Profit:**

Cool Davis, *Nominated by Yvonne Hunter*

Cool Davis works in close partnership with the City of Davis to achieve the goals of the city's Climate Action and Adaption Plan. Specifically, Cool Davis has taken on the important task of community engagement, focusing primarily on helping households reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. Since its founding by a small group of dedicated volunteers nearly 10 years ago, Cool Davis has become one of the most important and effective environmental organizations serving the Davis community, bringing together diverse groups to offer both education and information, as well as community action.

**Individuals/Groups:**

Jean Jackman, *Co-Nominated by Judith Blum; Jo Ellen Ryan and Gene Trapp*

Jackman, a columnist for The Davis Enterprise for 17 years, encourages appreciation of the natural world, local habitat and wildlife. She founded the Friends of North Davis Ponds in 2014, works tirelessly to coordinate volunteers and team work to benefit the environment, and has been an advocate for open space, including the 2000 Open Space Protection Special Tax (Measure O), restoration of the Partansky Pond, and the recent efforts to create a 3-acre upland habitat at Anderson and F Streets.

Gerry Braun, Lorenzo Kristov, Richard McCann, *Nominated by Alan Pryor*

These local energy experts provided invaluable information and time serving on the Technical Advisory Subcommittee of the Community Choice Energy Advisory Committee, leading to formation of Valley Clean Energy.

## **Special Awards: Empowering Youth for the Environment**

Deb Bruns, *nominated by Linda Biewer-Elstob*

Bruns's longstanding and ongoing work as an educator showcases her concern for current environmental issues both locally and globally. Her efforts have connected educators all over the region in leading innovative projects and providing outreach to local schools. Her expertise in networking has provided teachers with opportunities, projects, and programs to share with their students to promote environmental change, and her hands-on work with youth has provided invaluable experiences to the next generation of leaders. Deb has been championed as an "eco-and energy hero who has quietly worked for years to make the world a better place."

Christal Waters, *nominated by Loretta Moore Wingo*

Waters's quest to get more students on bikes and out of cars has had the overarching goal of reducing our community's carbon footprint. Not only has her innovative work increased the number of students biking, this work has also improved all forms of active transportation in our community. Starting with programming at elementary schools in 2010, the first participating students are now entering high school. The effective and innovative programs spearheaded by Waters have become a role model for other communities.

## **Environmental Legacy Award**

The NRC is recommending the 2019 Environmental Legacy Award recognition to the City of Davis Recycling Program, marking its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in April 2020. The recycling program has been successful thanks to the enthusiasm and environmental awareness of residents and businesses. Recycling in Davis began in April 1970, when a small group of concerned citizens began a newspaper drop-off recycling program. Curbside recycling began in 1974, with a City Council ordinance requiring newspapers to be separated from trash. Davis has collected yard materials for composting since 1989 and has offered a mandatory organics collection program (food scraps, food soiled papers and yard materials) for everyone in Davis since 2016. Davis has required that recycling be available at apartments since 1989, and per municipal code, apartment managers must inform new tenants about recycling and the location of the on-site recycling carts when they sign a new lease.

Recycling and organics collection service is mandatory for all businesses, single-family, and multi-family properties, and Davis Municipal Code requires that waste be sorted properly into the correct bin (trash, recycling and organics). Recyclables collected in Davis are remarkably well sorted--only 5-7% residual material is found in recyclables at the recycling MRF.

The City Recycling Program continues to strive towards zero waste. In 2017, the City adopted ordinances requiring that all food & beverages be served with either recyclable, compostable or reusable serving ware, and that straws be available only upon request at all sit-down restaurants. Another key to the success of the recycling program is its extensive outreach programs, which includes social media, e-mail newsletters, recycling fliers, website, monthly newspaper column, apartment outreach, and more. More information on the Environmental Recognition Awards can be found at <http://cityofdavis.org>

## 2020 Environmental Recognition Award Nominations NRC Subcommittee Recommendations

### BUSINESS

- Nugget Market

Nugget Markets is dedicated to environmental stewardship, and has committed extraordinary resources to sustainable business practices. Nugget Markets sees sustainability as a threefold dedication to Social Responsibility (taking care of people), Environmental Stewardship (taking care of the planet) and Economic Vitality (taking care of business, sustainably speaking) – and it shows in their business practices. Here are a few highlights of their sustainable practices:

- Waste Management: Nugget Markets donates 500,000 pounds of food to food banks annually and sends nearly twice that amount of inedible food to become compost and fertilizer. 72% of waste leaving stores is recycled. Since 2015, Nugget Markets has diverted roughly 6,000 tons of waste from landfills
- Water Conservation: Since 2014, Nugget Markets reduced water consumption by 9%, saving more than 5.3 million gallons! By eliminating the energy needed to produce those 5.3 million gallons, more than 18 tons of carbon were prevented from entering the atmosphere.
- Bicycling: Nugget Markets associates participate in May is Bike Month, replacing nearly 2,000 car miles each year with biking, walking and carpooling. Four of the Yolo County stores are certified bicycle friendly!
- Energy Efficiency: Every Nugget Markets building uses LED lights, which use half the watts of CFLs, last three times as long and convert all of their energy into light (no energy lost to heat). Nugget Market's plastic bags are made from 30% post-consumer recycled content and 50% green energy and can be used at least 125 times.

Nugget Markets is committed to the Davis community, and shows support through involvement with local organizations such as The Bike Campaign and local food banks, support for City events, and customer outreach events such as Earth Month and World Food Day.

We are happy to welcome Nugget Corporate Offices to Davis in 2020! Nugget Markets commitment to the environment shows in the design of their new corporate offices, with solar panels, EV charging, low-impact storm management, bike parking, Jump bikes, and a living wall.

### NON-PROFIT OR AGENCY

- Cool Davis

In recognition of 10 years of advancing sustainability in Davis by inspiring the community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to a changing climate and improve the quality of life for all. Since its founding by a small group of dedicated volunteers nearly 10 years ago, Cool Davis has become one of the most important and effective environmental organizations serving the

## 2020 Environmental Recognition Awards (ERA)

Davis community, bringing together diverse groups to offer both education and information, as well as community action.

To bring focus to major projects, Cool Davis organizes “campaigns” to highlight activity and provide resources to help Davis residents and businesses. Volunteers actively lead the different campaigns, which include advisory committees that help provide technical expertise. The current campaigns are: electric vehicles, rooftop solar, home heating and cooling, and cool homes. Each campaign includes resources on the Cool Davis website and easy to use educational materials, as well as community events that bring together businesses, experts and the general public around key sustainability topics. Examples include electric vehicles pop up events at the Davis Farmers’ Market, and workshops on such topics as rooftop solar, home heating and cooling, home energy efficiency and greywater.

With a very tiny paid staff, nearly all of work that Cool Davis does is with volunteers. About 500-800 individuals have contributed many thousands of hours to Cool Davis projects over the last ten years. Currently, about 40-50 individuals are engaged in an ongoing basis, leading campaigns, doing website work, assisting at events and providing technical expertise for the campaigns. This includes, but is not limited to, volunteers from the community, a dedicated cadre of technical experts, volunteer experts from the business community and the City of Davis, and students, faculty and staff from UC Davis. And, believe it or not, until very recently, Cool Davis’s executive director was a full-time volunteer. But, the core of Cool Davis’s energy and effectiveness remains its cadre of dedicated volunteers.

### INDIVIDUAL/GROUP

- Jean Jackman

In recognition of her environmental advocacy and 17 years as a voluntary writer for the Davis Enterprise, highlighting the environment “At the Pond”. Jean’s columns brings her appreciation for wildlife to people’s homes, encourages all age groups to join nature outings in the community, and showcases opportunities for families and individuals to volunteer and help protect our natural environment. Jean’s column and the group of community members that came together because of it, evolved into the “Friends of North Davis Ponds.” This advocacy and nature-appreciating group has inspired other efforts, such as Ed Whistler’s bird-watching strolls, Jack Anderson’s nesting box Eagle Scout project, and more.

As co-director of the Citizens for Open Space Campaign, Jean (with co-director Pam Nieberg) played a big part in the successful approval of the Measure O that ensures long-term funding for the City’s Open Space Program. In 2019, the Friends of North Davis Ponds with the City and the Open Space and Natural Habitat Commission, broke ground on the new “North Davis Upland Habitat Area” at the corner of F Street and Anderson Road. This project will provide new wildlife habitat area and accessible paths for the public to enjoy nature. This project is in part due to the

## 2020 Environmental Recognition Awards (ERA)

25 years of tireless advocacy by Jean to ensure this critical space be retained and enhanced as an accessible habitat for people to connect with nature.

- Gerry Braun, Lorenzo Kristov, Richard McCann

In recognition of these individuals devoted commitment toward carbon-free energy sourcing and regional energy efficiency and resiliency and their substantial contribution to the formation and success of Valley Clean Energy. Valley Clean Energy, the local community choice energy (CCE) agency, has been providing electricity service to residents and businesses in the City of Davis, as well as Yolo County, Woodland, and Winters, since 2018. While the Davis community is now enjoying the successes of Valley Clean Energy in providing less expensive electricity containing a far higher percentage of renewably produced energy than previously provided by PG&E, Valley Clean Energy's success is the result of years of dedicated individuals and City staff.

Gerry, Lorenzo, and Richard provided deep knowledge, expertise, and commitment to local sourcing of alternative energy throughout the development of VCE. Gerald Braun, Richard McCann, and Lorenzo Kristov were absolutely critical and selfless contributors in this process as the members of the Technical Advisory Subcommittee to the full Committee.

The efforts by the Committee began in earnest in early 2015 and an extensive, in-depth report was submitted 18 months later in October 2016 to the Council recommending formation of the CCE agency. Gerry, Richard, and Lorenzo reviewed and critiqued every consultants' reports and performed quite advanced independent technical, legal, and market analysis of the then-current alternative and conventional fossil fuel-derived energy procurement opportunities and the impacts this might have on future CCE-offered rates to Davis consumers. It was a mammoth undertaking on their part and virtually consumed them for this 18-month period. If any technical questions ever arose in the course of the Committee's review of the hundreds of pages of documentation required for completion of the Committee's final report, it was Gerry, Richard, and Lorenzo to whom the Committee relied almost exclusively for straight-forward, fact-based answers. Based on the thoroughness and completeness of the Advisory Committee's Report, the Davis City Council was able to confidently authorize the formation of Valley Clean Energy.

Thanks in part to Gerry, Richard, and Lorenzo's efforts, Davis residents now receive clean, low carbon power from Valley Clean Energy.

## EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

A Special Award Category, "Empowering Youth for the Environment" seemed warranted to recognize the importance of supporting and empowering youth to lead us in a time of climate-crisis and into a new era of climate action. These two individuals have each shown tireless commitment to teaching, investing in, and inspiring the younger generation of climate activists and in building a sustainable future for all of us. The subcommittee will recommend, to the full

NRC, creation of a new award category in 2021, 'Youth in the Environment', to recognize the environmental action by young people in the Davis community.

- **Deb Bruns**

In recognition of Deb Bruns commitment to environmental education. Her actions extend from her time as a teacher where she integrated environmental issues in to her American History lessons to her work today as the Director of Curriculum and Instruction at the Yolo County Office of Education, leading the region in promoting science, math, and environmental literacy. Her positive energy and dedication to the environment is commendable. Deb has been instrumental in many region-wide projects that support youth in learning (and teaching) about the environment.

Deb's commitment to and unwavering passion for the environment has been instrumental in the success of hands-on learning programs such as Project Solar, Young Energy Leaders, School Energy Efficiency Programs, and access to Watt Meters, Energy Program Youth Corps and West Sacramento School Environmental Education Program. Deb also works to establish partnerships and support other teachers as they bring these programs to their students.

- **Christal Waters**

In recognition of Christal's selfless commitment to the children, community and the environment through her efforts to advance bike ridership amongst the Davis School District youth. In 2010, Christal spearheaded efforts to increase bike ridership amongst Davis students. One of the challenges of ridership was parental fears for student safety, but Christal secured grants and worked with Tim Starback to overcome this obstacle through creation of the scan-notify system save-a-gallon (now known as Active4.me). This scan sends a digital alert to parents informing them that their children had arrived safely, plus tracks number of trips, carbon offset, and miles travelled.

Eleven years later, Christal is still diligently scanning and greeting students every school morning at Willett Elementary. Christal's quest to get more students on bikes and out of cars has had the overarching goal of reducing our community's carbon footprint. For the first 6 months of the 2019/20 school year alone, the elementary scanning program has logged 60,000 active transportation trips equal to nearly 100 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> saved from entering the atmosphere.

Christal bicycle advocacy and dedication has also extended to bike education programs. These programs include Bike Rodeo, Drive Your Bike, and the popular Loopalooza, which has conservatively helped educate a least 5,000 people over the last 11 years about the safe routes to school via the Davis Bike Loop. Students that experience the biking program in elementary school are likely to take their long-standing habit of biking and walking to their junior highs, high schools and beyond. On average there are 1,400 high school and junior high school students biking to school every day in Davis. This successful participation is due in part to the ground work Christal has done for biking programs at Davis schools.

## LEGACY

- 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Recycling Program

In recognition of the citizens that started the recycling program, the enthusiasm and environmental awareness of residents and businesses that has sustained the program, and the leadership that has grown the program over the last 50 years. The City of Davis was a pioneer in curbside recycling, one of the first in the nation. Recycling in Davis began in April 1970, when a small group of concerned citizens began a newspaper drop-off recycling program. In 1972, the group's efforts expanded to include collection of aluminum cans and glass bottles. Curbside recycling began in 1974, when the City Council passed an ordinance requiring newspapers to be separated from trash.

In 1976, Davis Waste Removal took over the City-wide recycling program and continued to grow that program with the addition of cardboard collection in 1988. Davis has required that recycling be available at apartments since 1989, and per municipal code, apartment managers must inform new tenants about recycling and the location of the on-site recycling carts when they sign a new lease. Davis has collected yard materials for composting since 1989, and this composting program was expanded throughout the City in 2016 to include other organic materials (food scraps, food soiled papers and yard materials).

Recyclables collected in Davis are remarkably well sorted; only 5-7% residual material is found in recyclables at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF - where the recycling is hand-sorted and baled before being sold for future re-use). Part of this is due to the unique dual stream collection system (the split blue and black bin), but a large part is due to the commitment of the Davis community to reducing waste. Another key to the success of the recycling program is its extensive outreach programs, which includes social media, e-mail newsletters, recycling fliers, website, a monthly newspaper column, apartment outreach, and more.

The City Recycling Program continues to strive towards zero waste. In 2011, the City adopted a Zero Waste Resolution in which the City strives to implement zero waste strategies. A ban on ban on single-use plastic carryout bags followed in 2013, encouraging reusable carryout bags instead. In 2017, the City adopted ordinances requiring that all food & beverages be served with either recyclable, compostable, or reusable serving ware, and that straws be available only upon request at all sit-down restaurants.

Davis' recycling efforts have been recognized through awards such as the California Resource Recovery Association's Outstanding Recycling Program Award in 2000 and the California Resource and Recovery Association's Pavitra Crimmel Reuse Award in 2012 for the Apartment Move-Out Waste Reduction Program.

## NOMINEES NOT SELECTED

The field was packed in 2020 with deserving individuals, businesses, and non-profits. These were the nominations not selected:

- Sinesa Novakoik & Co (Armisi Inc), Varsity Theatre, Mishka's Café, & Ice Krimski Complex
- Tree Davis
- The Episcopal Church of St. Martin