



# NEWSLETTER

Education for Environmental Action

A u t u m n 2 0 1 9

WELCOME MASTER CLASS 46!



We truly stand on the shoulders of these giants: EFM's founding teachers, Dr. Marty Griffin,

Kathy Cuneo, and Nona Dennis helped us welcome our 46th Master Class on September 7 at Richardson Bay Audubon Center in Tiburon. We are grateful for their prescient wisdom to create an educational program for community leaders to learn about Marin's unique natural environment, the effects of population growth and development, strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change impacts, and ways to successfully advocate for important causes. *It all happens here!*

Students paired up, to "speed date" or interview one other and introduced their partners to the class. Some students are California natives and some are new to Marin. Our students have worked as nurses, archeologists, marketing directors, landscape architects, professors, and ministers. There are poets, motorcyclists, horseback riders, and oyster lovers. Many students are active volunteers who are already giving back to their communities, but feel compelled to do more. Interests range from addressing homelessness, access to healthy food, improved air quality, ocean acidification, water conservation, regenerative design, renewable energy and clean transportation, protecting pollinators, trail stewardship, zero waste, human wellness, environmental justice, and expanding cross-generational efforts to work on climate change related issues. Help us welcome Master Class 46, and get to know these future graduates who will be creating positive change in Marin.

## President's Message

Happy Autumn to everyone! Master Class 46 is off to a great start with 19 students. We are making some of our field trips available to non students this year, so please check our website for details if you are interested.

### Phyllis Faber's Retirement:

The only way EFM has been able to put on 46 Master Classes over so many years is because of the many volunteers that have given their time to make it happen. Phyllis Faber was one of the founding teachers of the Environmental Forum back in 1972 when the program got started. After obtaining a grant from the Junior League of San Francisco, Marty Griffin and Stan Picher contracted with NSER (Natural Science Education Resources) to develop and deliver the initial curriculum. Phyllis, a microbiologist, was a part of NSER (along with Kathy Cuneo and Nona Dennis) and was instrumental in developing the EFM program during the first three years. After the first three years the graduates of the program took over the coordination of the training, but ever since that time Phyllis has

## Dr. Ellie Cohen, Keynote Speaker for EFM's Master Class: Building a Climate Change Toolbox



"In the history of the universe, humans have in a very, very short time changed the chemistry of our planet so much so that it



volunteered her time to ensure that the program she initiated would continue to educate hundreds of Marinites about the compelling environmental issues facing us.

Phyllis Faber has made countless contributions to the Bay Area environmental movement, published and worked on many books, and was a leader in the campaign for the California Coastal Commission. She has stayed with the Environmental Forum all of these years teaching many classes, the highlight of which has always been our annual field trip to West Marin. This past year, Phyllis let us know that she would be retiring from managing the West Marin trip to visit MALT (which she co-founded with Ellen Straus), Hog Island, and Straus Family Creamery. We will always be in gratitude for all of the contributions made by Phyllis over the entire life of our organization.

#### Valuing Volunteers:

Continuing with the theme of volunteerism, I would like to thank and highlight our current Master Class Director, Norma Fragoso, who is in her 4<sup>th</sup> year leading the Master Class. Norma can be found covering many tasks that need to be done to run the program: obtaining speakers like Mark Hertsgaard and Arlie Hochschild, and developing curriculum for our new classes.

Norma has also raised scholarship money to cover tuition for students in need and recruited many into the program. By the time Norma's fourth year is done, she will have guided over 80 participants through the program and on to their advocacy work -- quite an accomplishment!

EFM has had such a long history of dedicated volunteers and we are so appreciative of all of the time they have given to make our organization continue to function. Today we find ourselves in need of a few more volunteers: we need a Secretary for our current Board of Directors and we need a

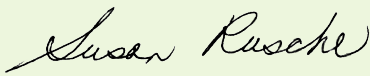
chemistry or our planet so much so that it threatens the future of our ability to live on this planet. What can we do now to avoid a catastrophic fate?" Ellie asks.

She peels off her bike helmet and flashes a bright, warm smile. Her electric bike was a retirement gift from Point Blue Conservation, where she served as President and CEO. During her 20-year tenure at Point Blue, the organization grew to include over 180 scientists where she and the organization worked with hundreds of public and private partners to develop climate-smart solutions. At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Ellie was honored to represent Point Blue as one of the nonprofit observer organizations twice: the 2017 COP23 in Bonn, Germany, and 2018 COP24 in Katowice, Poland.

First, Ellie dives headlong into explaining the science of climate change. In May 2019, atmospheric CO2 measured 414.7 parts per million (ppm), the highest seasonal peak and highest level in human history. This alarming rise is caused by human activity: the burning of fossil fuels -- petroleum, coal and natural gas -- creating soil depletion (less nutrient-rich) thereby destroying farms, as well as draining the ocean's ability to sequester and hold carbon. The last time we had this much CO2 in the atmosphere was around 2.5 million years ago, when temperatures were 3-5C warmer and sea levels were about 75 feet higher. Today the ocean is about 30% more acidic than it was in the 1800s and as it becomes more acidic, shellfish are unable to build shells they need for protection, and coral reefs begin dying off. Ocean-life may become more jelly-dominated in the future. Perhaps you remember "The Blob"? Well, it's back ... see this recent [Marin IJ 9-12-2019 article](#).

Of all the CO2 being produced, it is estimated that 93% is held in the ocean. Without bodies of water on Earth, our temperatures would rise so high that it would be uninhabitable. "Be thankful to the ocean. It has protected us from the heat

current board of directors and we need a couple of people who can organize and manage our two Membership events (the Holiday Party and Annual Meeting). We could also use assistance running media at our lectures. If you are interested in making a contribution to the success of EFM, please contact me at [President@MarinEFM.org](mailto:President@MarinEFM.org).



**Susan Rusche, President**

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## Upcoming Events @ EFM

### Plant Communities and Wetlands of Marin - A Guided Tour September 24

Led by experts Kathy Cuneo, PhD, and Nona Dennis, and Mia Monroe, we'll visit China Camp State Park, hike part of the Boot Jack Trail on Mt. Tam, and stroll through Muir Woods

Limited availability. Special member rate \$85  
- Learn more and register [here](#)

**Save the Date. Details will be posted on our homepage soon:**

### Join Master Class 46 on How Government Manages Climate Change (or Not) October 19

### The Power of Climate Philanthropy and Carbon Offsets November 6

ocean. It has prevented us from having disastrous impacts much sooner; but, because of this, it's easier not to take action or think of it as an emergency," Ellie warns. The ocean itself was the warmest on record last year. With permafrost melting, warming is accelerating even faster, and we're seeing more and more fires in the Arctic. Globally, the last five years have been the warmest on record.

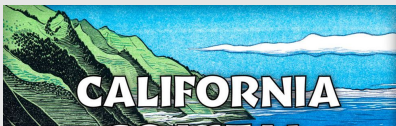
"Some call it a 'tipping point,' or, as Greta Thunberg puts it, 'our house is on fire.' Top published, peer-reviewed science journals since 2012 to present show that we are already exceeding four of nine planetary boundaries (or tipping points) for climate change: species extinction, habitat loss and degradation (including farm lands and oceans)."

It's not just about cutting emissions, it's about removing the emissions we've already added to the atmosphere. Ellie asked us, "how can we sequester emissions?" Our savvy Master Class students offered, "plant sea grass," "plant trees," and "change agricultural practices." "Yes!" Ellie encourages, "what we can do right away is what we already know how to do: manage nature better."

Ellie recently began working in her new role as CEO at [The Climate Center](#) in Petaluma, and her goals are ambitious. One of the reasons Ellie is excited about joining The Climate Center is that they are leading a collaborative effort for a bold climate emergency policy campaign statewide. The vision is that by 2025, California will have enacted a suite of climate policies with the goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and carbon negative by 2035.

"No more 'business as usual,'" Ellie emphasizes, "to achieve these goals, we'll need clean, local, equitable power and storage; sustainable transportation options; healthy soils for agriculture; habitat restoration for biodiversity; clean water; and fresh air. Stop GHG emissions, stop

## Environmental Events in our Community:





## 35th Annual California Coastal Cleanup Day

Saturday, September 21

9:00 am - Noon

Various locations - find one [here](#)



## Drive Clean Marin at College of Marin

Saturday, September 21

2:00 - 5:30 pm

Reduce your carbon footprint by 50%! Stop by College of Marin to test drive a variety of EVs and e-bikes. Attendees get priority access to EV discounts available through a group purchase. This event is open to the public and free! Join the pack and drive electric! Learn more [here](#)

## Marin Conservation League

### Walk into Conservation History at Samuel P. Taylor State Park

Saturday, September 28

9:30 am - Noon

Register [here](#)

plastic and nutrient pollution. Nature-based, multi-benefit approaches should be of equal priority. Adopt planet-friendly and politically-engaged lifestyles at home, at work, and within communities.” Of course, doing this crucial work will need government support and require swift advocacy action, commitment, and money.

Ellie waves and pedals away. Her dynamism will stay with us for a long time, and her message brings our work into crystal clear focus. *Let's do this!*

by Nancy Benjamin

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## West Marin Field Trip: Conversation and Conservation



Straus' electric truck photo by Lena Zentall (MC46)

The conservation landscape of Marin County is also a *conversation landscape* between nature, farmers, and several nonprofits working in concert to protect our future.

EFM clearly illustrates the commingling of nonprofits and community benefits to the Master Class students with an annual farm tour, which highlights key drivers in improving conservation networks. On Tuesday, September 10th, we piled into a bus at 8:00 am and set off to explore the conservation and conversation landscapes that protect Marin. This tour explored many of the positive outcomes of Marin

MCL hosts monthly issue committees focusing on preserving, protecting and enhancing Marin's natural assets. Refer to [MCL's website calendar](#) for additional upcoming events.

## One Tam

One Tam transcends boundaries to inspire deep connections to Mt. Tam and to mobilize the skills and resources of its five partners and the community to care for its long-term health. Help ensure a vibrant and healthy future for Mt. Tam.

*Volunteer opportunities, community hikes, naturalist talks and more! Visit [OneTam.org](#) to view the full calendar.*

## Resilient Neighborhoods

The time is NOW to commit to climate action with Resilient Neighborhoods. Get prepared for emergencies and lower your carbon footprint. You will get support to personalize your climate action plan and achieve measurable results over 5-team meetings. Sign up for a team or register for a class [here](#).



**Green Chautauqua Presents: Firestorm in Redding - Stories of Survival**  
Community Partner, EFM  
First Presbyterian Church  
San Anselmo  
October 12, 7:00 - 8:30 pm

Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) and its partnership approach to long-term conservation. Twenty-five years ago, Albert Straus formed Straus Family Creamery that became the first 100% certified organic dairy west of the Mississippi. Albert's mother, Ellen Straus and friend, Phyllis Faber, founded MALT in 1980 -- the first agricultural land trust in the country and a model for its success.

EFM begins its overview of the crucial conservation landscape with this dynamic farm tour. It introduced us to the relationships between nonprofits, farmers, land, and food producers making a visceral connection to the work that lies ahead. Within a few short miles of Point Reyes Station, we saw how the quality of our food system is intrinsic to the quality of our natural systems, and to the relationships people have to that land. This is the foundation to the mapping of the multi-agency approach necessary to conservation in Marin County. Through EFM's coursework students are given an inside view of the orchestra of agencies that are protecting and restoring our watersheds, farms, and atmosphere. Protecting the quality of this open space for future generations of all species takes teamwork and EFM helps its students get to know the team.

Journey to West Marin ... read the complete article about EFM's West Marin field trip on [Cool Hive](#).

by Daisy Carlson (MC 45)

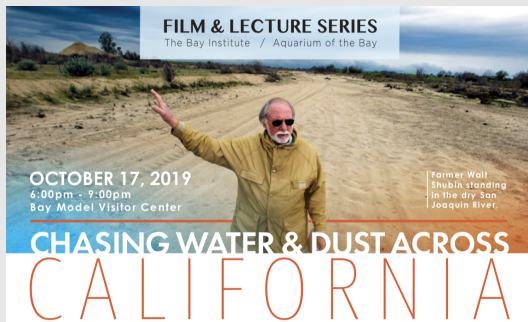
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## What We're Listening to Now ...





Learn more [here](#)



## Chasing Water & Dust Across California

Bay Model Visitor Center, Sausalito  
October 17, 6:00 - 9:00 pm

Award-winning writer, Mark Arax, will discuss his new book, *The Dreamt Land*, and the transformation of California's landscape by the manipulation of its water and soil.

Additional info and tickets [here](#)



Our podcast recommendation comes from Kirsten Nolan, MC 45, and part of EFM's Communications and Marketing Team. She says, "well, it's not a new discovery, but I enjoy listening to the Bioneers podcast, especially when I need a break from the heaviness of the news cycle. It provides a dose of inspiration and hope that reinvigorates me. It's also a great precursor to their annual conference." Stay tuned: Bioneers will take place in San Rafael at the Marin Center from October 18-20.

[www.MarinEFM.org](http://www.MarinEFM.org)

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**#Education4Action**