

# Talking climate change in Sisters

By **Jim Anderson**  
Correspondent

The Sisters Science Club filled The Belfry to capacity Tuesday evening, February 17, when Connie Millar, USFS research ecologist PhD from the Pacific Southwest Research Station at Berkeley, California, presented her research on climate change.

Millar spent about an hour sharing her work in the Sierra Nevada mountains where she studied a variety of trees and their response to the changes of weather phenomena happening in that area, as throughout the world. As she demonstrated how the forests of the Southwest are changing, she often addressed what she referred to as the “War on Science” that seems to be taking place in U.S. politics and other parts of our society.

Over 50 Sisters Country residents in the audience were held spellbound as Millar explained the various forest changes she has witnessed over the last 30 years.

She demonstrated how weather is changing forest and tree species distribution as they are affected by changes in ocean circulation, which in turn are caused by El Niño/La Niña effects in the Pacific.

Noting everything Millar was sharing with the crowd at The Belfry were four

eighth-grade students from Sisters Middle School, and their science teacher, Mike Geisen. Each trimester, Sisters Middle School students in Geisen’s science class are asked to participate in science activities outside of the scope of the classroom and curriculum.

These can include science talks, participating in the science fair, watching selected TED Talks, and diving into a particular topic of interest by reading about current events.

After the close of the program, and after a lengthy question-and-answer time with several of the members of the audience, Millar spent time with the students to discuss some of the points in her talk.

For several days after The Belfry talk, the students and their teachers kicked around the ideas and findings Dr. Millar shared with them and came up with these thoughts:

True Duerden: “Dr. Millar provided an insightful overview of topics I knew very little of, so it was fascinating to see how global climate change affects the movement of various trees species, but I didn’t know how complex it actually is. For example, I had no idea that species not only move up the mountains, but down as well. Also, different events such as extreme windstorms and wildfires can even lower a tree line. I

am very glad that I attended the talk and learned so much more than I knew before. I hope to attend many more talks in the future.”

Keaton Green came to these conclusions: “I think one of the most interesting facts that I learned is that we are not necessarily in an unusually warm period, but that we are in one of earth’s warm cycles that happen every hundreds of thousands of years. The temperature will most likely start cooling down in a few thousand years.

“Another interesting fact that I learned is that the Pika, which is related to rabbits, is not at all affected by the warming period yet, because they live down in the talus slopes where the temperature is about the same all day.”

Abi Manley had this take on Dr. Millar’s presentation: “Global warming is causing ecosystems at the base of mountains to rise and grow in subalpine areas more. The main reason for plants and animals not living up there in the first place is the cold temperature.

“With Earth’s temperature rising, the plants and animals are starting to move upwards. Eventually, if the Earth gets hot enough, the plants and animals will keep moving upward, run out of space, and ‘go up into heaven’ (go extinct).”

# Texas singer-songwriter headed for Sisters

The Belfry will present singer-songwriter Randy McAllister on Saturday, February 28 at 8 p.m.

Randy McAllister is one of the premier singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalists to emerge from Texas. Heartbreak, humor, high hair and tall Texas tales all play a part in the songwriting of Randy McAllister.

His music has been hailed as some of the most original and innovative being made today.

While comparisons are not easy, it has been said that his music is a cross between Doug Sahm, John Hiatt, and

Delbert McClinton, with a blues-man’s background and sensibilities thrown into the mix.

Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets are on sale at [www.Bendticket.com](http://www.Bendticket.com).



PHOTO PROVIDED

Texas songwriter Randy McAllister will play The Belfry on Saturday.

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