



THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER FROM CLAIR TAPPAAN LODGE (CTL)

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IN SHORT

By Pat Mikkelsen, editor, member CTL Committee; Diane Boyer, chair CTL Committee

Summer Review

The sixth annual CTL fundraiser was held August 13-15, 2010, with about 80 participants (see page 2). We raised \$11,695, of which \$4,925 was donated to CTL's environmental education account with the Sierra Club Foundation (see page 3). The balance went to CTL operations.



Painting by Karon Gambrell from Painting Along the Sierra Trails (see story on page 3).

\$\$\$ 2010 Finances \$\$\$

CTL continues to maintain a fair financial status during tough economic times and we are about on budget for the 3rd quarter. However, we know that the 4th quarter is historically low occupancy until the annual snow season starts, so please visit the lodge.

We are grateful for donations to maintain and support the Clair Tappaan Lodge. Donations are not tax-deductible; however, the money goes directly to support Lodge operations. Make checks payable to Clair Tappaan Lodge and send to Peter Lehmkuhl, Lodge General Manager.

New CTL Committee Members

The CTL Committee has added three new members: Barbara Berg, an organizational consultant from Carmel; Chuck Shackett of Lafayette who has building skills, teaches English, and has written an article about a visit to CTL with his daughter; and Dave McKinney of Chico, who is interested in leading fly-fishing events at CTL. We thank each of these supporters for their interest and for sharing their special skills to help keep CTL operating to carry on the Sierra Club's heritage on Donner Summit.

Volunteer Opportunities

To volunteer for the effort to keep the lodge profitable, please contact Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee Chair Diane Boyer (dianeboyer@directv.net). To join a work party, contact Peter Lehmkuhl at the lodge (see stories of two work parties on pages 5-7).

Other News

The CTL is on the Geotourism Map for the Emigrant Pass portion of the Sierra Nevada Map sponsored by the National Geographic/Sierra Business Council/Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Check it out—<http://www.sierranevadageotourism.org/index.sitemap.php>

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6th ANNUAL FUND RAISER

(Photos by Rich Johns; see all the photos at <http://sierraclubatdonnersummit.shutterfly.com/>)

In early August, 80+ supporters of Clair Tappaan Lodge gathered to celebrate three days of fun, good company, and great food.

Several hikes were offered on both Saturday and Sunday, enabling guests to enjoy multiple locations and topical interests.



Some stayed behind and learned painting techniques from Susan Barry.



Chef Bernie Cohen created a delicious wild fish dinner.



Wine and cheese tasting was at Hutchinson.



Saturday evening's program was a presentation by the Donner Summit Historical Society with many interesting photographs accompanied by stories of the "good old days."



Music and dancing rounded out the evening.



PAINTING ALONG THE SIERRA TRAILS

By Diane Boyer; photos by Jane Risk.

We gathered on the meadow in the cool of the morning, after breakfast and brief chores, to learn from our gracious leaders the destination of the painting class. We headed off in carpools to a nearby point, unloaded our gear, and hiked a short distance to some beautiful spot around Donner Summit: a granite-encircled sparkling blue lake; an historic bluff site with rock walls and petroglyphs; a cool trek through a leafy forest toward a rocky peak; or a grassy meadow alongside a bubbling brook.



Susan Barry, our talented instructor, demonstrated a technique and offered suggestions as each painter concentrated to create his or her own interpretation of the scenery. The day was broken up by sack lunches, a cool swim, or an invigorating hike with spectacular views.



A few hours later, as the sun lowered, we packed up our paints and headed back to the lodge, looking forward to a refreshing shower, a tasty hot dinner, and an evening of camaraderie spent critiquing the day's creations and

discussing our efforts at putting the beauty we had seen on paper.

Another great day on a National Sierra Club Outing at Clair Tappaan Lodge - Painting Along the Sierra Trails!

GATEWAY MOUNTAIN CENTER IMPROVING ECOLOGICAL LITERACY, HEALTH, AND EMPOWERMENT IN TODAY'S YOUTH.

By Peter Mayfield

2010 was a busy year for the Gateway Mountain Center! We ran 16 separate environmental education programs, an increase from last year even though we had fewer students overall. Our curriculum continues to evolve and we are excited about some new developments in the California education landscape.

First thanks to the many people who make our work possible— our fantastic staff of guide/educators; our clients - the hardworking classroom teachers who are so committed to enriching the lives of their students; our hosts - the friendly staff at Clair Tappaan Lodge; and our funding partners Clair Tappaan Lodge Environmental Education Fund which provided critical support to help 192 students from low-income families attend our programs.

Field Science

We all know that getting youth out into the natural world is a worthy end in itself, but with the education climate these days, it is important to deliver curriculum that gives students solid field science experience. Fortunately, with our incredible location we can combine beauty, inspiration, fun and adventure, with hands-on science activities.

Our wetland studies program is a prime example of the type of science curriculum we offer at Clair Tappaan Lodge. We take students through a section of the latest Mountain Meadows Health Assessment Protocol developed by researchers at UC Davis. Van Norden Meadow, an easy walk straight down the hill from the Lodge, is a critically important wetland habitat at the headwater of the South Fork Yuba River. (*Note: this is private property and we operate on this land with express permission from Sugar Bowl and Royal Gorge*).

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We do our survey in five parts. The students pair up and wade into the river with “D Nets” to collect Benthic Macro Invertebrates (aquatic bugs). They sort them into trays, looking for the sensitive indicator species such as mayflies, stoneflies, and caddis flies that can only thrive in creeks with low levels of sediment and pollution. After releasing the insects back into the creek, we do our “Herp” survey; the students spread out and slowly walk a section of meadow searching for snakes, lizards, and toads. Most groups find a few snakes, and we often see spectacular numbers of baby toads! The species and quantities get recorded, then we grab binoculars and identify the numerous bird species, often spotting the pair of osprey that hunt fish all summer long. The students learn to identify the wetland plants (grasses, rushes, and sedges) and complete a botanical transect looking at the distribution of plant species in a given area. Lastly we take a core sample of soil, looking for the coloration that indicates a healthy wetland.



Why do we care about wetlands? In the Sierra, wetlands perform a critical “eco-system service” as giant “sponges” storing and slow-releasing the snow melt that all Californians depend on for municipal water and agriculture. For animals, wetlands in the Sierra provide some of the richest and most diverse habitats. Through their ability to filter water and mitigate erosion, wetlands are critical to the trout and salmon that live in Sierra streams. Our Van Norden wetland, like many others, is threatened by potential development on the surrounding uplands, and by climate change that is projected to have a big impact on the hydrological cycles.

By studying this wetland, students learn how their lives are connected to and dependent on healthy Sierra ecosystems.

Positive New Developments

The news about public education in California these days tends toward the grim and depressing, yet there are some exciting positive developments. There is a new curriculum standard that all schools are mandated by law to adopt over the next five years. It is called the California Education and The Environment Initiative. The working group for this has come up with 85 lesson plans for K-12 that can be used as replacements to sections of current textbooks. We are currently researching how our field studies can support these new curriculum standards and are eager to work with the “early adopter” teachers and schools that are working with the curriculum.

The No Child Left Inside Act was passed by Congress last spring and will be included in the re-authorization of No Child Left Behind next year. Currently it provides for significant federal funding for eco-literacy and environmental education programs. We are following this closely as it is likely to help us get more schools into our programs.



How You Can Help

We are excited about this upcoming year. We have many returning schools, and some great new ones.

We still have space and scholarship money for more schools over the next 12 months. We are busy contacting schools for trips in autumn 2011. Give us a contact at your favorite school—an inspired teacher or involved parent—and we will hustle to make a fantastic field trip happen for them! Contact Peter Mayfield 530-205-6245, peter@sierraexperience.org.

LUDLOW HUT WORK PARTY

2-3 October 2010

By Dick Simpson; incorporated suggestions and photos from Irina Blok and Julia Trutko; incorporated comments from Chaincy Kuo.

This work party was the most scattered in terms of volunteers floating in and out that I have ever led. Jason McLachlan was a big help by handling the advance signups and cancellations, but there was continual flux through the weekend. Bill Behrendt set off from Clair Tappaan Lodge Friday; he wanted to repair Ludlow doors and, for various reasons, decided this could be done best by going a day ahead of everyone else. Peter Houck and his sister never got beyond Colfax because of car problems. John Ebneter met us at Kaspian campground on the west shore of Lake Tahoe. Bob Creek hiked in from the OHV staging area on McKinney Creek Friday; he was the only person to see Bill Behrendt, who left for home about 9 AM Saturday, hauling the hut mattresses to the Tahoe City landfill.



Everyone else met after breakfast at CTL and regrouped at Kaspian campground – except for Michael Livermore and his Excursion’s occupants, who got lost somewhere. Julia Trutko (and son Román) were with Michael even though they hadn’t signed up for the work party. We left messages at Michael’s cell number and CTL, then continued on. There was a car drop at Barker Pass and two more at dusty Barker Meadow, just before the road got seriously bad for Toyota Corollas. We reached the hut about 1:30 PM, more than three hours after leaving CTL. Chaincy Kuo and Ranjit Henry headed home at 4 PM, roughly the same time Michael and his crew arrived (reporting at least four wrong turns and no hope of getting out on their own). An hour later it started to rain.

The enthusiasm was not nearly so scattered as the participation. After some initial questions about what needed to be done and how, everyone dove into making Ludlow ready for winter. Jason found the usual, ample

supply of downed trees near the shore of Richardson Lake and kept his chain saw running for most daylight hours during Saturday PM and Sunday AM. The firewood collection, which was wheeled and stacked, was three rounds deep on each side of the hut from front to back—about the normal quantity.

Gayatri James and Bob replaced a window pane which had warped and separated from its frame. The hard part of the window repair is removing the old glaze/grout. Bob also varnished the loft floor, and John patched holes in the first floor concrete. Chaincy caulked holes and cracks in the hut siding. Tony and Hella Stieber anchored wayward roof shingles and stained most of the front and back sides of the hut. Melinda Gong and David Houghton cleaned up the kitchen, then split some of the larger rounds so they would be easier to carry. Irina Blok and Angela Livermore helped with stacking. Almost everyone moved wood in the wheelbarrows or by rolling rounds on the ground. Jim McPherson was everywhere, including replacing a sledge handle, hauling firewood, and staining; he took pictures while John, Tony, and I emptied the outhouse.

We had traditional hut spaghetti, French bread, and salad for Saturday dinner. Volunteers contributed appetizers and beverages, and Savemart’s Dutch apple pie supplemented the CTL cookies for dessert. Michael and his crew brought a completely separate food supply, sharing almost everything with people who still



Staining and window repair at the front of the hut; John Ebneter (left), Jim McPherson, Tony Stieber (upper landing), Hella Stieber, and Bob Creek (right).

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looked hungry. Conversation was very lively until well past 9 PM, but clearing skies and fatigue started to take their toll. By 10 most were at least heading for bed under clear, starry skies. Rain resumed about 2 AM; I dragged my sleeping bag into the hut, but no one else stirred. Gayatri and John found shelter under the branches of a large tree by the lake, a few people slept in the hut loft, and everyone else dozed quietly in their tents.

The next day, we finished the few indoor chores, concentrated on getting the final logs in from the cutting zone, had lunch, packed our gear, and gave the hut a final sweep. Bob hiked back down McKinney Creek. The rest of us piled into the four remaining vehicles and drove carefully back to Barker Pass. I lost

traction on a steep uphill before Bear Lake and again about half a mile beyond Barker Meadow. Repositioning the rear-wheel drive truck was all that I needed for a second try in each case; but the slick clay and ruts at the second bad spot required more effort (and a gentle push from Michael). We reached Hwy 89 about 3:30 PM, two hours after leaving the hut, and headed home.

Participants: Bill Behrendt, Irina Blok, Bob Creek, John David Houghton, Ranjit Henry, Gayatri James, Chaincy Kuo, Michael and Angela Livermore, Jason McLachlan (coordinator), Jim McPherson, Tony and Hella Stieber, Julia Trutko (and son Roman), and Dick Simpson (leader and scribe).

PETER GRUBB HUT WORK PARTY

25-26 September 2010

By Dick Simpson

The work party was organized by Joel Brody; it was blessed with exceptional weather and included the participation of eight students and two teachers from The Bay School San Francisco.

We met at Clair Tappaan Lodge after breakfast Saturday morning. With many vehicles having various abilities on unpaved roads, we agreed to regroup at the end of pavement on the north side of I-80 and proceed slowly from there. Our trucks stopped about 200 yards short of Castle Pass, but Jim McPherson offered to carry heavy items (three bags of RediMix concrete and a tool box) and packs to the end of the road in his Explorer. Miraculously we got just about everything to the top of the pass in one carry; from there to the hut, the hike in was uneventful.

We worked about 30 minutes before taking lunch. This got us started on clearing the loft in the east room, cleaning the kitchen area, painting interior walls, and patching holes in the concrete floor – the latter two jobs were prerequisites to bringing in new firewood.

After lunch it became clear that we needed to get our dump run into gear. We loaded the hut mattresses onto a pair of wheel-barrows, tied them down with pieces of cord, and sent them off with four people, expecting a return run for a couple loads of east-room trash before Dave Rust headed to the Placer County Sanitary Landfill. It was after 3 PM when Dave drove away with only the mattresses, hoping to reach the dump before it closed at 4.

Bay School San Francisco Volunteers.



Meanwhile the Bay School contingent concentrated on moving firewood from a couple large piles west of the hut to the vicinity of the north door; with wheelbarrows assigned to mattress duty, most of the work was done by carrying a round or two per trip. By the time we called it a day late in the afternoon, all of the wood had been brought in. There was interest in hiking to Sand Ridge Lake, but only a couple people made the trip. Others spent time filling water bottles at the creek; by the time the filtering was done, a lot of enthusiasm for Sand Ridge Lakes had dissipated. This gave volunteers plenty of time to set up their sleeping arrangements; the Bay School group settled along the southwest edge of the Round Valley meadow.



We cooked dinner in the open area south of the hut; the temperature was comfortable and we timed it almost perfectly. With 22 in the group, the spaghetti pot was almost overflowing; but no one complained of being underfed. Venus was visible through the trees on the western horizon just after sunset. Jupiter was in the eastern sky and a nearly full moon shone most of the night. About two-thirds of the group had headed for their sleeping bags by 8 PM, but a small group sat around an indoor table discussing plans for the future of the hut until about 9:30. A small fire in the stove made the room comfortably warm very quickly.

There was light frost along the creek Sunday morning, but temperatures climbed quickly once sunshine hit the valley. The main job Sunday, however, was moving wood from outside the hut into the main room stack. A couple people made wheel-barrow trash runs with the material that had been left behind Saturday; I showed them where to find more cut wood along the trail so their return would be productive. Several people also stained the lower boards on the outhouse and the south face of the hut, including the ladder to the second floor. Joel removed the remains of gaskets from both the inner and outer sides of the stove door glass; but, because the stove store had run out of new

gaskets, we could only reassemble the metal and glass pieces and leave the sealing for another work party.

With a good weekend of work behind us, we broke for lunch, packed up, and headed out. Each person, who did not already have both hands full, was given an old board to carry out to Dave's truck. He delivered the load to the CTL dumpster. My estimate was that we had 60-70% of the wood needed for winter, but we had done all we could without having chain saws to cut more. With another work party on 9-10 October, there was good reason to be hopeful; but the weather needed to turn a bit more ugly so that chain saw operation would be allowed by the US Forest Service.



Hadrian and Dick clean stove pipe (Brody)

Participants: Jesse Amital, Greg Andreas, Amy Andreini, Jodi Bailey, Lisel Blash, Joel Brody, Alexis Elliot, Tate Giesemann, Ryan Jung, Alex Kinsella, Hadrian Klinkner, Eric Krieger, Tyler Krill, Jim McPherson, Kiyona Mizuno, Annelise Moore, Lorrie Poch, Katherine Riley, Dave and Karen Rust, Jan Siano, and Jake Welling,

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Address Correction Requested

FOR UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

go to <http://ctl.sierraclub.org> and click on "Activities" for more

We are sending more and more Goshawk Newsletters by email.
Please send us your email address and you will get to see all the photos in color.