

Sierra Conservationist

NEWSLETTER OF THE PLACER GROUP SIERRA CLUB



APRIL - JUNE, 2015



From the Co-Chair

By Marilyn Jasper

Late last year, it became official that the Sierra Club was changing its website arrangements. Groups and Chapters had to decide to either stick with Sierra Club's new templates or find an Internet Service Provider to host their own websites. Placer Group decided to stay with the Club's.

There are four different level choices of web hosting in the new somewhat "stripped down" model, but Placer Group took the first level (the easiest to manage), and we think it will be updated more often because it's more manageable. If/When we become proficient and confident, we can always move up to the next level. The new link is at www.sierraclub.org/motherlode/placer. If you get a chance to look at it, let us know if you have any suggestions or see any corrections that should be made.

Placer Group may lack much-needed volunteers, but we're not lacking in activities. We co-sponsored with the Auburn Area Democratic Club who brought in a great speaker, Dr. Deb Niemeier, from UCD. As a renowned expert in climate change, she explained the complexities and magnitude of the problems in a manner that all could grasp. She also offered hope and suggestions for each person to conserve and not add to global problems.

Placer Group was also a sponsor of the Wild and Scenic Film Festival's "Tour" that was arranged by Protect American River Canyons (PARC) on March 7. It was fantastic. Hopefully the W & S on Tour will become an annual event. The newly remodeled State Theater is a treat, and the films were simply magnificent. Don't miss it next year.

A visitor to Sierra Club Placer Group information table at "On Tour Auburn Wild & Scenic Film Festival" receives a packet of complimentary sunflower seeds for spring planting from Executive Committee members Marilyn Jasper and Heidi Van Zant. Thank you to Cat Raymond of 49er Printing for making the packets.



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www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/placer/index.html

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Public Relations/Newsletter: We invite your letters, comments and input. Our deadline is 15 days prior to publication, the first day of each quarter during the year. Our newsletter can also be accessed on our website.

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ON THE COVER: California Sister butterflies sipping on mud the rocks in the American River Canyon. Photo: Cat Raymond



Environmental heroes, inspiring speakers, good party at May 2 Mother Lode Banquet

The Mother Lode Chapter will host its Annual Awards Banquet on May 2 in Sacramento. Meet other members from 11 local Sierra Club groups, help honor dedicated environmental heroes from around Northern California, listen to a dynamic keynote speaker, and enjoy the party-like atmosphere that is always part of this annual fundraising event.

This year's banquet will be held at The Dante Club, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd. Sacramento, CA 95825. Social hour (no-host bar) begins at 5 p.m. Dinner is at 6 p.m. Attendance is by reservation only, no tickets sold at the door. Cost per person is \$45, a portion of which helps sustain chapter programs. Reservations: <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode>

The Keynote Speaker is Bruce Hamilton, Deputy Executive Director of the Sierra Club. In his 38-year career with the Sierra Club Bruce Hamilton has had many important roles, but he has assiduously avoided the limelight.



Sierra Club Deputy Executive Director
Bruce Hamilton

As Executive Directors have come and gone, Bruce has been the power behind the throne, the heart of the Sierra Club, central to virtually every one of the organization's major conservation and political efforts (and we wouldn't be surprised if he fills us in on how the Club will respond to the Republican-controlled Congress).

Donations of items for our silent auction and raffle are appreciated. In the past we have had offerings as diverse as glider trips, stays in cabins, guided hikes, baskets, paintings, photography, handmade items, books, and more. For delivery of your donated items see the contact information below.

Sponsorships are available. Your name will be in the printed program that everyone receives at the banquet, and you will be making an important contribution to sustaining our grassroots work. Find out about sponsorship levels and even more information at our website, parallexdesigngroup.com/sierraclub.

For more information about any of the above, email info@MLC.sierraclub.org or call 916-557-1100 x108.

Wonderful nature film comes to Auburn

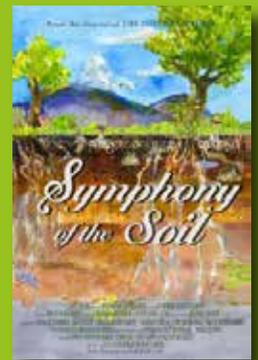
In case you missed the Sierra Club Placer Group's showing last year of the film "Symphony of the Soil," it will be shown again as part of the California Native Plant Society's Redbud Chapter lecture series on **Wednesday, April 22, at 7 p.m. at the Auburn Library.**

This wonderful film explores the elaborate relationships between soil, water, the atmosphere, plants and animals, as well as our human relationships with soil.

This is a film that should be seen by everyone!

This "Passionate About (Native) Plants Lecture Series" also will include a lecture at the library after the film with Master Gardeners and a special guest lecturer.

The Auburn Placer County Library is a 350 Nevada Street in Auburn.



2015 Placer Group Executive Committee selected

The elected six-member Sierra Club Placer Group Executive Committee has selected its officers for 2015:

Co-chairs Marilyn Jasper and Michael Garabedian, Vice chair Heidi Van Zant, Secretary Carol Love, and Treasurer Tony Rakocija. The other member of the Executive Committee is Tom Beattie.

Elections are held each December for the Executive Committee that oversees the SCPG, and officers are then chosen for the next calendar year.

2015 SCHEDULE

March 28-30

April 5-7

May 3-5

June 14-16, Bird Lovers Special!

July 19-21

August 23-25

September 27-29

October 25-27

Island Hopping in Channel Islands National Park

Join us for a 3-day, 3-island, live-aboard tour of the enchanting Channel Islands! Hike wild, windswept trails bordered with blazing wildflowers. Kayak rugged coastlines. Marvel at pristine waters teeming with frolicking seals and sea lions. Train your binoculars on unusual sea and land birds—and an occasional whale. Watch for the highly endangered island fox. Look for reminders of the Chumash people who lived on these islands for thousands of years. Or, just relax at sea. All cruises depart from Santa Barbara, California. The cost, \$615, includes an assigned bunk, all meals, snacks and beverages plus the services of a ranger/naturalist who will travel with us to help lead hikes, point out items of interest and give evening programs.

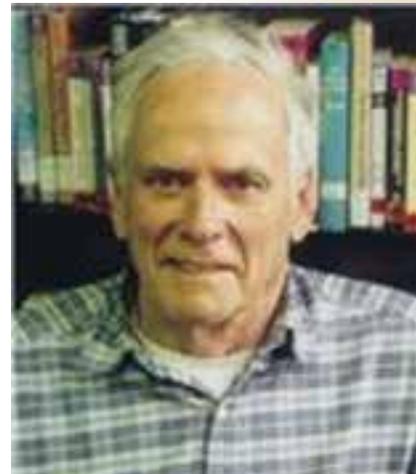
To reserve space, send a \$100 check written to Sierra Club, and mail to leader Joan Jones Holtz, 11826 The Wye Street, El Monte, CA 91732. For more information contact Joan (626) 443-0706 jholtzhn@aol.com



Tribute to Matt Bailey

Matthew Bailey, a founding and cherished member of the Sierra Club Placer Group, passed away in February after a lifetime of devotion to the North Fork of the American River and protecting Placer County's natural resources.

Matt, who was born in San Francisco in 1925, moved to Dutch Flat in 1958 with his wife, Betty, and their three daughters, Heidi, Gretchen and Lisa.



He was a tireless and treasured advocate for Placer County wildlife and conservation issues, serving as the second chair of the Sierra Club Placer Group, helping establish the Dutch Flat Water Company and serving for years on the Placer County Fish and Game Commission.

Among his many accomplishments was leading the drive to include a 38-mile stretch of the North Fork of the American River in the National Wild and Scenic River System in 1978 and helping defeat a proposed dam at Giant Gap.

"Matt was a mentor to me in the Sierra Club. He was such a modest, self-effacing guy, but if he saw nature being harmed or if he saw corruption, he was a force to be reckoned with," said Terry Davis of the Sierra Club, a longtime friend of Matt's.

"Because he was soft-spoken, when a cause moved him and he got mad, everybody paid attention," Terry said.

A celebration of life for Matt and his late wife of 62 years, Betty, will take place in May in their beloved Dutch Flat.

Watchdogs for wildlife

Wildlife needs your support and needs watchdogs on many fronts. After years of working on wildlife issues, sometimes legislation is passed that is beneficial to both wildlife and humans. However, every year requires vigilance as the opposition introduces bills to either roll back or destroy the gains made to protect wildlife.

In California, one example is the controversy over implementation of the lead ammunition ban (AB 711, passed in 2013), with phasing to be completed by July 1, 2019. Hunters are resisting the five-year phasing plan. Thus, AB 395 was introduced this year to repeal the ban.

Another bill that needs watching is AB 665 that will not allow local jurisdictions to set hunting or fishing regulations—even when they are more protective of wildlife than state regulations. We understand that local jurisdiction cannot loosen state laws, but more restrictive laws are usually allowed, especially when locals want to protect a particular habitat or species that may be dear to the community's heart. However, AB 665 will prohibit local jurisdiction to make more restrictive laws unless there is a health and safety issue.

There are not only many bills to watch but also many “spot” bills. These are meaningless bills that are created to make the submission deadline, but are later “amended” for whatever the legislator wants—when they should have done their homework and had their bills ready to meet the deadlines. One Placer County elected legislator introduced about four or five “spot” bills. These make it very difficult for constituents to follow, which may be partly why they do it.

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Controversy over county winery ordinance escalates

For the record: The Placer Group Sierra Club supports the preservation of agricultural lands. When winery and brewery operations are doing business as agricultural operations, complying with the ordinances, and codes are being enforced, there should be no problems.

However, when wineries and breweries press for unlimited events, “by right with no permits needed,” that creates real risks that de facto zoning conversions will occur—from residential agricultural and farmland zones to commercial entertainment event centers—and a subsequent loss of agricultural lands. At what point do the agricultural operations become subservient to the event operations?

After two years of intense work (2006 to 2008), the current winery ordinance was adopted. Sadly, only one winery bothered to comply with the ordinance.

Minimum requirements for starting a winery include a minimum of 1 acre of planted grapes, on 4.6 acres or more. Statistics show that these minimums cannot support a winery economically. Once established, the existing ordinance allows wineries a total of 6 promotional events plus 6 more days with a “Temporary Outdoor Event” permit.

With little-to-no code enforcement (see 2013 Grand Jury Report, “Winery Ordinance Enforcement Review”), many wineries have been holding unpermitted events—advertised on websites or in newspapers. Now, wineries are asking for an unacceptable loosening of the ordinance to make their illegal activities legal with little to no regard for the impacts.

One proposal is to allow unlimited events (aka “activities”) as a “matter of right without the necessity of a permit.” In addition to amplified noise, greater enforcement challenges, shared private road conflicts, there will be traffic impacts on narrow, winding back country roads—especially as breweries are established.

In many other California counties that adopted more flexible winery ordinances, current attempts to tighten the rules are proving difficult. For a good overview of the issue, the February 26, 2015, Placer County Planning Commission hearing can be watched on line at: www.placer.ca.gov/departments/communitydevelopment/planning/pchearings.

The Placer Calendar



April - June, 2015

*The calendar of the Placer Group Sierra Club and other local events of interest.
Starred (*) activities are sponsored and administered by the Sierra Club.*

For more events visit the Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter "outings" link at

<http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/outings>

May 2, Saturday*

Sierra Club Mother Lode Chapter Annual Awards Banquet

Location: The Dante Club, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95825. Social hour (no-host bar) at 5 p.m. – Dinner at 6 p.m. By reservation only, no tickets sold at the door. Cost per person: \$45, a portion of which helps sustain chapter programs
Reservations: <http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode>
Keynote Speaker: Bruce Hamilton, the Deputy Executive Director of the Sierra Club.

May 6, Wednesday*

Placer Group Member/ExCom meeting

7 p.m., Denny's at I-80 Foresthill exit. Let us know if you want to have the agendas emailed to you. Contact Marilyn for more info: marilyn.jasper@mlc.sierraclub.org or 916-652-7005.

May 9, Saturday

PLT hike

Placer Land Trust docent-led Mother's Day wildflower hike at Big Hill Preserves, starts at 9 a.m. For details, see <http://www.placerlandtrust.org/calendar-2/>

May 20, Wednesday*

Day Hike (1A) PG&E Trail (Senior Section)

This approximately 4-mile one-way hike, down the canyon, offers many unique views of both past and current quarrying operations along the Middle Fork American River. There are also several nice views up the Middle Fork

American River. Bring lunch, water and essentials. Meet at the Quarry Parking Lot, (State parking fee or pass required.) on the left off Hwy 49 just past the Hwy 49 bridge below Auburn at 9:30 a.m. We will shuttle from there to the upper trailhead starting point. No dogs. Rain cancels. Leader: Sheila Toner. 530- 886-0673.

May 27, Wednesday

Hike (1A) - Foresthill Divide Loop, Canyon Keepers hike

Hike the approximately 5-mile loop off the western section of the larger Foresthill Loop trail. Hike will cross Foresthill Road offering views on both sides of the divide. Bring lunch, water, \$ for parking fee or state parking pass and essentials. No dogs. Rain cancels. Meet in Auburn at Burger King, on Lincoln Way at Foresthill Exit off I-80 at 9:30 a.m. Leader: Sheila Toner 530-886-067.

June 3, Wednesday*

Placer Group Member/ExCom meeting

7 p.m., Denny's at I-80 Foresthill exit. Let us know if you want to have the agendas emailed to you. Contact Marilyn for more info: marilyn.jasper@mlc.sierraclub.org or 916-652-7005.

June 6, Saturday

Trails celebration

Placer Land Trust National Trails Day celebration. For details, see <http://www.placerlandtrust.org/calendar-2/>

June 13, Saturday

PLT hike

Placer Land Trust docent-led hike at Harvego Bear River Preserve. For details, see <http://www.placerlandtrust.org/calendar-2/>

WATCHDOGS... continued from page 5

Last, as an apex predator, wolves are magnificent, complex animals that are beneficial in keeping ecological balances. However, many ranchers and hunters seem to abhor the thought of wolf recovery. In areas where wolves are present, some ranchers have embraced many non-lethal wolf deterrent options that protect livestock successfully.

Where game is concerned, those who kill for trophies are concerned that game species killed by wolves could mean fewer tags will be issued to them—which could reduce the number that hunters can kill legally. However, wolves usually take out the older, weaker, or diseased animals, which in turn strengthens the species. Nature is capable of sustaining its wildlife populations at optimal, sustainable balances better than those who kill for sport or trophies.

Wolf delisting is a very hot topic—being pushed by those who want to kill both wolves and game animals. Two controversial bills are in Congress to leave delisting up to the states. For more information, visit websites of the California Fish and Game Commission, California Department of Fish and/or Wildlife, and US Fish and Wildlife websites for the latest information on wolf recovery and delisting. And then consider being a "Watchdog for Wolves."

We wish to thank these Placer Group sponsors



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FIELD NOTES

California Sister

Adelpha californica

Sisters are large, attractive butterflies which fly with alternating quick wingbeats and flat-winged glides. The California Sister is a strong flier found in oak woodlands, coursing about the tops of trees and descending to sip at mud, rotting fruit and occasionally at flowers. The California Sister flies spring to fall along most of northern and central California. Oaks are their larval foodplant. This butterfly is “brush-footed” which refers to their two short hairy legs which suggest a tiny bottlebrush.



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