



**Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties**

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**Yahi Winter 2014/2015 Outings and Events**

*Coordinated by Alan Mendoza*

<http://motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/outing.html>

**CA Statewide Ban on Single-use Plastic Bags**  
*By Grace Marvin, Yahi Conservation Chair*

We can celebrate a major victory for California with the passage Senate Bill 270 in September. We in Chico, home of internationally distributed Chico Bags, like to think we helped lead the way to Governor Brown's calling a statewide limit on plastic bags. After all, we had fought for such a limit in our fair city. As Jeremy B. White wrote in the Sacramento Bee (9/30/2014):

*Gov. Jerry Brown on Tuesday signed legislation phasing out the single-use plastic bags that grocery stores and other retailers use to package products at the checkout line. Brown's assent hands a sweeping victory to environmentalists and vindicates the scores of cities and counties that have already banned bags....Implementing the law will reverberate through multiple industries, shifting how retailers and manufacturers do business. Consumers will face a choice: purchase a reusable bag, or pay at least ten cents for a paper bag or a multi-use plastic carrier that meets a set of state durability standards. There is precedent in the more than 100 municipalities across the state that have already enacted similar prohibitions after concluding that the amount of waste generated by plastic bags outweighs the convenience. Advocates for a statewide ban said the experiment has unfolded on the local level with few hitches.. (The) lack of consternation reflects the fact that organizations representing retailers and grocery stores backed SB 270, calling a statewide standard preferable to the current quilt of varying ordinances.*



# Yahi Club News

## Christmas Potluck Friday, December 12, 2014

By Suzette Welch



FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2014 will be the date for our annual Christmas Potluck. Once again it is to be held at Valley Oaks Village 1950 Wild Oak Lane, Chico, Ca. Party starts at 6:00pm. Limited parking so please carpool. Bring your own beer and wine. There will be a \$5 for room rental and cleanup.

After dinner we are going to have a talk by David Nopel – “Hiking along the Oregon trail”. The annual Christmas Party is a good time to visit with old friends and meet some new people. So bring your favorite dish and plan to have a pleasant evening.

If you plan on attending, please notify Suzette Welch by e-mail [booksontape@rocketmail.com](mailto:booksontape@rocketmail.com) or phone 342-9214 stating number of people in your party and what you plan to bring.

## Yahi Group Fundraiser

By Davie Garcia

### Win a Gorgeous Mosaic Bird Bath, Stand Included.

Tickets on sale now until the drawing day of December 12th, at the Yahi Christmas Potluck.

Call 530-533-2357 to purchase tickets and get details or look for us at Sat Chico Farmers Market or check Yahi Group of the Sierra Club Facebook page.

Tickets \$1 - 1 ticket, \$5 - 6 tickets, \$10 - 15 tickets, Buy your tickets today!



## Sign Up for Yahi Group Action Alerts

By Grace Marvin

If you would like to be notified when a specific conservation issue needs some form of immediate local activism, please send a note to [g-marvin@comcast.net](mailto:g-marvin@comcast.net).

As Yahi Conservation Chair, Grace will maintain a list of people to contact by e-mail. News can reach members quickly and action can be coordinated efficiently.

## Yahi Fall/Winter Program Meetings

*By Suzette Welch*



On **Thursday January 8, 2015** the program meeting will explore the National Parks of South Africa and Tanzania. Our speaker Donna Elkins visited these parks and saw lots of animals, baobab trees and exotic birds. This should be a good preview for those of you who have longed to visit Africa.

The meetings will be held at Butte County Library, Chico Branch on the corner of East First Avenue and Sherman. Social time starts at 6:30 p.m. with the program starting at 7pm. The meeting will start with a social time at 6:30 with talk starting at 7 p.m. Non Sierra Club members are always welcome.

For more information call Suzette Welch 342-9214.

## Join Us On Facebook

*By Louise Casey, Yahi Webmaster*

You are invited to join the Yahi Facebook Group page initiated by the Yahi Group to highlight local environmental issues, events and outings. You may:

- Join and receive automatic “notifications” when anyone posts to the page. You will also be able to post to the page.
- Join in, but turn automatic “notifications” off. The link will be listed under GROUPS on your own Facebook page.
- Bookmark it and check periodically to see what is going on without joining.

You can find the page on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1494003344180107/>

## Yahi Excom Elections

*By Louise Casey, Yahi Webmaster*

All Yahi members receive this abbreviated version of our winter newsletter because it is time to vote for people to represent them on the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the local Yahi chapter. This year we have three candidates who are seeking re-election to the Yahi Board: Celeste Garcia, Laurel Heath and Suzette Welsh.

Please take a few minutes to participate in this important process. Your ballot has been inserted into the newsletter. Read the Candidates’ Statements, and show your support by folding, taping and mailing your ballot by December 31, 20124 .

# YAH! ExCom 2015 Candidates

*Each December Yahi members can vote for people to represent them on the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the local Yahi chapter. This year we have three candidates: Suzette Welch, Laurel Heath and Celeste Garcia. Ballots are included in your mailed YAH! newsletter. Be sure to vote and return yours by December 31, 2014.*

## **Suzette Welch**

I joined the Sierra Club when I first moved to Santa Barbara from Pennsylvania in about 1969. I was excited about joining an organization which was dedicated to preserving our natural resources

I got involved with the Yahi Group by helping with the Newsletter mailing. From there I moved on to the Yahi Group Board of directors. I have been on the board for 4 years. For the past two years I have been co-chair along with Laurel Heath. If elected I will continue to co-chair the Board. I have also been program chair for 2 years and will continue in that position

My husband and I used to enjoy backpacking until we got involved with white water canoeing and found we wanted to spend a lot of our free time in the summer on the water. Recently bicycling, an activity we have always enjoyed, has taken up more of our time.

I went to Penn State University and then Drexel University where I graduated with a Masters Degree in Library Science. I have worked in public libraries and in hospitals as a respiratory therapist. I have been working part time for the Butte County Library Chico Branch for the past 13 years.

I am very interested in preserving the natural resources of our country especially those of Northern California.

## **Laurel Heath**

I am running to be on the Ex-Com board for our Yahi Group for my third term. So far I have served on the board for two years as secretary and two years as co-chair.

This year I was also active in recruiting people to gather signatures to ban fracking here in Butte County and have run the Sierra Club tabling for the Endangered Species Faire for the last four years.

I also serve on the Chico Democratic Club and the Chico Democratic Action Club boards and was the office manager for Chico Democratic Headquarters for this November election.

I look forward to serving you on the board for another 2 years.

## **Celeste Garcia**

I'm a life time member of the Sierra Club as well as a current Board member. I've participated in several day excursions as well as service trips the Sierra Club has sponsored over the years.

I have also been involved in fundraising for our local Yahi group. I'm a strong advocate for the environment as is the Sierra Club.



# Yahi Conservation Report

By Grace Maria Marvin, Yahi Group Conservation Chair

## Water Issues

The drought with its horrendous short- and long-term effects, stimulated many (understandable!) questions about the club's neutral position on Proposition 1-- whose election outcome awaits us, as I write this column on 11/1/14. In the meantime, many club members and friends have been fighting transfers of water proposed by Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District and the US Bureau of Reclamation.

To many of us, it seems very clear that state water officials believe that water from our north-state water ecosystems, especially the Tuscan Aquifer, will be the major source of the water needed for the Twin Tunnels project --- strongly supported by our governor. Since not enough is known about the recharge capabilities of the aquifer, we in the Yahi Group are leery of having our groundwater pumped up to become surface water (part of *conjunctive use*), and then transferred to proposed new dams and tunnels. We do not want:

1. our land to sink (*subsidence*) due to such pumping,
2. our aquifer to potentially collapse and be incapable of holding much water, whenever it does rain and snow again, nor for
3. our region to become another San Joaquin Valley-- where there are water needs galore!

## Fracking

Burning still is another water issue, that is, fracking. Butte County's Frack-Free Butte County (FFBC) is a grassroots group that includes quite a few Sierra Club members, including yours truly. Because we are so dependent on a clean healthy aquifer for our economic and personal needs, we do not want to risk toxic fracking chemicals leaking into it. So, we developed our own ordinance to ban fracking and collected more than the requisite petition signatures to get it on the ballot; political pressure will keep it off the ballot until 2016. (Its history has been reported in other *Yahi News* columns).

However, after the FFBC made presentations to both Butte County's Water Commission and Board of Supervisors (BOS), the BOS in April, 2014 voted 4-1 to ban fracking in Butte County. Thus, they ordered the Planning Commission staff to develop a draft ordinance for such a ban and that draft finally was open to public comment on October 1, 2014. Members of FFBC were delighted with the ordinance, and we made our comments to the Planning Commission (PC) on 10/23/14.

Despite the excellent ordinance, our strong recommendations that the PC pass it on to the BOS, and our minor suggestions to improve it, the PC want it redrafted to no longer focus on fracking but only on disposal/ storage of fracking waste water. Undeafated, we in the FFBC would like the current draft to go to the BOS. Stay tuned for future installments (including efforts to pass our own ordinance).

## Hurray for the end of the resort!

These are the words of our main lawyer regarding the proposed 4-season Dyer Mountain project. We can declare a major victory for the Yahi Group, the Mother Lode Chapter, the Sierra Club and, especially, the beautiful Dyer Mountain area (near Lake Almanor in Lassen County).

At the end of October, the national office of the Sierra Club signed off on the lawsuit settlement that was achieved regarding Dyer Mountain. All the approvals for development have been rescinded, without which the very poorly planned development -- doomed by global warming -- would have destroyed a fantastically beautiful meadow with cultural (Maidu) and natural resources that we need to protect.

Again, we are enormously grateful to Lassen County resident, Steve Robinson, who fought so valiantly to preserve this beloved countryside. He garnered the support of our club as well as Mountain Meadows Conservancy and Sierra Watch, but he did not live to see this victory.

p.s. The Yahi Group is also supporting Butte Environmental Council's efforts to protect more trees from unnecessary, undesirable cutting down in Chico. We would like to see the city halt the cutting until a forest manager can help make well-studied tree decisions.

We also sought and received support from the larger club for our candidates for Congress and for Chico City Council. May all five Yahi counties see some signs of hope as a result of that election!



## Hiking Butte County— The Perfect Christmas Gift

*Hiking Butte County* is a wonderful field guide to hikes in and around Butte County. It was assembled by the outings leaders in the Yahi Group under the direction of Alan Mendoza. In it you will find descriptions, directions, distances and difficulty information for 35 hikes. This is the only book of its type for this area.

You can purchase it for \$11.95 at Trailside Adventures in Paradise and in Chico at Mountain Sports and Lyons Books. Or you can order one directly from Alan for \$10 plus shipping. Contact Alan Mendoza, 891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net).



**River Watcher:**

## **Standing on Two Feet**

*By Rex Burress*

The first question the doctor asked a senior who fell was, “Why did you fall?” In fact, doctors ask that question when any senior falls, checking out a cause that might indicate a physical condition. In this case, the lady was picking up litter and slipped on a slope injuring her wrist.

Standing on two feet is quite a feat of balancing weight on bone and muscle when walking or running. It would seem unlikely that a person could get it all together to walk the John Muir Trail or run a 26-mile marathon, yet mankind, of all the mammals, is the only species able to do that two-legged trick with regularity. Even an ape can only stand a few minutes before bouncing away on four limbs. The human foot with its tendons and joints is of utmost importance, and that balancing business involving the inner ear is a critical component.

We wonder how John Muir was able to saunter all over the Sierra mountains alone, and never break a bone. He did it with crude leather boots quite unlike today's marvelous foot savers. One of my nature walk group once fell and broke a leg in the Table Mountain flower fields, and even though those loose basaltic rocks are treacherous, you never see a deer or coyote make a misstep.

If having two legs was designed to elevate vision, the giraffe does it better with four. Just why we are made in the two-legged mode is not fully apparent, however, Tyrannosaurus Rex evidently moved on two legs. Other dinosaurs were so ponderous they could have used six legs, but six belongs to the insects, while spiders have eight, centipedes have 30, and none for the snakes! Whyyyy?

Birds are about the only other animal using two legs exclusively. From the speedy quail to the perching jay to the ponderous ostrich, bird legs are a help on the ground and in the trees, but are secondary to wings for locomotion, though the flightless emperor penguins wobble along on two legs for miles across the Antarctica ice to reach a nesting site!

With that all said about animals with two or more feet, consider an animal with ONE foot! Give up? Anatomists call the flat, moist, crawling appendage of Gastropods a “foot.” You know, like the snails whizzing along in your garden, riding with that one foot on a silver trail of slime. The gastropod is a mollusk of about 80,000 living species, and they all feature a foot.

Human feet are prone to being twisted when in a bind, like stepping on a sidewalk edge or tripping in a rocky hole. Such a misstep sometimes results in a sprained or broken ankle. That's serious business when you have only two legs, especially if you are a Sierra Club hiker in some distant mountain range. Cell phones don't always work far back in the wilderness and you can be in double trouble when grounded, especially if you are alone.

Even though John was able to survive solitary Sierra ventures, having hiking companions is a safer way to go. Hiker Sandy Becker of Oroville made her 33<sup>rd</sup> climb of Mt. Whitney at age 73, but she has had companions.

Admittedly, I have probed alone pretty deep into the hills, but seldom as far as a backpacking over-niter. My big venture was backpacking/camping at May Lake in Yosemite and climbing Mt. Hoffman. I wanted to climb the first mountain John Muir climbed, but I had my son as a valued hiking companion. I was awed that Muir had climbed it alone, and in 1868, he probably didn't see a single human being where there was not even a trail. It's lonely when you're alone out there.

A little 'careful' can make your Sierra Club sojourns a pleasure on two feet!



## San Gabriel Mountains National Monument -- The Wild Is Where You Find It

*From [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)*

In a wise move, President Obama recently designated about 350,000 acres of the San Gabriel Mountains, east of Los Angeles, as our country's newest national monument. It's a decision that came as the result of years of collaboration amongst a vibrant and diverse network of community leaders, a reflection of the many important roles the area's mountains and rivers play for local communities. One hundred and fifty years ago, Sierra Club founder John Muir explored the steep and picturesque peaks of the San Gabriel Mountains and marveled at their beauty.

Stretching from Santa Clarita to San Bernardino County, the San Gabriel Mountains provide outdoor recreation opportunities for more than 17 million Southern Californians. They include the Angeles National Forest, one of the busiest forests in the country with more than 3.5 million visitors every year. However, inadequate funding and services, such as the lack of trail signs, restrooms and trash cans, have marred the visitor experience. Permanent protection as a national monument aims to solve many of those problems and bring additional benefits to the community.

“We applaud President Obama for using his authority under the Antiquities Act to protect this beautiful place, and ensure responsible public access to the San Gabriels for all. This designation is more positive progress in the effort to make America's public lands better serve the diversity and interests of the American people,” **said Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune.**

The new San Gabriel Mountains National Monument affirms that protecting wild lands is still a popular endeavor for many Americans today. The wild is where you find it, whether that be an urban park or the vast wild spaces that make up much of our country's public lands. And no matter where it's found, the wild is worth protecting.



# 2015 Snow Goose Festival

[snowgoosefestival.org](http://snowgoosefestival.org)

**Wednesday-Sunday, January 21-25, 2015**

Birders and nature enthusiasts of all ages are invited to attend the 16th Annual Snow Goose Festival, one of the premier birding events in California. This action-packed 5-day event celebrates the millions of waterfowl migrating along the Pacific Flyway that call the Northern Sacramento Valley their home during the winter months. It also gives our local community an opportunity to rediscover the abundant treasures the North State has to offer all year round, from wholesome foods and delectable wines to inspirational artists and gifted musicians. And with the wide variety of engaging youth activities, there truly is something for everyone at the Snow Goose Festival!



Renowned naturalist and author, Scott Weidensaul, joins the Festival this year as our Keynote Speaker at the “Gathering of Wings” Banquet & Silent Auction on Saturday evening. Scott will explore the wonder and mechanics of bird migration and share his research, experiences, insights and the simple, effective ways we can preserve our feathered friends. Don’t miss this special event!

## Field Trips and Workshops

Our festival is located in an amazingly diverse area, with habitats that include rivers and wetlands, sweeping plains and grasslands, rolling foothills, sheltered canyons and mountain peaks. Attendees can choose from over 60 field trips and workshops that are sure to please a wide variety of interests and ability levels. In addition to numerous bird-watching field trips for waterfowl, raptors and songbirds, you might choose to take a guided tour of a nature preserve, visit a local vineyard, or hike the scenic Sutter Buttes in search of lofty views and resident wildlife.

Our workshops offer something for everyone! Learn about nature photography, how to sketch in nature, bird carving, how to record nature sounds, how to identify those backyard birds, and much more. Free nature activities are offered for children, as well as armchair adventures for the less hardy.

## Registration Begins in Early December

We highly recommend getting on our email list as soon as possible. Emails will go out to notify you when Registration opens, of various deadlines, and changes and additions to the program along the way. You can follow us on Facebook, too!

If you have any questions, you can reach us at [info@snowgoosefestival.org](mailto:info@snowgoosefestival.org), or by calling the Festival Office at 530-345-1865. Our website is [snowgoosefestival.org](http://snowgoosefestival.org).

## Check out our new Bird List!

See the list of 151 bird species spotted during our 2014 festival at

<http://snowgoosefestival.org/links/bird-list.html>



## Watch Out for this Ballot Measure Petition

*By Kathryn Phillips, Sierra Club California*

I suspect you heard some of the same well-meaning warnings as a child that I did: Don't talk to strangers. Don't run with scissors. Don't sign ballot measure petitions.

What? You didn't hear that last one? Well, I'm here to share it with you now because there's a new ballot measure petition circulating that you should not sign. It's designed to overturn one of the boldest environmental bills the California legislature has passed in a long time.

That legislation, Senate Bill 270, was signed into law in September and establishes the first statewide ban on distribution by grocery stores of the ubiquitous plastic grocery bag. The ban phases in over a couple of years and includes some special funding to make sure a single-use plastic bag manufacturing company in Southern California is able to transition to making other products.

The petition to place a referendum on the 2016 ballot to overturn the new law is pushed by the American Progressive Bag Alliance, a group that's part of the plastics industry trade association called SPI. Both groups are based in Washington, DC. Both groups represent plastic bag manufacturers based outside of California who are apparently offended by Californians' desire to live in a place that's not polluted with plastic bags.



Our friends at Californians Against Waste note that plastic bags create between \$37 million and \$107 million in litter cleanup costs in California's cities and counties. And that's just one of the easier costs to count. Plastic grocery bags have also been found trashing nearly every corner of the globe, and have been found in the stomachs of a variety of dead wildlife. Those costs are harder to put into dollar figures.

The senate bill establishing the plastic bag ban wasn't created on a whim. It was the result of many years of work and had been preceded by other ban bills that failed. The bill had also been preceded by adoption of local plastic bag bans in more than 100 California cities. And, significantly, the bill was supported by a diverse coalition that included the California Grocers Association and the California Retailers Association.

So now we have a situation that we've seen before in California. State lawmakers create policies that protect the environment and have broad support. Then out-of-state special interests move in and try to stop the policies from taking hold.

The plastics makers who want to kill the ban bill have just over two months left to collect more than 500,000 signatures to put the referendum to overturn the bag ban on the ballot in 2016. They will be hiring signature gatherers who are paid per signature to assertively obtain your John Hancock.

If you are approached by anyone in the next couple of months asking that you sign a petition to put a bag measure on the ballot, just say no. There are times when well-meaning warnings are worthwhile. This is one of them. Pass it on.



# YAH! Club Information

## Executive Committee

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## Newsletter Information

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For advertising, contact Celeste Garcia, 533-2357, celesterdh@mynvw.com.

For changes in mailing address or email address, contact Sierra Club Member Services: membership.services@sierraclub.org, or (415) 977-5500.

For submissions, comments, or inquiries, contact Louise Casey, 872-9159, [YAHInews@comcast.net](mailto:YAHInews@comcast.net). Please include name, phone number, and address with each submittal. Short, single-topic articles are preferred. Deadlines for proposed articles and letters to the editor: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1.

*Yahi News* reserves the right to edit all submissions for reasons of space, clarity and potential libel. The opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Sierra Club or the Yahi Group.

# The Last Word



Photo by Marie Scarrin

## GOING, GOING... GONE?

Sea turtles date back nearly 90 million years and are among the Earth's oldest surviving species. All 6 species of sea turtles are protected under the Endangered Species Act. Sierra Club has mounted a major effort to defend and preserve threatened habitats before their inhabitants are gone forever.

**Help protect our animal friends; because once they're gone, they're gone. Join Sierra Club now.**

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