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**Yahi Fall 2019 Outings and Events**  
*Coordinated by Alan Mendoza*

[www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/outings](http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/outings)

**Sierra Club’s Brand New Infill Housing Policy: Filling in the Basics**  
*Conservation Report: By Grace Maria Marvin, Yahi Group Conservation Chair*

After more than a year of efforts by dedicated Sierra Club members, the national Sierra club adopted an **Infill Policy this year** (not yet on the Club’s website). I was fortunate enough to attend a special workshop about it this July and learned about its implications for addressing climate change, social inequalities, and creating walkable neighborhoods. I want to share basic points about creating Infill housing and, then, ask you to consider why we need to remind our state chapter and local planning and government leaders that this policy should play a central role in many land use considerations.

I have summarized what I believe are key points, highlighting them as well. Italics are used for direct quotes.

From the Preamble: *Sierra Club’s mission in combination with growing threats to our environment require a renewed emphasis on cities and towns where people can live, work, and thrive while protecting and restoring our natural environment and fighting the causes and impacts of climate change. **Our resilience to the threat of climate change begins with our social, cultural and economic resilience, which depends upon inclusive and fair communities....***

Infill mean placing **dense, new neighborhood developments inside or next to existing small or large communities**. These neighborhoods should be **walkable, i.e., pedestrian friendly and visually appealing with the predominant transportation centering on paths for bicycles and efficient public transportation**. That would help address our need to cut down on car transportation and, thus the bad air and CO2 emissions that contribute to ever new excesses of heating, flooding, storms, and fires. The policy specifically calls for **convenient high-quality transit, something that must be prioritized in transportation expenditure plans in your region, California, and the country.**

The policy focuses on **affordable housing**, and it conforms with the Sierra Club's belief that housing is a human right. The Infill housing, therefore, requires 1- including housing that low-income people can afford and 2-actively addressing the history of social inequities which many low-income people have experienced. **Mixing residents of different ethnicities and social classes** can help combat many national and local zoning policies and racist attitudes - in general - that have treated and continue to treat so many people inequitably. Practically speaking, such a mixing of peoples - to also include the middle and upper classes- will help generate the kinds of food markets, cafes, and other businesses that can make such an Infill project economically viable. Noteworthy: there is a demand for such housing from members of all classes.

People of different social classes should be fully involved, together, in planning Infill projects. Their engagement means that they can 1-help determine other social services needed, e.g., schools, recreation, job training and employment centers, 2-help prevent actions and policies that are unsustainable, whether they involve transportation, finances, urban planning, climate, or the natural environment. *Thus, the Infill policy also calls for jobs with a **living wage** and a **balance between employment opportunities and housing** -- allowing, for example, people to live and work within or near the Infill project.*

One quote from the policy serves as a summary: ***Affirmative support for such communities is a natural corollary to the Sierra Club's opposition to sprawl, which promotes automobile dependence destroys natural ecosystems, separates people from each other, increases social inequity, reduces economic security and increases carbon emissions.***

The Infill Policy document was given to workshop attendees and should be online eventually. In the meantime, I highly recommend reading the Transportation Policy of the Sierra Club on the Club's website. It has specific information relating to different types of transportation, while specifying that infill projects are what we should pursue when considering new housing.

During the workshop, we had the opportunity to go see an Infill project getting built on an abandoned parking space next to the MacArthur Station on the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) rail route in Oakland. (For a description, see [hoodline.com/2017/03/city-council-approves-260-foot-tower-for-macarthur-transit-village](http://hoodline.com/2017/03/city-council-approves-260-foot-tower-for-macarthur-transit-village)). We discussed the degree to which it meets the goals of the new infill policy, and found that on balance it seemed to fit quite well - with ongoing improvements essential.

After the workshop I searched the web and found numerous examples of Infill projects throughout the country, as well as online stories about related environmental, capital, regulatory, demand, and land use issues. (See 2/14 U.S/EPA online: *Smart Growth and Economic Success: Investing in Infill Development*) *I found the following recognition especially valuable, although it was not included in the workshop:*

"The blog post announcing the "SMART Infill Awards for 2015," provides top ten lists for large cities (250k population and above), medium cities (100k-250k population), small cities (between 25k and 100k population), and towns (under 25k population).

Taking the top spots in each of those categories:

- Large City: San Antonio, Texas
- Medium City: Spokane, Washington
- Small City: Redondo Beach, California
- Town: Truckee, California

Since 2000, Truckee's score has increased more than any city of any size: from 25 to 85.” (2015 Top Cities from *Infill Score 1/5/16*).

If possible, let's check these infill projects out for ourselves, compare them with what is called for in our Club's new Infill Policy, and then do what we can to further Infill and prevent urban sprawl. Concerns about climate change, social inequality, thriving walkable neighborhoods, and preservation of our natural places must be paramount for us, and Infill projects strongly address each of these concerns.



## Wendy LeMaster MotherLode Award

*By Betty Volkler, Yahí ExCom*



In Sacramento on May 18 Wendy LeMaster of Chico/Paradise received an award from the MotherLode Chapter of the Sierra Club. Her award was for outstanding service in outreach to community and her work with community youth. Wendy is on the board of the Yahí Group Sierra Club and an outings leader. MotherLode Chapter covers 27 countries in Northern California.

## Yahí Outings Leader Jeanne Woodbury Retires

*By Alan Mendoza, Yahí Outings Leader*

The Yahí Group would like to acknowledge and thank Jeanne Woodbury for serving as an outings leader for nearly 20 years.

Jeanne has always been enthusiastic and attentive to all the many people who have come on her outings over the years. She led day hikes and multi-day camping trips for the Yahí Group all over Northern California, including Lassen National Park, Point Reyes, Grass Valley, the Sutter Buttes and Whiskytown Lake.

We sincerely thank her for the many hours she has put into planning trips and making all of her trips a fun and positive experience for all participants. She has been a true inspiration for other leaders and the many people who met her through Yahí Group outings. We wish her the best on her future adventures as she retires from leading outings.

## Upcoming Fundraiser for the Environmental Education Program at the Sierra Club Lodge in Donner Summit

By Jane Coleman, Executive Board member for the Yahi Group

We are still trying to get more local youth participation in this unique and wonderful program. Some of our north state schools and youth groups have not been able to participate due to lack of funds. Please help us add to the Clair Tappaan Environmental Education Program Scholarship Fund by joining us for a fun and special weekend.

From September 20th to September 22nd, 2019, there will be organized hikes, music, art auction, good food and good company at the Clair Tappaan Lodge at Donner Summit. On Saturday evening, Michael Brune, Sierra Club Executive Director will be our guest speaker.

<https://clairtappaanlodge.com/events>

Hope to see you there.

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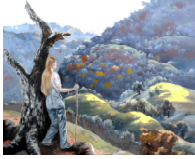
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**River Watcher:**

## **The Trees Must Fall?**

*By Rex Burress, The River Watcher*

Most folks realize that trees, like mankind and the rest of living things, don't live forever on this round-about earth, and fall in time.

Nevertheless, we like to see trees standing tall, transmitting their beauty and good functions to the life of this planet. That mostly reads, oxygen to enable us to breathe and food to eat. Yet we're seeing more and more of the green canopies falling in the wake of fires, floods, wind, and community whims...and others being sawed down for various reasons.

The thing about a tree is it starts from a seed, often a mere speck, as we see in the towering redwoods or an oak growing tall from an acorn, that if afflicted by a defect, can come crashing down. No one in a compact community wants a tree to fall as it can cause damage and loss. Yet, communities love their leafy shade and green beauty, and would rather have them around, begrudging the loss of a single branch.

Thus we saw the grievous wildfire destruction in Paradise damage the forest community beyond repair, and the tree take-down ensued, as with the clean-up of the destroyed houses. Nearly all the burnt trees—an estimated 350,000 mostly pine...air-givers that filtered the air of pollution...glorifiers of the landscape...comrade to the living fauna...destined to be hauled away—but to where? The situation has been given a new word -- “Log Decks!” Which means “piles of logs!”--with insufficient mills to saw the logs into lumber.

The harsh words; 'you could burn it,' isn't very feasible when the word fire is very distasteful to that burned out community, and we don't want anymore excess smoke.

Another major question: “How much forest replanting is practical?” And with what species of trees? Pines have proved their explosiveness, and any regrown vegetation will be fuel for fire if a spark and a high-wind ever come again.

My esteemed silver maple in my front yard died from the drought and I reluctantly had to have it removed for safety. It is a costly matter to have a tree removed--\$900 for that one. Birds liked that dead tree and nested in the cavities. But it's lose/lose with a dead city tree.

PG&E states that they plan to trim or remove some 375,000 damaged Paradise trees, in addition to roughly one million trees its crews remove annually! Folks, this is habitat removal—the very thing wildlife depends on—the very environmental factors for life on Earth...and air for man-kind...manipulated in order to supply electricity to cities and to cabins up the canyon, or to misplaced houses tucked away into flammable forests.



Of course, our Oroville Tree City USA is stuffed full of trees and plants by plant-loving people stuffed into small living spaces. Of course, people don't want limbs to fall on their car or property, hence the cry to prune the embracing tree limbs down central Montgomery Street, limbs that form the most embracing tunnel of shade and love in Oroville. All those limbs and leaves support a glorious display of autumnal color in the fall. If the leaves were gone the wail would be as great as when the wail went out to trim, or when the wail went out to save the gallant sycamores fronting Oroville Cemetery that were to be cut. PG&E again; removal for the safety of citizens. That was a major loss that should have been avoided by diverting the pipeline around the cemetery in order to save the healthy sycamores. Too late.

John Muir was a defender of trees who said, "The woods are full of dead and dying trees, yet needed for their beauty to complete the beauty of the living." The woods that Muir was speaking of was the woods of the wilderness, where an old tree can fall without any conflict with human communities, where roots can feed on the enriched soil and the decomposers can complete their job.

*"Going to the woods is going home."*--John Muir

The Nature Conservancy launched the "Plant a Billion Trees" in Brazil in 2008. Twenty nine million native trees have been planted on 28,000 acres in order to restore ravaged woodlands in the largest rain-forest on earth.



## Hiking Butte County

*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).



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For submissions, comments, or inquiries, contact Louise Casey, 872-9159, [Louise.Carol.Casey@gmail.com](mailto:Louise.Carol.Casey@gmail.com). 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.

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