



**SIERRA
CLUB**
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**Yahi
Group**



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

News Articles Programs Hikes and Outings Meetings Events

Bidwell Park in Peril

Have you ever stopped to wonder about the things that might change Bidwell Park? Or do we take this wonderful public resource for granted? The fact that this Park sits adjacent to a rapidly growing urban area should alert Sierra Club members and other nature lovers that the impacts and potential threats to the ecosystem of this magnificent place are as varied as they are tangible.

A closer look at what is currently impacting the health of the park will likely cause readers to think twice before assuming that "all is well" in our beloved Bidwell Park.

Threats from outside of Bidwell Park

As we all know, growth is coming to the Sacramento Valley. It need not come on the heels of economic forces, but rather the fact that approximately 1,000,000 new people arrive in California yearly makes this event inevitable. With this growth come impacts to every part of our lives such as increases in traffic and housing densities, diminishing air and water quality, as well as loss of natural habitats and open spaces. As with the use of many public facilities of the City, the use of Bidwell Park can realistically be expected to rise exponentially.

One of the most visible direct impacts to Bidwell Park that results from an expanding City of Chico is the development of private, formerly open space lands adjacent to Upper Park. Because the City has allowed development immediately adjacent to Upper Park, the City has significantly diminished the aesthetic value of the once majestic view. The build-out of the Canyon Oaks development (approved in 1989) prompted many park lovers to call the City of Chico to express their sincere disappointment. These calls led to both a review of the project's planning process which revealed a mistake in the view-shed assessment, and a discussion by the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission, who are now in the process of drafting a "Bidwell Park View-shed Overlay Zone" which they hope will influence planning decisions County-wide.

Many other impacts to the native ecosystem follow nearby development. Most notably, is the invasion of non-native species, which, next to development, is a primary cause of habitat loss of California's open spaces. Human



activity is most often the vector by which non-native species arrive, whether by foot, tire or by intentional planting. These invasive species displace native species, reducing the overall biodiversity of a given region.

Some municipalities across the nation have acknowledged the threat of native habitat loss and created encroachment ordinances that hold landowners responsible for their escaped plants. By allowing residents adjacent to Bidwell Park to landscape with noxious weeds such as ivy, brooms and olives, the City is encouraging the spread of these highly invasive non-native species into the park. This affects the habitat requirements of many native life forms that rely on our own special foothill environment. Once an invasive plant species gets a foothold, native plants that cannot compete are soon outnumbered. Without intervention, Upper Park will quickly become a haven for invasive plants, animals and invertebrates that could potentially completely alter the ecosystem. An example of an ecosystem now dominated by non-native species is Lower Park, which is surrounded by urban development.

Other impacts resulting from adjacent developments include fragmentation of contiguous habitat required by some wildlife species, such as nesting and foraging raptors and songbirds, as well as deer and other mammal species that migrate seasonally and/or diurnally (morning and evening) between higher elevation ridge and lower elevation canyon and creekside habitats.

An increase of "edge effect" is another negative consequence resulting from development adjacent to natural areas. This ecological phenomenon manifests in increased disturbances to wildlife species (particularly reclusive ones), increased potential for noxious species invasions (plant and animal), increased chance of accidental wildfires (95% of wildfires in California foothills and valleys are human caused), increased effects of wind, water, and human-borne "spillover" pollution (to name a few), in what is otherwise supposed to be natural undeveloped habitat (Upper Park).

In short, the more fragmentation and edge effect a natural system experiences, the more difficult it becomes to properly manage the system. The more vulnerable and unmanageable this particular natural system becomes, the less it is recognizable as our beloved Upper Park.

With increased park use comes more pressure on both facilities and natural resources. While many of us might assume that the City of Chico is prepared and able to protect the Bidwell Park experience for generations to come, a look at the City's track record gives reason for pause.

Threats from 'within' Bidwell Park

Many large open spaces that are next to large urban areas such as Griffith Park in Los Angeles or Mt. Rubidoux in Riverside County have felt the ravages of intense and uncontrolled public use. In these cases, millions of dollars have been spent trying to recapture the habitat values and aesthetic integrity that was compromised by years of neglect and abuse. Because of similarly poor planning and neglect, Bidwell Park is in jeopardy of losing its natural beauty and is threatened by ecological degradation.

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Yahi Club Notes

Wood, fire, oil, and water don't mix! But this report will include all of them. First, however, special thanks go to:

1-**Patricia Puterbaugh** and **Jim Brobeck** -- who saw to it that certain forest and water policies were adopted to prevent excessive logging and undesirable water transfers.

2-**Joanne Gerson** -- who keeps our financial books in order and even added to them with a very successful **Garden Tour in Butte Creek Canyon**. She was also among several volunteers who helped with the **Centennial picnic in Bidwell Park**, where **Dr. Wes Dempsey's** documents about the building of the Yahi trail made for some very interesting history. Thanks to him and to **all the volunteers** at the Centennial or working elsewhere!

Some of the many upcoming events of note to Yahi are the following:

On Wednesday, **September 7, October 5, and**

About This Newsletter

SIERRA CLUB YAH! GROUP NEWSLETTER is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club, Post Office Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 or 5590 Feather River Place, Paradise, CA 95969, Attn: Louise Casey.

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The newsletter is mailed free to all current members of the Sierra Club residing in the Yahi Group area. It is also available, without charge, at selected public places and merchants in the Yahi Group area.

For submissions, comments and inquiries, please write to Sierra Club, Post Office Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 or contact the content editor Susan Sears at 530-532-0149 or the copy editor Louise Casey at 530-872-9159.

For advertising in the Newsletter, please call John Wood (530-899-8607). For changes in membership address (which also affects the address for receiving the newsletter by mail) please write to Sierra Club Member Services, Post Office Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328-2968; sending a mailing label for the old address will speed the process.

Submission Guidelines:

Please include name, phone, 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. A one week extension is available if the submission is sent by e-mail and advance advisory has been provided that the article is forthcoming. Submissions will be returned if specifically requested and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

The right is reserved 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.

November 2, the monthly meetings of the Yahi Executive committee will be held. If you are interested in attending, please let **Gene Anna McMillan** or me know a week ahead of time, if possible. As Vice Chair, she will be running the club (very well, thank you) when I'm gone, September 14 to October 15.

On Thursday, **September 8**, the quarterly program meeting will be in **Paradise**. **Lynn Ott** and **Gene Anna McMillan**, from our Executive Committee, are taking charge of this educational program about gardening -- with the guest speaker emphasizing environmental aspects, such as sustainable gardening. Please see the details in the calendar and contact the two officers if you have questions.

September 8 is, also, the last meeting of the **Bidwell Park Management Update** meeting; the public is welcome to attend. Please voice your concerns and interests if you can attend. It will be from 6-9 pm. in Chico City Council Chambers. (I have been participating regularly but cannot be there September 8; **Suellen Rowilson** was the Yahi representative in June.)

September 8-11 is the national conference of the club in S. F.'s Moscone Center. Your fearless leader will be the delegate from the Yahi Group to the **Sierra Summit 2005**. I will take along ideas I received from Yahi members as well as from the subsequent Mother Lode meeting held in Sacramento in preparation for this conference. A major goal of the Summit is *to establish directions for the Sierra Club's efforts in the coming years*. You can register for it at www.sierrasummit2005.org. (I know of several Yahi who plan to attend!)

All summer long, we have had terrific outings. These lovely trips out in nature sometimes lead members to become environmental activists; thus, we have been participating in a variety of meetings, speaking up and writing letters to *protect open space, ensure wise use of water, prevent unnecessary fires, encourage alternative transportation, implement new conservation policies, and intervene -- as needed -- to see that existing policies are properly followed*. Our relationship with nature is enhanced when we realize we are part of nature's insurance plan!

We also have been joining the efforts of several other environmental groups, when they support our goals. One example: the Yahi Group now has membership in the **Sierra Nevada Alliance** (www.sierranevadaalliance.org). Most of the counties covered by the Yahi Group are a part of the 25 million acres within the new (as of 2004) **Sierra Nevada Conservancy**. At the annual meetings of the SNA, one learns about much affecting us, e.g., **the Sierras provide 65% of California's water, yet more than a third of the Sierra snow pack is likely to disappear** over the next 50 years as temperatures keep rising. That point is often neglected in land and water plans made both by public and private entities. **If people do not join together to protect the Sierra Nevada's 24 major watersheds, the effect on our**

Sierra Club Contacts in the Yahi Group Area

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She will relay inquiries or comments to the appropriate person.

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Yahi Club Notes *(con't from p. 2)*

Yahi counties' economies and population will be staggering. (23 of the 24 watersheds already have major problems with pollution or decreasing fish).

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Dozens of other organizations, including the Mother Lode Chapter and several Sierra Club groups, are a part of this Alliance. One of the many of interest to Yahi is the **Mountain Meadow Conservancy**, headed by **Steve Robinson**. Several Yahi have expressed concern about the 4-seasons resort that the Dyer Mountain Associates plan to build in **Westwood**, in southwestern Lassen County. Steve has been very active in proposing that any project address the diverse ecology of the region. To learn more about the Conservancy and its impact on Westwood/ Lassen County, contact Steve at 530-256-3982, or at www.mtmeadows.org.

(I also strongly recommend attending the exciting, yearly Sierra Nevada Alliance conference. Our governor even had a cabinet secretary there, formerly head of California's EPA.)

And, now, the **oil part of this report**, with news from the national office. For environmental news updates such as the following, contact **Sierra Club Insider** about a subscription. Their email address is insider@sierraclub.org

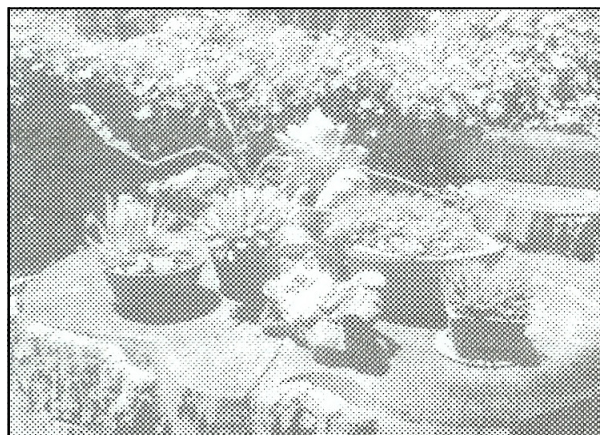
"This Isn't Democracy -- It's a Mugging." Congress waited until the week before its August recess to do its worst damage: passing an energy bill that lavishes billions of dollars in subsidies upon the oil, gas, nuclear, and coal industries -- more than even President Bush asked for. It also instructs the Department of the Interior to prepare to lease the entire coastline of the United States for oil and gas drilling. As Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope wrote in his blog: ["This isn't democracy -- it's a mugging."](#)

Fortunately, drilling the Arctic Refuge was not included, but a critical vote on that issue is coming in September. Because Bush administration allies in Congress snuck projected revenues from Arctic drilling into the \$2.5-trillion budget reconciliation bill, the Arctic Refuge may not get a vote on its own merits. This puts some members of Congress in a terrible bind. For example, Maine's two senators, Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, consider themselves champions of the Arctic and have voted several times against drilling for oil there. But because the budget bill also includes provisions supporting Maine's struggling shipbuilding industry, Collins and Snowe could end

Yahi Executive

Yahi Group Executive Committee meetings are usually held the first Wednesday of every month from 7PM to 9PM. Please contact Grace Marvin: 530-893-1994 or GMRADM@aol.com regarding the specific place and time if you would like to attend or if you have an item you would like placed on the agenda.

Yahi 2005 Garden Tour



Photograph by Louise Casey

The third annual garden tour was a roaring success. We made \$1505 dollars which equated to 262 people attending.

Of course first thank yous go to the garden owners who opened their yards to all these strangers. Hosts at garden sites: Karen Kern, Annette Carely, Lynn Ott, O.J. & Gene Anna McMillan, Linda Stukey, and Barbara Todd.

These are the Sierra Club volunteers that made it all happen:

- Steve Green-using his satellite map, used as a Friend of Bidwell park, and years of experience, he created the tickets and whipped the booklet into usable form.
- Teresa Marcus-wrote beautiful descriptions of three of the gardens in what one owner called "John Muir prose."
- Barbara Todd-publicity and keeping my head on straight.
- Goodie Sweatt and Gene Anna McMillan for ticket sales at the "canyon" 49er Fair and pancake breakfast. A fun event plan to attend next year.

Thanks to Alan Mendoza for use of walkie talkie to direct traffic and to Louise Casey for creating posters and signs.

Finally the businesses and nurseries that sold tickets. Little Red Hen Nursery sold over 40 tickets and wants 100 to start with next year.

We have two wonderful yards lined up in Butte Creek Canyon for next year so it should be bigger and better than ever. Think about volunteering. It really is too big a job, even with the above

Congratulations to Our 25- and 50- Year Members

The following Yahi Group members have been Sierra Club members for 25 years: **Charles Goodart** of Quincy; **Eric Lauha** of Corning; **Susan Hughes**, **Peter Magnussen**, **L. Moore**, **Mari Moore**, **Doug Shields**, **Linda Stukey**, and **Michael Urbani** of Chico. Also, **Gerda Lydon** of Chico has been a member for 50 years. Congratulations to all of us!

Do Something!

According to an article in the April 21st edition of the **Chico News and Review**, 25,000 acres in northern Butte County have been purchased by a developer with the intention of building some 20,000 homes. There are also said to be plans for mitigation banking on this land, which includes recharge areas for the Tuscan Aquifer, which is our primary water supply.

These three issues - development, mitigation, and water supply - are so important that great care and intelligent planning must be exercised to prevent mistakes which may not be correctable.

Primarily, it's the county that is in control of these issues. The last Butte County Grand Jury reported that there has possibly been coercion of County Planners to favor development projects which perhaps should not have been approved. With the issues being considered for these 25,000 acres being so important, we cannot afford poor land use decisions.

Do what you can. It's very important that you keep yourself informed about what's going on regarding these issues so you can take any actions you see fit before it's too late. We all need to add our two bits' worth to help guide development and/or any changes to land use and zoning in order to protect our environment as much as possible.

Pick up the phone and make a call to your County Supervisor to at least show you care. Write a letter to the editor of your newspaper expressing your opinion. Talk to your neighbors. Your water, the area you enjoy for recreation, the animals that presently use these areas, the peace and quiet you now enjoy - all may be at risk.

Presently, the Butte County General Plan and Zoning Regulations are meant to guide and limit how land can be used and built upon. Most of us accepted the existing zoning when we made our decision about where we wanted to live and, in many cases, chose our livelihood and/or recreation based on land use. There seems to be considerable profit-based pressure building to change the General Plan by loosening land use restrictions. As the General Plan is presently in the process of being updated, you can have an impact only if you take some action. Show you

Conservation

Bidwell Park in Peril ((continued from p. 1))

A clear example of this is the City of Chico's seeming unwillingness to address the many unauthorized and rapidly eroding 'bootleg' trails that zigzag across the thinly soiled slopes of Upper Park. Even site-specific erosion along the

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officially designated trails are victims of neglect, as the under-funded maintenance staff struggles to address the trail system's poor design and poor condition. Poorly designed and/or un-maintained trails can, and in many cases have, led to massive loss of soil, which washes down the trails and increases the sediment loads in tributaries, negatively affecting aquatic wildlife in Big Chico Creek. In some areas, a complete loss of topsoil has exposed the bedrock, a substrate unable to support plant growth. In most cases, this in turn leads to more accelerated soil erosion. In some areas of Upper Park, massive erosion like this and/or the presence of multiple, duplicitous trails have significantly affected the natural beauty of the area. Despite some discussion of this in the 1990 version, the new update of the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan provides an opportunity for the City of Chico to demonstrate a much better understanding of this serious threat to the park's natural resources and trail system.

Although the City is unable to provide for basic and adequate park maintenance needs, it continues with proposals for more developments in Upper Bidwell Park, including miles of new trails across unstudied land, two 18-hole disc golf courses, and a Horseshoe Lake multi-million dollar extreme makeover.

By building new recreational facilities in Upper Park, the City is diminishing the aesthetic setting, and the quality and health of a very complex ecosystem. These new recreational facilities will increase and concentrate impacts on natural and cultural resources, fragment diverse natural habitats, increase the spread of invasive species, reduce the quality of wildlife habitat and increase the threat of catastrophic wildfires, not to mention draw funding away from much needed maintenance.

The more facilities the City allows in Upper Park, the less wild it becomes, thereby reducing the quality of the natural experience – something the urban dwellers of Chico are lucky to have at their back doorstep.

Trails, roads and other existing park

facilities deserve the attention they require before Upper Park is turned into a hodge-podge of unsightly scars reminiscent of the urban jungle, rather than a cared for and well-loved magnificent northern California canyon.

What can be done to help Bidwell Park?

Every municipal park system faces similar challenges when it comes to funding and caring for their parks. Bidwell Park is no different in that respect. Whether you're an average Joe or Joanna or you sit on the Chico City Council, Bidwell Park needs your help.

Here is a list of suggestions that can make a difference:

- **Learn more about history and natural resources of this wonderful place:** The more you know, the more you'll appreciate the park, and the more you can share with others. Go to the Chico Creek Nature Center at 1968 E. 8th Street (naturecenter@chico.com) or check out one of the many fun and informative events listed on the web site <http://www.FriendsofBidwellPark.org>.

- **Volunteer.** Every city park system would lie dead in the water if it were not for the help of volunteers. Even though Bidwell Park enjoys the dedication of several individuals and organizations, there remains so much more to do, from invasive plant removal and streamside restoration to trail maintenance and more! Didn't anyone ever tell you that volunteering is both fun and rewarding? Contact the City of Chico Parks Department at <http://www.chico.ca.us> for a list of volunteer organizations or go to <http://www.FriendsofBidwellPark.org> for more information.

- **Learn more about park planning and management.** As a public resource, Bidwell Park deserves the attention of a dedicated citizenry. If you have an appetite for watching the political and social machinery and you love the park as most do, the public process can definitely use you.

- **Write a letter to City Hall or attend public meetings.** Like all good democracies, public participation is essential and you need to let the decision makers know how you feel. If you don't, you won't have reason to grumble later if things don't go as

"Every good thing, great and small, needs defense." -John Muir

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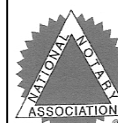
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Lake Merritt in Perspective

Perched in my home up on the Feather River, I think back to the time I worked at Oakland, CA's, Rotary Nature Center Lake Merritt Wildlife Refuge. Those regular connections with the unique lake in the middle of a city occurred from 1961 to 1993, and then I retired from the job of watching the refuge birds to watching the ornithological wonders of the river at Oroville, CA, "just upstream from Lake Merritt!"

As can be expected, a "defender" of nature soon becomes involved in local conservation issues and speaking up for imperiled wildlife, and I have been busy: "Think globally, act locally."

It was a valid occupation for a devotee of nature to be connected to a group dedicated to the advancement of nature interpretation at Lake Merritt, right there in the city where the human population badly needs the stimulus of "things wild and wonderful." I was privileged to work with Naturalist Paul Covell and a host of other fine employees, and it is equally heartening to know that Naturalist Stephanie Benavidez, Brian, Robert, and other staff have, and are, carrying on the important program of acquainting people with nature, as well as maintaining a historical refuge and its wildlife.

As important as it is to forge ahead with innovative ideas about nature presentation and keeping pace with modern trends, any worthy organization is built upon its past, and that history should not be neglected. Indeed, marvelous creative programs can be interwoven with the present and the past. It was Aldo Leopold who said, "A sense of history should be the most precious gift of science and of the arts."

Lake Merritt Wildlife Refuge's history began back in 1870, by way of review, the first wildlife refuge in the country, established as a state sanctuary for the masses of ducks that spent the winter on the shores of the altered salt water estuary. Oakland was growing around the lake, and local Dr. Samuel Merritt was prominent in building the dam that allowed a more constant source of water for the homes being constructed along the shores. Thus began an unusual habitat, partly salt water and partly fresh, with a myriad of adaptable organisms intertwined and people nearby.

The City of Oakland began supplying grain for a daily 3:30 feeding program in 1917, an effort to bring birds in for close viewing that became a

popular attraction. The concentration of migratory winter waterfowl also attracted Paul Covell in the early 1940's, and he aspired to deliver public lectures about the birds on weekends. Another innovator, Superintendent of Oakland Parks, William Penn Mott, Jr., caught hold of Paul's volunteer enthusiasm, and hired him as a Ranger/Naturalist in 1948, and soon interpreting birds became a full-time job. The Naturalist Program was born, and by 1953 the Rotary Nature Center was built to establish a home base for the refuge staff.

Islands were built, duck banding established, connections to other parks were made, a geodesic dome was built, crippled geese were installed, a nature-zoo for injured animals was developed, and by 1960 one of the finest Nature Centers in the country had risen. Paul continued on as supervising naturalist until he retired in 1975, to be followed by Richard Kaufmann and others, unto the present operating crew. These are bits of history that should be simmering in the background of future developments. The importance of maintaining the active migratory sanctuary and nature center cannot be stressed enough. Its calming value in the midst of a tumultuous world should be of utmost importance in planning for the future. Green trees, grass, wild birds, open space, nesting egrets, everlasting water, and nature interpretation are precious elements for those who in the love of nature hold communion with her visible forms...and also for common citizens.

How disturbing, then, for me to hear hints that there were/are those with thoughts of reducing the Canada Goose population by eliminating the traditional 3:30 feeding program. For some, the successful saga of the six original geese in 1953 that have evolved into a healthy tribe of nearly 2,000 magnificent birds with full flying powers, is a precious asset in the clamor of the city. For some, it is well worth the defecation mess they leave on the lawns and walks, but some fussy souls are offended, and would disperse those gallant representatives of their species. Who would deny the beauty of a flock of honking geese threading their way over the city, drifting down to alight on the lake or other park places in the Bay Area, and mingle with mankind? How wonderful that wild creatures have merged with the metropolis to share bits of open space. It is an indescribable privilege to see the geese, as well as the wild migratory waterfowl that return by the thousands every winter.

For those who love open space and the wildlife that live there, there is a constant need to be vigilant because there are others who look at space in terms of immediate monetary gain. Defenders of wildlife and open space are looked upon as obstacles by some industrial/economic-minded people, and wildlife habitat has constantly shrunk in recent years.

There is a need to consider some places as hallowed ground, full of history and healthful recreation, where politicians cannot manipulate visible commodities for economical gains. Some places are sacred by the very nature of the age-old status of the land and water and wildlife. May

Proposed Foothill Forest Reserve in Concow

In the watershed of the Concow Lake (reservoir) there is a treasure chest in the forest: a U.S. Forest Service parcel which has withstood the uses and abuses of humans throughout the years. It stands as an example of how forests in this area may have looked before being logged, mined and developed.

A group of concerned citizens hope to be able to set this land aside as a refuge and specimen of old-growth timber in this zone. In the parcel there is a great variety of habitats, and we invite you to come hike with us and discover this wonderful area. It includes riparian habitat filled with woodwardia fern, waterfalls, and grinding stones from the original inhabitants, the Concow Maidu tribal people.

There are some magnificent trees, some of which are among the largest remaining individuals in the county. Fir, Pine, Maple and other species call this area their home. It also includes some steep areas with decomposed granite and serpentine, and so contains quite a variety of plants and animals due to the different vegetation and soil types within this parcel.

We are conducting a campaign to request the Forest Service preserve this area and not designate it as logging land. It is in the perfect location to act as a buffer zone between a residential use area and a commercial timber harvesting zone.

Please join us in hiking through this unusual area, and you will learn why this place deserves to be protected for future generations of humans (as well as animals and plants). This land "belongs" to the Lassen National Forest (headquartered in Susanville) and is administered by Plumas National Forest, out of Oroville. We are working to get it recognized as a "special interest area," a Forest Service designation.

The hike is scheduled for Saturday, September 24. Meet at the Chico Park and Ride at 8:00 A.M. and also at the Spring Valley School parking lot at 8:45. At 9:15, we can rendezvous at the paved parking lot on the shores of Lake Concow to see the osprey nest near there, and at 9:45 we can park at the trailhead and hike into the forest.

There is a beautiful, rustic campground in the area for those of you who might like to extend your stay in the area. It is on the shores of Lake Concow and one of the most peaceful spots in Butte County. There is a pond here, and the hikers are welcome to take a dip.

Please go to this Forest and Watershed News web page to see our newsletter, The Ring Tailed Cat, http://groups.yahoo.com/group/F_A_W_N (Yahoo password required - please join).

Also, to help us establish this rare habitat as a specimen forest sanctuary for future generations,



Yahi Fall 2005 Program Meeting

By Wendy Woods

A representative from Mendon's Nursery will be the guest speaker during a meeting of the Yahi Group, September 8. Valerie Spencer will discuss landscaping with native plants and water conservation.

The meeting will take place at Oak Knoll Senior Living (Activity Room) at 1007 Buschmann Road in Paradise and starts at 7.00 p.m. The meeting is open to the public and refreshments will be served

On-Going: Tuesday Power Walks. (grade 2, class A). Meet at Chico Park & Ride each Tuesday evening at 6:30PM for a 1½ hour brisk walk along the creek. Wear tennies/walking shoes and bring water and a flashlight. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

On-Going: Tuesday Volleyball. Join Yahi Group members and friends for friendly, co-ed volleyball every Tuesday night at 7PM at the Chapman Center (corner of E. 16th Street and B Street in Chico). Cost: \$4 per night. Free lessons included. For more information call Karen, 899-8305 or Betty, 345-7205.

Cross-Country/Downhill Ski List: Join our more than 60 cross-country ski enthusiasts this winter as we explore the backcountry of Butte Meadows and Lassen Park and enjoy the groomed trails of the Mt. Shasta and Royal Gorge. Downhill skiing also available. All ability levels welcome. If you'd like to be added to (or updated to) our cross-country ski list, please contact Jeanne, 899-9980.

September

Wednesday, September 7—Yahi Group Executive Committee meeting 7PM to 9PM. Contact Grace Marvin: 530-893-1994 or GMRADM@aol.com for directions.

Thursday, September 8 - Quarterly Yahi program meeting will be in Paradise. Lynn Ott and Gene Anna McMillan will host an educational program about gardening -- with guest speaker Valerie Spencer emphasizing environmental aspects, such as sustainable gardening. Oak Knoll Senior Living (Activity Room) at 1007 Buschmann Road in Paradise, 7:00PM. For more info, call Lynn 530-877-1671 or Gene Anna 530-345-7003.

Saturday, September 10 - Lassen Park Summit Lakes Shuttle Hike (grade 2, class A). Join us on this beautiful 7.1 mile descending shuttle hike. We will visit Terrace, Shadow, and Cliff lakes and then hike to Summit Lake where we'll rest, relax and enjoy a refreshing swim. This portion of the hike is 3.9 miles. For those who wish to hike further, we will hike an extra 3.2 miles (round-trip) to Paradise Meadows while others rest at Terrace Lake. For those who hike to Paradise Meadows, the hike will be a total of 7.1 miles. Bring lunch, snacks, comfortable hiking boots, water, and \$ for carpool. Meet at Chico Park and Ride at 8AM. Leader: Lynn 864-7826 or lynngarden@yahoo.com; Asst. Leader: Charlie: 895-3045.

Saturday, September 17 - Full Moon Hike in Upper Bidwell Park (grade 2, class A). Come watch the sunset and the moonrise as we hike the Upper Rim Trail. Snake down to the canyon and

return via the lovely Yahi trail along the creek. This is a moderate 8-mile hike with a 750 foot elevation gain early on. Bring dinner, water and flashlight. Meet at Horseshoe Lake near the old rifle range at 6:15PM. Return time will be around 10PM. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980. Asst. leader John H. 872-8258.

Sunday, September 18 - Butt Mountain/Carter Meadow Hike (grade 2, class B). A round-trip hike of 9 miles mostly on the PCT to reach the 7900' summit of Butt Mountain. Along the way we'll have tremendous views to the west and south of Lake Almanor. At the top we'll get a 360 degree view, including Lassen Peak. Bring sunscreen, lunch, plenty of water and \$ for drivers. About a 90-100 mile round-trip drive. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Saturday, September 24 - Foothill Forest Preserve Hike in Concow (grade 1, class A,

Educational). Come see the proposed forest preserve in Concow (see article on page 9 in this newsletter). Bring lunch, water and comfortable shoes with good tread. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or Spring Valley School at 8:45AM (Hwy 70 and Pentz Rd.). At 9:15AM we will rendezvous at the paved parking lot on the shores of Lake Concow to see the osprey nest and then go to the trailhead to hike into the forest. There is a beautiful, rustic campground on the shores of Lake Concow for those would like to extend their stay. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

October

Saturday, October 1 - Deer Creek Hike (Grade 2, Class A) Take a 6-7 mile walk through the reds, yellows and greens of fall as we follow the rush of Deer Creek. We'll begin at the trailhead just off of Highway 32. Return at approximately 3-4 PM; about an 80-mile round-trip drive. Bring lunch, water, sturdy hiking boots and \$ for carpool. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park and Ride at 9AM. Leader: Lynn: 864-7826 or lynngarden@yahoo.com; Asst. Leader: Charlie, 895-3045.

Wednesday, October 5—Yahi Group Executive

Yahi Group's General Outing Information

The following information is intended for people who have decided to take or are contemplating an outing that has been organized by the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club. The information is based on the Group's established policy (available from the web site or from the Outings Committee Chair); it will be supplemented by trip specific information and by the outing leader.

Updates: Updated outings information can be found on our web site at www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/

Transportation: There is an active interest in car pooling, but leaders cannot organize car pools to Sierra Club outings. All trips begin and end at the trailhead, which is not necessarily the initial meeting place. Any car pool arrangements are private agreements between the driver and the passengers.

Riders are expected, as a matter of courtesy, to reimburse drivers to cover the transportation expenses of the trip. A customary amount is 6 cents per mile per passenger depending on the vehicle, the number of passengers, and the road conditions. This is only a guideline.

Membership in Sierra Club not required: Outings are open to the general public unless otherwise indicated. If you enjoy the outings, it is hoped that you will see the value of joining; application information is available in this newsletter or on the web site.

Fees and costs: Occasionally an outing announcement will indicate a cost. Unless the announcement specifically indicates that outing is a fund raiser, the cost indicated is only that which has been estimated to cover trip expenses. **Non-Sierra Club members are asked to make a \$2 donation if attending an outing to help defray our costs for outings**

Sign-up: Most activities do not require advance sign-up; it is merely necessary to show up at the designated time and place. For those outings where advance sign-up is requested, a call to the leader will initiate the procedure. If fees or deposits are needed, the sign-up is not considered complete until those have been paid. Deposits may not be refundable; please inquire at time of making payment.

Outing Waivers: All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, please go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

All activities: These are group outings. It is important that participants follow the instructions of the outing leader. Please be sure you are in adequate physical condition to undertake the activity you choose (see classifications for guidance). If you are unsure of the difficulty of the trip or of your ability, check with the leader before deciding to go. The outing leader may decide to disallow the participation of an outing applicant if the leader concludes that the applicant's reduced preparation or capability may negatively affect the outing for the rest of the group.

Hiking and Day Activities: Bring lunch, water, and essentials, as well as reimbursement money for your driver. Wear boots or sturdy shoes.

Dos and Don'ts: Plan to carry out anything you carry in. Pets are not allowed unless the trip specifically indicates "pets permitted". No firearms. No electronic music devices.

Young people: Please consult with the leader for a decision as to whether the outing is appropriate for a youth, whether accompanied by an adult or not. Any person under 18 not accompanied by a parent must have a written parental authorization to give to the outing leader. Forms may be obtained in advance from the outing leader or from the Outings Committee Chair at 891-8789. The completed form is required to provide for emergency medical care if needed.

Errors in the schedule: If there is incorrect information in an outings announcement, please see the web site at www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/ or call Skip Augur at 894-1366 to obtain a correction.

Suggestions and Comments welcome:

Any comments on the outings or suggestions for future ones are always welcome.

Mail to Alan Mendoza; 6 Patches Drive, Chico, CA 95928 or e-mail ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Outings and Events

Committee meeting 7PM to 9PM. Contact Grace Marvin: 530-893-1994 or GMRADM@aol.com for directions.

Friday-Sunday, October 7-9 - Lakes Basin/Mt. Elwell Backpack (grade 2, class B). We drive to Plumas Eureka State Park near Graeagle and take the Jamison Trail to beautiful Rock Lake and camp. On day two we'll climb 7800' Mt. Elwell and enjoy the spectacular views. On Sunday we hike out and do an optional climb of the 9000' Sierra Buttes. A leisurely trip with more strenuous optional day hikes. Individual commissary. Call leaders to reserve space and get more info. Leaders have extra backpacking equipment to share with beginners. Leader: Perry, 534-5510; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Saturday, October 15 - Chambers Creek/Murphy Lake Trail Maintenance (grade 2, class B). We'll drive from Philbrook Lake above Paradise through the high lakes area past Spring Valley Lake and park above Murphy Lake. From there we'll descend 1 1/2 miles to work on the upper section of the Chambers Creek/Murphy Lake Trail. Need 4-Wheel drive vehicle volunteer to drive to trailhead. Call leader to sign up and get more info. Leader: Perry, 534-5510; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Saturday, October 22 - Turtle Bay Museum & Sacramento River Trail Walk (grade 1, class A). We'll park adjacent to the spectacular Sundial Bridge and take a 3-4 mile walk on the Sacramento River Trail then tour the beautiful Turtle Bay Museum. Cost: \$11 for adults and \$6 for kids for museum entrance. Bring lunch, water and \$ for carpool drivers. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Saturday, October 22 - Cross-Country Ski Trail Maintenance (grade 1, class A). Free cross-country ski lessons for those who work on the McGowen cross-country ski area. We have to put in a new cross-country ski trail in the Christy Hill, Church Camp Trail area. Bring work clothes, gloves, lunch and \$ for drivers. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Sunday, October 23 - Bike Ride (grade 1, class A) Start at One Mile in Bidwell Park and ride to Little Chico Creek on a bike path all the way to Bruce Road and back. See how the creek Area has been rejuvenated. Meet at Caper Acres parking lot at 10AM. Bring water. Helmets required. Rain cancels. Leader: Gene, 873-1552; Asst. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

Saturday, October 29 - Cross-Country Ski Trail Maintenance (grade 1, class A). Free cross-country ski lessons for those willing to work on the Colby Meadows ski area. Tools furnished by the Forest Service. Bring work clothes, gloves, lunch and \$ for drivers. About a 75-mile round-trip drive. Meet at 8:30AM at the Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

November

Wednesday, November 2 - Yahi Group Executive Committee meeting 7PM to 9PM. Contact Grace Marvin: 530-893-1994 or GMRADM@aol.com for directions.

Friday, November 4 - Dinner at Turnadot. Come join us for a relaxing evening of fine dining and pleasant company. Catch up with old friends and meet new ones. Call by Thursday, November 3 before 9PM for time and to reserve a spot. Leader: Lynn 864-7826 or lynnsgarden@yahoo.com; Asst Leader: Joanne, 893-2154.

Saturday, November 12 - Shuttle Hike from the South Side of Bidwell Park to Five Mile (grade 2, class A). Join us as we start from the Green Gate along Hwy 32 and hike one-way, downhill for 6-7 miles along the south side of Bidwell Park to Five Mile below the golf course. Beautiful views along the way of the Sacramento Valley, Big Chico Creek and Upper Bidwell Park. A short car shuttle will be required. Bring lunch, water, \$ for drivers and sturdy shoes. Rain cancels. Meet at 9AM at the Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Thursday, November 17 - Yahi Newsletter Prep. Join us to help prepare and sort the Yahi Group Newsletter for mailing. It only takes about an hour and we always have a lot of fun! Volunteers are always needed. Newcomers and old members are both welcome. Call 343-9277 for directions and more info.

Sunday, November 20 - Chico Mural Walk & Lunch (grade 1, class A). Stroll around downtown Chico to view the many innovative murals followed

Bidwell Park Fall 2005 Events

Sept 3rd--Riparian Plants of Upper Park Walk Join botanist John Dittes along the Yahi Trail to learn more about the park's creekside plants. Meet at Parking Area E, 10 AM to noon. Call 892-1666 or email info@friendsofbidwellpark.org for more information.

Sept 10th--Friends of Bidwell Park Presentation at the Chico Museum from 1-2:30 pm. Call 892-1666 or email info@friendsofbidwellpark.org for more information.

Sept 10th--Maidu Medicine Walk Wes Dempsey will lead a hike from 9:30-noon identifying the many species of native plants and discussing how the Maidu Indians used them in their daily lives. Meet at Parking Area E in Upper Park. Wear good walking shoes and bring water. Rain cancels. Call the Chico Creek Nature Center at 891-4671 to pre-register for this event.

Sept 10th--Big Chico Creek Watershed Monitoring. Meet at FiveMile Recreation Area on Centennial Ave. From 9 am to noon. For more information, call Timmarie at 342-6620. Sponsored by the Big Chico Creek Watershed Alliance.

Sept 17th--Annual Bidwell Park and Creeks of Chico cleanup. Sponsored by Butte Environmental Council, from 9 AM to 1:30 PM, followed by a lunch for the volunteers. Meet at Parking Area E in Upper Park for park cleanup and Foster's Old Fashioned Freeze for creeks cleanup. This is also National Public Lands Day--help to make the public lands of Chico ready for the winter rains. Bidwell Mansion Historic Park celebration day with presentations of "Dear General" (reading of letters between Annie and John Bidwell), BBQ, craft fair, tours of the Mansion, and silent auction. Fundraiser for Las Senoras with \$20 ticket for tour and lunch--everything else is free.

Oct 9th--Relationship with Nature: Traditional and Modern Day Presentation by the Mechoopda Indian Tribe at the Chico Museum at 1 PM. For more information, see Bidwell Park Centennial 1905-2005

Oct 15th--Trace the Upper Park flume route from Horseshoe Lake to Diversion Dam. Learn more about the history of this project and see new areas of the park. 9 am to 2 pm, about a 4 mile hike. Limited to 10 participants because it's partly off-trail. Bring water and lunch. For more information or to sign up, email info@FriendsofBidwellPark.org or call 892-1666

For a full and current list of Bidwell Park activities:

<http://friendsofbidwellpark.org/calendar.html>

Sierra Club Hike Classifications

Distance Rating

Grade 1: up to 6 miles

Grade 2: 6-10 miles

Grade 3: 10-15 miles

Elevation Gain Rating

Class A: up to 1000 feet

Class B: 1000-2000 feet

Class C: 2000-3000 feet

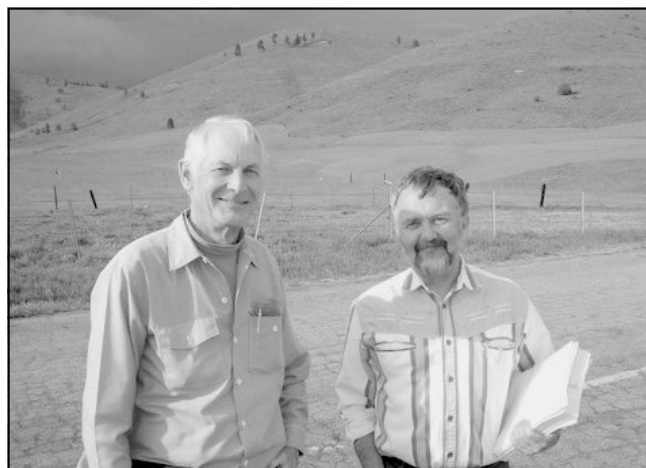
Sierra Valley is North America's highest, largest, and most important mountain valley, protected from development by the combined efforts of agricultural and environmental partnering. It's the major flyway for migrating birds and a benchmark for Sierra valleys, prior to exploitation. The Valley straddles both Sierra (southern portion) and Plumas Counties (northern portion). Sierra County's General Plan mandates that development must take place in established towns thus preventing development in the Valley. Plumas County intended to alter its 1985 General Plan for its portion of the Valley to reflect Sierra County's, but the effort was defeated by B.J. Pearson, a land developer, who until recently was the Valley's representative on the Plumas County Board of Supervisors*. In 2005, Bill Powers defeated Pearson, in part because Powers, a former schoolteacher, ran on a platform of intelligent but limited growth in the Valley.

Plumas County Supervisors recently approved EIR 73, which bundled 6 zoning changes into one EIR in order to meet State requirements to update Plumas' General Plan. The opponents to this procedure contend that zoning-bundling might meet the letter of State law, but not its intent, and so have vigorously opposed EIR 73, mostly because it allows intrusion of a housing development the size of a small city well onto the Valley floor. The Shoffner agricultural parcel is the specific irritant and most important of all the zoning changes in EIR 73. Shoffner's proposed zoning change cuts a scimitar-shaped swath well into the Valley, because State route A23 is the new limit for "ex-urban" development onto the Valley's agricultural land. Also, Shoffner's 800+ acre parcel is far distant from established infrastructure and services, thus draining the resources of surrounding towns. Because of his decision to support EIR 73, seemingly in violation of his pre-electoral commitments, Plumas County Supervisor Bill Powers gave me an interview to explain his and the Board's decision for this zoning change.

What is your long-term vision for Sierra Valley, which spans both Plumas and Sierra Counties?

The Valley floor is of highest value and should remain open [agricultural] space because it cannot sustain the pressure of development from Reno's expansion. I support a regional Planning Commission for the Valley, which would effect a positive change from the development pressure that's presently going on.

* Williamson Act 80-acre agricultural parcels protect the Valley but the Plumas Supervisors grant exceptions, which permits subdivision of the parcels while retaining their tax



Frank Kraus (left) with Bill Powers

advantages. Then these exemptions are also claimed as General Plan updates.

What was your reasoning for changing the Shoffner parcel's zoning from agricultural to development land and what concessions did the County attain, i.e., park, open space, community center? Did the public get a bargain from the EIR 73 zoning changes, including Shoffner's?

John Shoffner applied for, and [Plumas] Planning presented [May 10, 2005-Certification of EIR #73 and 2005 Winter General Plan Amendments and Sierra Valley Annual Review], zoning options to the [entire] Board. We did not approve any specific development plan but only selected zoning changes that left the Valley untouched. There will be open space in the front of Shoffner's development so the view from the Valley will not be much different than it already is and its wetlands {bird life} will be preserved with only slight visual impact.

There may be some seepage [drainage and sewage] and the developer needs [to drill] an artesian well, but Shoffner wants small unobtrusive homes set well back in the Valley's rim. The development's next phase addresses density transfer to smaller parcels, but for now, Shoffner prefers seven acre or larger parcels, not Planning's recommended smaller lots. So we're ultimately looking at only 50 to 70 homes.

I decided not to accept Planning's recommendation that would have allowed 3-acre parcels because that was too dense. Lot sizes will be 5 to 6 acres because 3 acres won't work visually. Most homes in the development will be spread out on 40-to 80-acre lots and there will be only a few houses visible from the A23 road. Although the developer [Jack Bridge] built golf courses on his other developments, there won't be any course built on this parcel.

Plumas County has budget problems. How will the Shoffner and similar land development projects liquidate the County's deficits?

The County is strangled by regulations and under-

funded State mandates. The impact of Shoffner's development in resolving the County's budget problems is minimal and won't have significant impact on resolving our fiscal woes. For example, the zoning fees generated from the Planning Department's EIR 73 authorship amounted to only a few hundred dollars.

The Board is only just now studying an impact fee concept wherein the County would get more [in mitigation] than just a bill from having to support sewer and water requirements of our new housing developments. But no matter what, neither the Board nor the County halt development; not even in Sierra Valley. The things we need to focus on are the standards by which we allow these developments to take place. The present Board members are very invested in the concept of private property rights being paramount over the [general] community's needs.

At the Supervisors' meeting of May 10, you commented that you did not understand EIR 73, yet you voted to accept it. Why?

It seemed everyone was confused, but I had [previously] consulted with County Planning, so I understood what was going on. I agree Planning's maps were confusing. The public doesn't realize that the Board obtained legal opinion in 1984 that said we could bundle groups of zoning changes as the simplest way to meet the State's requirement to update the County's General Plan.

Any development in Sierra Valley must also have the approval of the Sierra Valley Groundwater District which is composed of local ranchers from both [Plumas and Sierra] Counties. The developer's plans still need to be reviewed through several processes before any final approvals are granted. All the Board approved were zoning changes.

The development's road system will not be incorporated into County's Public Works as happened at Graeagle and Lake Almanor, but if this is requested, the roads would have to meet County standards, and that's expensive. Right now road maintenance and snowplowing will have to be done by the developer, or he'll have to pay the County to do it.

If he wanted, the developer could apply to form a Community Service District to support infrastructure needs like fire protection, drinking water, and sewage. That would put the tax burden on to the home purchasers and not encumber the general [Plumas] taxpayer.

An enormous stack of textual material relating to EIR 73 was made available at the Supervisors meeting of May 10 but was never distributed beforehand, so the public had no chance to review and prepare comments. Was this proper?

Conservation

The Saga of EIR 73 *(Cont. from p. 8)*

[Plumas] Planning should have made all the material available to the public before the Board meeting so it could be discussed more fully. But the four other Supervisors [there are 5 Supervisors] were inflexible on sending EIR 73 out for more public scrutiny. I could not convince them the EIR

needed more review or that we [the Board] should change our basic procedures where we bind several zoning changes into a General Plan update. The

(continued on p. 9)

better of the options open to me was to accept the least intrusive development plan that also had the least visual impact and effect on the Valley. That happened to be Shoffner's plan, not Planning's.

Bill Powers knows Eastern Plumas County well. He represents the County's District 1, which includes the Plumas portion of Sierra Valley. Prior to his 2005 supervisory election, Powers served on Portola's Board of Supervisors while simultaneously teaching at Portola High. Bill, who is 57, was born, raised, and educated in Portola with higher education at SF and Chico State Universities.

We also need to bring common sense to the entire zoning and development process. The public needs to understand what the Board can and cannot, and will and will not, do acting either as individual Board members or as a unit. For example, the Board's concept that the new Planning Commission will only update the County General Plan and then disband is something I hope that won't happen. The Board is still working on having their entire discussions at our meetings archived to a CD system, something I promised to get done when I ran for office.

I hope we can implement public discussions that include Board members on days separate from Board proceedings. That way there will be more transparency in the Board's decision making and a more respectful Board response to public input. Our County is the size of Rhode Island, so I also think that at least one Board meeting each year should be held outside of Quincy [the County seat] to improve public participation.

I also recommend that my constituents become knowledgeable about land development and California's environmental review process by reading books such as the "Guide to California Planning" [ISBN 0-923956-54-9 published by Solano Press, Point Arena CA]. This way they can better participate in discussions with me and their legislative representatives on the Board.

Your constituents, many of whom actively worked for your election, are collecting money to bring legal action to prevent Shoffner's development, i.e., passage of EIR 73. What is your message to them?

It's their right to do so [i.e., collect for legal defense].

Footloose

In an early American age when walking was as popular as jogging is in 2005, two super-walkers came to America in the 1800s and made some extensive exploratory journeys on both sides of the continent. Of these two famous men, John James Audubon arrived first, in 1803, during those days of crude transportation and at a time when the Lewis and Clark Expedition was commencing. He settled initially in Pennsylvania at a farm northwest of Philadelphia on Perkiomen Creek. Although born in Haiti in 1785, Audubon transferred to America from France at age 18, and developed a keen interest in American birds.

John Muir, born in Dunbar, Scotland, on April 21, 1838, arrived in America in 1849, his family settling on a farm in Wisconsin, where he worked 10 years before venturing outward in pursuit of botany, traveling from Wisconsin to Florida on one of his walking trips in 1867. He arrived in California in April 1868, walking from San Francisco to Yosemite when he observed that the entire Central Valley was covered with wildflowers so thick that "you couldn't take a step without touching blossoms."

Both of these "Johns" had a wide interest in natural history in addition to their art and inventive specialties, and were inclined to walk great distances seeking new wonders, just as Meriwether Lewis walked on shore most of the time while the keelboat labored on the Missouri River during their 1803-06 Expedition. Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson were also advocates of walking in this times.

Audubon, in particular, was an intensely focused person, determined to seek and draw birds, and finally to exhibit his artwork in The Birds of America, a book series he designed. Searching for birds and preserving their skins was a passion that overrode the difficulties of finance and family, and involved extensive travels to reach bird habitats, and even longer travels to have his drawings published in England. Boats, horses and wagons helped moved him along, but close investigation was best done on foot. Needless to say, great energy was involved in those pursuits, and Audubon was one of the most energetic, talented, and determined.

On one of his efforts to reach Louisville, he said, "Unfortunately I had no shoes, and my moccasins constantly slipping made the wading extremely irksome; not withstanding, I walked 45 miles and swam the Muddy River." Forty-five miles in 12 hours is almost four miles an hour, a mile every 16 minutes wading ankle-deep in cold water of slippery wet grass. Throughout his life, Audubon would always be a phenomenal walker, on good roads managing even a series of eight-minute miles, walking as fast as many people run, said Richard Rhodes, author of John James Audubon.

Unlike John Muir, Audubon was rarely without his shotgun and rifle, depending on the gun to obtain birds for detailed drawing work and also for obtaining meat for food. Muir was more prone to carry a bag of bread and tea and eat berries during his Sierra saunters rather than hunting animals with

a gun, although he was not above eating mutton in the mountains as much as he came to dislike habitat-destroying sheep. He was an advocate of apples, and later, when managing the fruit orchards at the Martinez ranch, his motto was, "eat apples." Audubon, for good reason, ate meat he shot, one of the most accessible foods in those days of few grocery stores.

Both Muir and Audubon had an urge to record their observations, and though Audubon had more sophisticated ambitions to portray American birds through art, both carried their journals and eventually wrote books about their natural history encounters. Traveling mostly by foot in those days of crude transportation enabled them to observe nature up-close-and-personal in a slower mode, closer to earth.

Muir was extremely inventive, especially in his early years when he could devise almost any mechanical device, sometimes with merely his pocket knife. His efforts took a more philosophical approach as he gained insight from nature and his "saunterings" in the Sierra, culminating in expressive journalistic endeavors which helped promote five national parks plus sparking the salvation of Yosemite, the creation of the Sierra Club, and exerting political influence on Congress to conserve natural resources. Conservation was also an attitude expressed by Audubon as he condemned the destruction of eastern forests, passenger pigeons, and buffalo.

Audubon's rambles afoot took him over much of eastern America, and although business failure sent him into debt, he never lost sight of the joy in watching birds and recording their images with his artwork. Carrying the art sheets and supplies, along with his gun and ammunition, was an additional burden often rampant with damages from boat disasters and foul weather.

Both Audubon and Muir did extensive travel between continents, enduring the rough sea passages to garner new vistas. Even at age 73 in 1911, Muir made a year-long journey to South America and Africa, obsessed with seeing the natural wonders of the world. He crossed the Atlantic at least eight times in addition to extensive travels in western America, and made seven trips to Alaska. One of his walking journeys is recorded in the story of Stickeen, a dog that befriended him in a long walk over a glacier field.

For all the elevated vision of the world that Muir and Audubon displayed, there was an emphasis on small things composing the wonders of nature that they found in those simple walks in the wildlands; unique plants, minute insects, and birds were vitally exciting to both men. One of the first stories that Muir wrote was about "The Hummingbird of the California Waterfalls," which detailed the life of his favorite bird, the Water Ouzel or Dipper.

The monument to Audubon being footloose in America is his bird painting collection compiled in the book, The Birds of America. John Muir's

Conservation

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

I enclose Professor Yang Dongping's clarifications and corrections to my May 2005 article on China, entitled "Learning from the Future." -Joseph A. Abbott

Abbott: "Fon is committed to monitoring development projects throughout China, like dams and water diversions. Much effort goes to preaching conservation to State bureaucrats."

Professor Yang's clarification: "Friends of Nature (FON) is committed to educate the public about the environment, and to bring attention to China's most important environmental problems, such as projects involving dams and water diversions, and to publish alternate opinions in FON's effort to influence governmental decision-making."

Abbott: "To convince ministers to reverse poor decisions, FON flies peasants to Beijing to relate their stories of displacement and exploitation."

Professor Yang's correction: In fact, it's not the FON that flies the peasants, it's the Beijing NGO of the Environment that flies the peasants.

Abbott: "FON has a staff of 40."

Professor Yang's correction: FON has a staff of 20, not 40.

Abbott: "FON is China's only officially sanctioned, non-governmental environmental organization."

Professor Yang's correction: FON is only one of China's several officially sanctioned, non-governmental environmental organizations.

To the Editor:

I just returned from a three-week tour of China, and I have visited China several times previously on business. I trust that it's clear to you that I'm in agreement with most of what is said in the May 2005 article, "Learning from the Future," and with all of the most salient points.

However, I've found that many Americans are exceedingly critical of China as well as other third world countries - particularly as it applies to environmental issues - without giving sufficient thought to the background. And to me it's most frustrating when we criticize and in fact berate other countries for doing in small measure what we've been

doing in the US for many decades. It's like saying we have some right to squander resources and spoil the environment because we've been doing it for so long, but you guys can't do the same because you haven't had the wherewithal to do it previously. I'm sure you get my drift.

Although I believe there are factual errors in the article (the statement that 98% of the Chinese people were unemployed in 1995, I know to be incorrect), I agree with much of what is said and many of the article's observations. However, I believe the author's statements and observations are clearly seen through the prism of a 21st century American environmental advocate. That's all well and good, but it doesn't give sufficient credence to the 2000 years that China was inhibited by its own feudalistic/communistic system as well as subjugated by Western powers to provide sufficient restraint (and concern with the environment) now that they are economically free.

In my view, the result of this historic reality is that within the past 8 or 10 years (or so) the Chinese have found themselves in a position where they have had the opportunity and the means to play economic "catch up" with the rest of the world. And, in my opinion, they've decided that environmental issues would have to take a secondary place to economic growth. Perhaps that's a short-sighted decision, but certainly understandable in the context of a country that has 1.3 billion people to support. And it seems to me that the technocrats ruling China have (at least) given lip service to the need for environmental concern even though it's clearly not nearly enough.

In this country, where we have a hugely higher standard of living partially developed via the promiscuous use of natural resources for the past 150 years and practice blatant waste on a daily basis, our leaders won't even pay lip service to environmental concerns. Suffice it to say that abrogating the Kyoto Treaty and lobbying hard to exploit virgin wilderness in Alaska for the sake of a small increase in our domestic oil supply doesn't seem to me to give us any leadership position relative to environmental issues. I would hope that the author (Abbott) is as critical and activist in his assessment of our own environmental situation as he is of the situation in China. Both need earnest intelligent attention - very soon if we're going to leave any semblance of civilization for our grandchildren to enjoy.

-Ezra Weisman, Toms River, NJ

To the Editor:

I read the most interesting article about China ("Learning from the Future," May 2005), very thought-provoking and informative. I covered about the same territory 10 years ago, but did not have the benefit of personal interaction with educated locals. Our guides were not free to speak their minds so what I learned was limited. The years before my China trip I was in India and was struck by drab and cheerless Chinese compared to the Indians, where color and music convey a joy of life not easily reconciled with

their apparent poverty.

My reaction to China's development has been one of awe. Ten years ago China had annual famines which claimed multiple hundreds of thousands of lives. Annual floods displaced as many more every year. It is not surprising that China has paid a price for coming to grips with these fundamental problems of such staggering magnitude.

China's blind rush into a polarized consumer society, on the other hand, has been unexpected and disturbing. It suggests that the issue is not the professed dogma, be it democracy, Marxism or what have you, but the implementation of the policies pursued by those in power. Contrary to the former Soviet Union, China has chosen to change its economic system first, to provide a basis for improving the general welfare. This suggests that they are more pragmatic than one would have expected from the children of Mao. They have gotten rid of the system of seniority-dictated rule, a return to the merit-based civil service of earlier times.

The fact that they put economic progress ahead of military domination suggests that they learned where the Soviets did not. Now they see themselves in a world dominated by the US, a country not averse to going to war to maintain its economic dominance. Given the potential economic clout of China, they are developing this potential with a vengeance. They are likely to surpass the US in science and technology in less than 10 years. Thus they will be in a position to influence the course of the future, theirs and ours.

You have done a great job in drawing attention to the environmental consequences of this development. Much as the likes of the author and others in the Sierra Club have made a difference here in the US, supporting like-minded people in China is probably the most effective way to influence this situation. As long as our government, given its influential position in the world, takes such an irresponsible position on environmental issues, it is doubly important to let the world hear that there are responsible voices in the US not subject to electile dysfunction.

I find it difficult to expect much in the way of leverage upon the Chinese from the government of a country which rejects even the discussion of conservation or taxation designed to improve the situation. You may quell concern at home by blaming Abu Ghraib on the enlisted men, but Condi's admonition of the Chinese "civil rights" abuses must ring rather hollow in Beijing.

Yet this is an environmental problem coming our way, probably 10 to 100 times greater than anything

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The Great Bear Rainforest

The planet's largest tract of intact temperate rainforest, British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, has never been closer to being protected. With a historic land-use agreement among diverse parties currently on the table, which would see a third of the region protected from logging, now is the time to make our voices heard and ensure that the agreement becomes a reality.

BACKGROUND

An oasis of green stretching along British Columbia's mid-coast, the Great Bear Rainforest is a place unparalleled in both beauty and ecological riches. This land of narrow, steep-walled fjords and towering cedar trees is home to one of the world's largest populations of grizzly bears, as well as the rare white Spirit Bear. All five species of wild salmon spawn in its rainforest streams and genetically unique coastal wolves find refuge in its forests.

Ongoing clear-cut logging threatens the Great Bear Rainforest, but the region is threatened in other ways, too. While unsustainable forest practices undermine the region's ecological legacy, communities in the Great Bear Rainforest experience unemployment as high as 85 percent. A solution for this region must not only protect its forests, but also find a sustainable future for the region's communities, many of which are First Nations peoples who have called the region home for over 10,000 years.

Protests, blockades and a coordinated international markets campaign by many groups including the Sierra Club forced the forest industry to the negotiating table in 1999. For four years, environmentalists sat at land-use planning processes alongside forest companies, communities and tourism operators. By 2004, the land-use tables had reached a set of historic agreements—a solutions package that addresses the Great Bear Rainforest's ecological and economic future.

The solutions package includes three components. First, fully one third of the Great Bear Rainforest will be protected from logging. Second, in areas not protected, a new set of improved logging practices known as Ecosystem-based Management will be applied. Third, philanthropic and government funds will be invested in diversifying the region's economy and creating a sustainable and prosperous future.

The next step in making this vision a reality is the British Columbia government's approval of the consensus solutions package, including formal designation of the protected areas. Government has committed to First Nations that it will make its decision by September 2005. We need supporters to speak out now and help ensure this decision is one that honours the landmark consensus agreement.

For more information on the Great Bear Rainforest, see www.savethegreatbear.org.

The Greatest Good

Little Oroville, CA, was the show-place for the U.S. Forest Service 100th Anniversary film, "The Greatest Good," on July 30, 2005. The two-hour film covered the history of the Forest Service, including the travesties heaped upon American forests after the colonization by Europeans. Forest Service personnel were extremely gracious and helpful with information.

Though there was little mention of redwoods except for old growth forest in the Northwest, I couldn't help but think of the clear-cutting of the "San Antonio Redwood Forest" that once graced the hills of Oakland in 1850. The size of some individual trees in the five-by-seven mile strip draping the hills was astounding with some 32-foot-in-diameter giants existing whose stump circles still show! This was an outstanding example of a legacy that would still be with us if not for the greed and absence of planning displayed toward natural resources.

Although you can go to the 415-acre Joaquin Miller Park today and be thrilled by the secondary growth of redwoods that rose from the roots of the ancients, it is nothing like the grandeur one would experience in the presence of a rugged 32-foot-wide monarch.

At a time when you could look out over San Francisco Bay and see the Golden Gate entrance without a bridge, it must have indeed been magnificent to stand in the grove of giants and realize that they were so huge their bulk could be used as landmarks for ships entering the bay. What breath-taking excitement it must have been to walk beneath those 2000-year-old trees and gaze upward in utter amazement. To think that hand saws could bring them all down in a ten-year span in the 1860's is incredible.

Today, you can roam though the park on Big Trees Trail and Sinawik Trail and alongside Palo Seco Creek and see authentic Sequoia sempervirens and revel in the quietness of the deep forest, vaguely aware that the four-foot -hick shafts only survive because of the integrity of the root regeneration of the giant originals. You can be reassured of the exploration-privilege by the park's protected status. No wood renegade is going to be sniping trees in a place of refuge...it is hoped.

One of the important jobs that Naturalist John Muir did was speak up for American trees and the need to set aside and protect forest reserves. He did this in the face of much opposition from people profiting on American natural resources and exercising excessive exploitation out of habit. Before Muir came to California in 1868, eastern American forests had already been ransacked, largely in building, clearing land for cultivation, and firewood use. The tendency to freely take any amount of trees, gold, or animals was a way of life among early settlers who thought resources were inexhaustible. Even Yosemite, that had been declared a "Place of unusual interest" by President Lincoln in 1864 and given to the State of California to safeguard, was mismanaged and overrun with sheep and businesses and lumber mills. Muir and associates succeeded in getting Yosemite highlands under National Park control in 1890, but the valley floor was still state manipulated until finally transferred to Federal control in 1906, one of the great efforts of the Sierra Club that Muir founded in 1892.

The establishment of the U.S. Forest Service in 1905

under Theodore Roosevelt was a step forward, but the first Chief Forester, Gifford Pinchot, was a "use" man whose philosophy was "...where conflicting interests must be reconciled, the question will always be decided from the standpoint of the greatest good of the greatest number in the long run." At that time, especially, the 'greatest good' was in harvesting wood, and that their reasoning was flawed could be seen in the early practices of clear-cutting, which certainly was for 'the greatest good of the lumber industry' regardless of the destruction wrought on the environment. Now legitimate lumbering is running out of wood, and lives have been changed for lumber workers as well as wildlife and watersheds.

The Forest Service has bungled its way through the last 100 years, achieving some good marks, but has been often confused by the conservation/preservation conflict. Pinchot was bent on using the forests, which was in conflict with Muir's ideas of preservation of the best forest reserves. While Pinchot was captivated by Muir's personal magnetism, he was not going to be persuaded by him simply to lock up broad swaths of highly valuable timberlands under the vigilant supervision of the U.S. Army. Instead Pinchot envisioned a civilian force of trained foresters administering forest reserves to which commercial interests had supervised access. "The first principle of conservation is development," he said, "the use of natural resources now existing on this continent for the benefit of the people who live here now."

On one hand, the public was outraged to think the U.S. Government would take over control of their happy hunting grounds at all, and it exploded in violent protests throughout the west, and the other extreme was Muir's insistence on using national forests for places of recreation and healing in a natural world and preservation of those places.

Muir expressed himself in denouncing the "invading hordes of destroyers who left the lands behind them cleared and scorched into melancholy ruins." Muir concluded one of his lectures with "that it was the righteous duty of any good government to protect its public forests so as to keep in view the common good of the people for all time. The government is like a rich and foolish spendthrift who has inherited a magnificent estate in perfect order, and then has left his fields and meadows, forests and parks, to be sold and plundered and wasted at will, depending on their inexhaustible abundance."

Muir proclaimed that "Tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life."

Thus we arrive at a U.S. Forest Service effort to again proclaim their status as forest managers. In showing the extensive film, "The Greatest Good," they are formatting changes to come. Original "Pinchot thoughts" have been greatly modified, in part because of protest from the non-lumbering users even to the point of protesters occupying trees in the face of old growth tree cutting and seemingly there is more effort to reconcile the differences. At issue is grazing, fire,

Last Words

The California Invasive Plant Council's

14th Annual Conference

Cal-IPC Symposium 2005

*"Prevention Reinvention - Protocols, Information,
and Partnerships to Stop the Spread of Invasive Plants"*

October 6-8, 2005
California State University, Chico

and announcing our first

WILDLAND WEED FIELD COURSE

October 5, Chico

Program, registration, lodging, sponsorship... **all forms online at**
www.cal-ipc.org

Early registration deadline: September 1
(Current Cal-IPC members will receive materials in the mail)

The Symposium is the ideal place to learn the latest in invasive plant biology, management, and policy issues from researchers and practitioners working around the state. Invited speakers, contributed papers, working groups, field trips, posters, and trade exhibits make the event the most comprehensive overview of wildland weed work in California. Join us for our 14th annual Symposium!

Program

This year's theme sessions explore the crucial topic of prevention, with invited speakers describing partnerships, protocols and programs that effectively address the spread of invasive plants. Five sessions of contributed papers and a poster session delve into the latest in weed biology, control, mapping, and more. Plus weed alerts, exhibitors, working groups, a photo contest, awards, auction, and a guest talk by Joe Silveira of the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge on "The Return of Diversity to Great Valley Wildlife Habitats."

Wildland Weed Field Course

The day before the Symposium, plan on attending our first hands-on field course focusing on control of wildland weeds. The course is designed to benefit newcomers and experienced weed workers alike by combining a comprehensive review of field techniques with the latest in cutting-edge technology.

Field Trips

Choose from four exciting field trips on Saturday -- explore weed work at the Sacramento River National Wildlife Refuge, Lower and Upper Bidwell Park, the Sutter Buttes, and Stony and Red Bank Creeks.

Chico!

Our meeting venue on the CSU campus borders lively downtown Chico. Big Chico Creek cuts through campus, and Bidwell Park begins upstream, ranging into the foothills. Bidwell is one of the largest municipal parks in the country, and played the part of Sherwood Forest for *The Adventures of Robin Hood* in 1938. Lassen Volcanic National Park is 40 miles east.

For more information: www.cal-ipc.org

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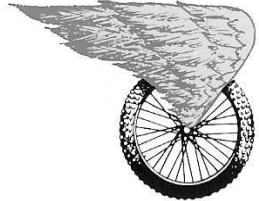
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