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Yahi
Group



News Articles Programs Hikes and Outings Meetings Events

Will (Mining) History Repeat Itself?

Plumas County is faced with a recurring dilemma: should it encourage the short-term economic stimulus a few extraction-oriented jobs will provide, or will it forsake this immediate financial boon in favor of protecting its assets and long-term economic well-being. Paraphrased, the answer is: those who ignore the past are destined to repeat their mistakes.

Sheffield Resources Ltd., a Canadian mining company, is currently doing exploratory core drilling in Moonlight Valley and Engel Mine in order to determine the economic feasibility of reopening the hard rock Engel Mine (on private property) and establishing an open pit mine at Moonlight Valley (on USFS property). Their main interest is in copper deposits with a secondary interest in molybdenum, gold, etc.

Copper prices have risen from a low of \$.05/lb. when Engel Mine closed in 1930 to about \$3.50/lb. Today, driven in large part by Asian demand, they are intending to extract 400-600 million tons of ore from the Moonlight location alone.

The Engel Mine would involve enlarging and deepening existing hard rock mine shafts. The Forest Service has facilitated the process by granting Sheffield a Categorical Exclusion for the initial exploratory drilling and subsequent extensions for the Moonlight location.

According to Sheffield, both locations show promise but the Engel Mine corings have yielded higher ore grades and are likely to be pursued first. Ref: www.sheffieldresources.com

Sheffield promises lots of local high-paying employment with little to no experience required. They also promise not to harm the environment (i.e., putting up a substantial bond guaranteeing complete reclamation). Sounds pretty good to a county with a 10% unemployment rate, desperately needing an economic stimulus.

Sheffield is counting on Plumas County to be short-sighted, gullible and unwilling to check out mining's track record. Unfortunately, the county has followed that path before (e.g., heavy timber harvesting up and into the 1980s, past mining practices, and willingness to allow heavy grazing on

government/public lands).

What Plumas County has in abundance—and what really holds the most long-term economic value—is its clean, cold water, beautiful forests and valleys, and its open space. The remote Moonlight Valley is a case in point. These attributes hold the greatest economic potential (reference public input results of recent Indian Valley Community Vision meetings as part of the county rezoning/planning process). Our community would be better served by protecting and utilizing these assets for economic gain. Extraction-oriented economies are usually short-lived and produce the least return.

Historically, copper mining is very damaging to the environment; e.g., reference the deleterious effects of such local mines as Walker and Iron Mountain. The Calgom Goldstripe mined gold but left a horrendous mess. They forfeited their bond and left it to the USFS to clean up.

Regardless of the extraction method, the end result of the different processes is that they all end up with acidic residues. Flooding and retention pit deterioration result in surface and subsurface water quality deterioration. The wells used in the extraction process lower the water table.

Larger mines like these could affect stream levels and well productivity in the valley. These are drainages from the headwaters of the Feather River. The Feather River is the backbone of California's municipal drinking water system and is a substantial player in its agricultural water supply as well.

Other environmental degradations include blasting and truck traffic. These will elevate the ambient noise level and erode the air quality, not to mention the effects on wildlife. Some mine tailings produce a type of particulate pollution that lowers air quality to the point of increasing the incidence of asthma.

Think again: the Moonlight pit will be about 100 acres, 400 feet deep, with the same volume of mountainside piled up somewhere nearby.

Consider how this will affect the quality of life for those in the path of these environmental assaults.

The bonds required for reclamation are notoriously too low (ref: <http://earthworksaction.org> for a scientific article by Jim Kuipers and Ann Maest citing the failure of cost estimates for mitigation and restoration to accurately predict costs). There are several reasons for these low estimates, including but not limited to the fact that the people making the estimates are often tied to the mining industry. Also, one should be aware of the fact that a multi-million-dollar bond requires that the mining company put up only a fraction of that value. All too often—in a few years either the claim has been worked out or ore prices drop—when faced with the real cost to restore the area, it is all too easy to simply “walk out” and forfeit the bond. For them, this is a small cost of doing business, and the local community is stuck with the mess when the bonding company fails or the costs to restore far exceed the money available. Then, Plumas County could have some real long-term employment: government employees in charge of a new Superfund site. The trouble is, Superfund money is currently being gutted, and anyway, these jobs wouldn't go to the locals. Mining continues to illustrate the reality of the boom-and-bust economy so common to the area.

Add this to a significant drop in real estate values, and the true economic effects of the mining business can begin to be appreciated. Note that every home that doesn't sell affects 10-15 businesses (e.g., real estate brokers and agents, lenders, title and escrow companies, septic service, contractors at both ends of the transaction, inspection services, etc.) And, when the property values deteriorate, schools and road repair will be just two of many areas that will be negatively impacted financially. All good stuff for a county struggling to make ends meet.

Yahi Group—Sierra Club
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Yahi Club Notes

Conservation

Laura Grossman, in addition to program planning and tabling, is seeing how the club can become an active stakeholder in developing a Habitat Conservation Plan for Butte County. If such a plan gets approved by the Board of Supervisors, it would help us protect environmental resources in the county before development projects get approved. Meanwhile, Mary Watters will be looking into the status of the county's General Plan process on behalf of the Yahi Group. Bob Woods, Norma Odell and Marcia Toruno have been getting the word out about the club's needs and interests (including hiking) via tabling, phone calls, and other forms of outreach.

Other Yahi counties have crucial environmental issues too. Steve Robinson has been addressing a proposed development on thousands of acres of timberland at Dyer Mountain in Lassen County, a project with huge air and noise pollution as well as watershed and traffic problems. He wrote us: "I invite you, our members of the Sierra Club, to come to Mountain Meadows and see for yourselves what a special place this is, and hear how we are working to

protect 58,000 acres here in western Lassen County while trying to stop this poorly planned development. Please check our website: www.mtmeadows.org" The Yahi group will be supporting his efforts and have asked the Mother Lode Chapter to support the cause much more than we are able to do.

Similarly, John Shower has carefully laid out many good reasons to oppose a mining project at Moonlight Valley and Engle Mine in Plumas County. Please read his article in this newsletter, and get in touch with him if you can help.

Trish Puterbaugh and Jim Brobeck are seeking volunteers to help with protecting our forests from excessive logging. As the most active members of our Lassen National Forest Preservation Group, they have been very busy taking field trips, going to meetings, and sending in comments regarding the Hat Creek, Almanor and Eagle Ranger Districts.

Members of our Executive Committee have also attended other meetings and written letters to newspapers, public agencies and officials regarding numerous issues including the proposed M&T gravel mining operation in Butte County, responses to the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan, unmanaged off-highway vehicle use in our national forests (with Stephen Sayre taking the lead), Chico development issues, and a call for updated information from Chico City Council's Sustainability Committee.

The Yahi Group is often asked to write letters regarding environmental issues outside our Yahi region. One example: our Executive Committee wrote a letter supporting the national Sierra Club's position against the privatization of water and the Nestle bottling plant in McCloud. We also get to vote on a large number of regional environmental issues, as I am the Yahi representative to the Mother Lode Chapter's Conservation Committee. With enough votes, the Mother Lode Chapter can lend its more powerful support to causes deemed worthwhile.

Political Compliance

Many of these environmental concerns could best be addressed by having conservation-minded leaders in public office who could prevent environmental problems from developing in the first place, i.e., by their choosing proactive conservation polities. That is why it is so important that we have an active Political Chair in the Yahi Group such as Walt Schafer, who has helped to get more progressive politicians elected in Butte County. Thus we are very grateful that he recently took the time to take a Political Compliance course offered by the national Sierra Club. Thank you, Walt. We need to know exactly how we, as representatives of the Sierra Club, can endorse good people and what we are permitted to do in supporting political candidates.

Upcoming Yahi Events

Sierra Club Contacts In the Yahi Group

General Contact

Linda Stuke: 530-345-2696
She will relay inquiries or comments to the appropriate person.

Executive Committee Officers

Chair - Grace Marvin:

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g-marvin@sbcglobal.net

Vice Chair—Laura Grossman:

530-893-3882 or joebass@outrageous.net

Secretary- Norma Odell:

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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.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Yahi Group of the Sierra Club, Post Office Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 or 5590 Feather River Place, Paradise, CA 95969, Attn: Louise Casey.

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 Woods (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

What's Next for Bidwell Park?

The City's costs for the Bidwell Park Draft Master Management Plan (MMP) and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) have exceeded original estimates. Now there are insufficient funds to respond to the large number of public comments regarding these two documents. Therefore, in September, Chico's General Service Director Dennis Bearsdley will ask the Chico City Council for additional funding.

The MMP and EIR focus on four main proposed projects including the Horseshoe Lake Plan, the Cedar Grove Plan, the Disc Golf/Trailhead Plan and the Trail Plan.

Comments submitted by Friends of Bidwell Park are posted on our website at www.friendsofbidwellpark.org. These comments are in response to the documents' failure to adequately describe:

- The projects
- The environment in which these projects occur in and the potential impacts to ancient blue oak trees, vernal pools, native biodiversity and soils
- The rich cultural history of Bidwell Park and potential impacts to a number of valuable historical resources
- The details (including the cost) of the proposed projects from construction to long-term maintenance
- The details of the proposed mitigation including cost, feasibility, adequacy and potential negative impacts of the proposed mitigation measures
- Other alternatives that will have fewer impacts to resources, enhance the environment of Bidwell Park, reduce maintenance costs and enhance sustainable recreation opportunities for all citizens of Chico

The City can either respond to the comments directly, or they can rewrite the documents so that inconsistencies and deficiencies are corrected and then resubmit the documents for public review.

We believe that Bidwell Park is extremely important to Chico's historical and natural heritage. We think that, for the money already spent, the citizens of Chico deserve a product that is complete, clear and accurate. The City should also reconsider priorities and focus on maintaining and improving existing trails so that they become all-weather trails suitable for walkers, bicyclists, and equestrians, closing

Yahi ExCom Meetings

Yahi Group Executive Committee meetings usually will be held the **first Tuesday of every month from 3PM to 5PM**. Please contact Grace Marvin: 530-893-1994 or g-marvin@sbcglobal.net regarding the specific time and place if you would like to attend and if you have an item you would like to place on the agenda.

YAH! Fall Program and Events Preview

Many informational and fun activities are planned for the next several months.

Fundraising Yard Sale

Saturday, September 22nd will be the date for the Yahi's fundraising Yard Sale. Longtime member Joanne Gerson has graciously offered the use of her yard located at 750 Vallombrosa Way, Chico. (To get to Vallombrosa Way, turn off of Vallombrosa Avenue toward the One Mile Pool in Lower Bidwell Park. Joanne's house is at the end, near the CARD parking lot). Please bring your donations with an approximation of your object's value to the site at 7:30 a.m. If you have a spare table, please consider loaning it to the club for this event.

Halloween Party

Wednesday, October 31st will be a great night to get out of the house and join Alan and Joy Mendoza at their home for a Halloween Party. While costumes are optional, having fun is a must! Bring your favorite board game and be prepared to play, enjoy snacks and non-alcoholic beverages, and help handout treats. Festivities begin at 6:00 p.m. For more information and to RSVP contact event leaders: Alan/Joy Mendoza (891-8789) or ajmendoza@prodigy.net

Fall Program Meeting

Saturday, November 3rd. - As a part of CSU Chico's "This Way to Sustainability Conference," the Yahi Group will be presenting speakers on the topic of "Sampling Local Sustainability." Susan Mason from

Club Notes *(continued from p. 2)*

Please check out the Yahi Outings in this newsletter so that you can make great choices about our wonderful outings, programs and other events ahead; also see Laura Grossman's article regarding the yard sale on September 22. Be sure

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to call Laura (893-3882) if you can donate sale items, tables, or time to the yard sale. Then, come spend, and help the club! Our fundraisers are very important in meeting the future publishing and mailing costs of the newsletter (note: very few people seem to want an email version instead).

We also are in the process of organizing our fall Yahi program, "Sampling Local Sustainability," at CSU Chico's Third Annual Sustainability Conference. We will bring together five local environmental groups, including our own. Yahi Group members and the public can hear what interests and challenges these five groups have. Call me or Laura, or email sustainability@csuchico.edu to check on details for this program scheduled for Saturday, November 3 at 1:00 P.M.

Thanks to Dr. Marcia Moore's outreach on our behalf, we have some potential candidates to run in this year's Yahi Executive Committee election. Some current members will be up for re-election (but I do not plan to run this time). If you are interested in running or know someone else who

Friends of Bidwell Park, Kasey Merrill of Chico Avenues Neighborhood Association, Jim Brobeck representing the Sierra Forest Legacy Group, the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and our own Chair, Grace Marvin, will be featured. BMU (Bell Memorial Union) room 303. For more information, please contact Grace Marvin or Laura Grossman, send an e-mail to sustainability@csuchico.edu, or view the conference web site www.csuchico.edu/sustainablefuture/ for the entire conference schedule of events.

Cookie Exchange Baking Party

Sunday, November 18th is the day for the Yahi Baking Party, Cookie Exchange, and Potluck. Bring the materials you need to bake your favorite cookie, cookie tins, and a dish (optional) for this run-up to the holiday eating season. Games and creek hikes will be available for those who want to get out of the kitchen. This tasty event is being hosted at the Paradise home of outings leader John Hollister (872-8258). Please contact him to RSVP and to get directions.

Annual Holiday Dinner

Saturday, December 15th is the date for the fabulous Annual Holiday Dinner at the Chico Public Library. Set-up will start at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. Bring your specialty dish or a suggested donation of \$5.00 and enjoy the feast and the camaraderie of your fellow Yahis and friends at the group's last event for 2007.

Mining *(continued from p. 1)*

Ask yourself: if you were planning a move to the area and heard that a copper mine was up and running, would you want to live downstream of it?

Some of the people I've talked to say they've seen this situation before, and that the mining company is really mining for investor dollars and has no intention of really going to the trouble of opening a mine. Some have expressed interest in high-paying jobs requiring little or no experience. However, many have noted the reported \$10 million lease/option with the California-Engels Mining Company, the dramatic increase in copper prices, and the exploratory drilling, and are fearful of what this will mean to Indian Valley and to the county.

The 1872 mining law does not exactly provide a level playing field (especially when a foreign company can have a free ride to mess up the area, pay no royalties and very few taxes, and finally

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sell the product out of the country). We don't seem to benefit much from the process. They play fast and loose, sucking in locals

Yahi Group Outings

Fall 2007

Ongoing

On-Going: Tuesday Power Walks. (grade 2, class A). Meet at Chico Park & Ride each Tuesday evening until October 24th 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: \$3 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 2007

Friday, September 14 - Indian Dinner at Priya's Indian Cuisine. Come join us at Chico's newest Indian restaurant to enjoy either southern or northern Indian cuisine. Call leader by September 12 to reserve space and get more information. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980, Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Sunday, September 16 - Indian Springs Butte Creek Trail Maintenance & Swim (grade 1, class A). Join Trailhead Adventures of Paradise as we explore the lower section of the 1,987-acre Forks of Butte Recreation Area, help BLM prune brush back from this vista trail, learn plant names and pruning tips, then swim and rock-hop up to the site of the Twins Falls gold claim for late-afternoon relaxing. Meet at the serpentine slope trailhead / parking area midway down DeSabra Powerhouse Road at 9:15 AM, or at Skyway & Humbug at 9:00, the Save Mart / Rite Aid parking lot (Clark & Wagstaff) in Paradise at 8:30, or at Chico Park & Ride at 8:00. Hazards include poison oak and rattlesnakes. Wear boots, pants, and long sleeves, and bring gloves, extra creek shoes, swim suit, lots of water, and lunch. Plan to

enjoy the creek until late in the day. Loppers will be provided by BLM. Leader: Stephen, 876-1391; Assistant Leader: Jim, 680-8841.

Saturday, September 22nd - Yahi fundraising Yard Sale. 8:00 AM., 750 Vallombrosa Way, Chico. Please bring your donations with an approximation of your object's value to the site at 7:30 a.m. (To get to Vallombrosa Way, turn off of Vallombrosa Avenue toward the One Mile Pool in Lower Bidwell Park. Joanne's house is at the end, near the CARD parking lot).

Saturday, September 22 - North Yolla Bolly Mountain Hike (Grade 2, Class B). A climb to the top of 7900' North Yolla Bolly Mountain with a round-trip distance of about 8 miles. Bring lunch, water, \$ for carpool and dress in layers. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or at the Applebee's/Burger King parking lot in Red Bluff at 9AM. The trailhead is about 60 miles west of Red Bluff and the roads are paved except for the last mile. Leader: Bill (Red Bluff), 527-8203; Asst. Leader: Alan (Chico), 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net

Saturday, September 29 - Humboldt to Humbug Summits on the Pacific Crest Trail, (Grade 2, Class A) We'll meet at Chico Park and Ride at 9:00 A.M. and drive up to Humboldt Summit, above Butte Meadows. We'll leave one car at Humbug Summit so we can do a shuttle. The hike

is about 7 miles without a lot of elevation gain and loss. We'll see late fall wildflowers, interesting volcanic features from ancient Mount Yahi, and share great company. Round trip drive is a little over 100 miles, arriving back in Chico about 4:30 P.M. Any questions contact John at 872-8258 or hubhollister@yahoo.com.

Saturday, September 29 - Cross-Country Ski Trail Maintenance (grade 1, class A) (Service). Free cross-country ski lessons for those who work on the McGowen ski area. Tools furnished by the Forest Service. Bring work clothes, boots, gloves, lunch and \$ for drivers. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8:00 AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Sunday, September 30, - Reese Flat to Grassy Lake Hike - (Conservation) (grade 1, class A) Approximately one mile northeast of Rock Creek Crossing (Forest Road 24N04), a Temporary Forest Order has closed the southern OHV access routes into the High Lakes above Philbrook. We will examine the obvious impacts of two former OHV routes, on a 4-mile round-trip hike to Grassy Lake, and see how the nearby petroglyph rock has fared with vehicle access. Bring writing implements and digital cameras to document observations for comment upon these proposed OHV route closures. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9:30 AM or Paradise SaveMart (Clark & Wagstaff) at 10 AM. Leader: Stephen, 876-1391; Assistant: John, 872-8258.

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 <http://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. The customary amount is 10 cents per mile per passenger depending on the vehicle, the number of passengers and the road conditions. For example, one passenger only should pay the driver a little more and a car full of passengers should pay a little less. 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 website.

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 <http://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.

October 2007

Saturday, October 6 - Deer Creek Lower Trail, (Grade 1, Class A) This 5 to 6 mile round trip begins where the wooden bridge crosses Deer Creek 3 or 4 miles below the Hiway 32 bridge. This is a leisurely stroll with a few ups and downs. We should be able to spot spawning spring run chinook salmon in the larger pools. We will cross a few side creeks with low water and will see large boulders that have rolled down the canyon as well as volcanic spires throughout this section of the canyon. We'll have lunch at a large hole where the hearty can swim with the salmon. Chico Park & Ride at 9:00 A.M. Please contact John at 872-8258 or hubhollister@yahoo.com.

Saturday, October 13 - Cross-Country Ski Trail Maintenance (grade 1, class A) (Service). Free cross-country ski lessons for those who work on the McGowen ski area. Tools furnished by the Forest Service. Bring work clothes, boots, gloves, lunch and \$ for drivers. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8:00AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Saturday, October 20 - Cross-Country Ski Trail Maintenance (grade 1, class A) (Service). Free cross-country ski lessons for those who work on the McGowen ski area. Tools furnished by the Forest Service. Bring work clothes, boots, gloves,

lunch and \$ for drivers. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8:00AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Sunday, October 21 - Deer Creek Fall Color, (Grade 1, Class A) Few people get up to the section of Deer Creek between Potato Patch and Deer Creek Meadows in the fall and actually get out of their cars. That's what this trip is about. Deer Creek abounds with bright yellows and deep reds against an evergreen background. The forest floor is often littered with a splash of varied colors. We will drive up to Deer Creek and stop at five or six spectacular sites to walk around, just enjoy or take prize-winning photos. We'll have lunch and hot coffee or chocolate at Elam Campground. Chico Park & Ride at 9:00 A.M. Please contact John at 872-8258 or hubhollister@yahoo.com Asst. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

Saturday, October 27 - 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: Bill, 527-8203.

Wednesday, October 31 - Halloween Game Night. Hand out treats and tricks and we'll play games. Costume optional. Snacks will be provided. Card tables and chairs appreciated and bring a favorite game to play. The fun begins at 6PM. Call for directions to meeting place. Leader: Alan/Joy, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net

November 2007

Saturday, November 3rd— This Way to Sustainability Conference, CSU Chico. The Yahi Group will be presenting speakers on the topic of "*Sampling Local Sustainability: What We Are Doing and What We Need.*" Susan Mason from Friends of Bidwell Park, Kasey Merrill of Chico Avenues Neighborhood Association, Jim Brobeck representing the Sierra Forest Legacy Group, the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society, and our own Chair, Grace Marvin, will be featured. 1:00 PM., BMU (Bell Memorial Union) room 303. Contact Grace Marvin or Laura Grossman, send an e-mail to sustainability@csuchico.edu, or view the conference web site www.csuchico.edu/sustainablefuture/ for the entire conference schedule of events.

Saturday, November 3 - Cross-Country Ski Trail Maintenance (grade 1, class A) (Service). Free cross-country ski lessons for those who work on the McGowen ski area. Tools furnished by the Forest Service. Bring work clothes, boots, gloves, lunch and \$ for drivers. Meet at the Chico Park & Ride at 8:00AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Sunday, November 4 - Hike at Mendocino Tree Improvement Center (Grade 2, Class A). Join us as we hike/walk both outside loops of the Mendocino Tree Center for a round trip of 3-4 miles. Well-behaved dogs welcome. Optional

breakfast after. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or at Tree Center entrance at 8:15AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Friday, November 9 - Thai Dinner at Thai Basil. Join us for an evening of Thai food and good company at Thai Basil, 121 Broadway in Chico. Call leader by September 7 to reserve space and get time. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Thursday, November 15 – Sierra Club Newsletter Folding. Join us to help fold and sort the 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.

Saturday, November 17 - 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 8:30AM at the Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Sunday, November 18 - Thanksgiving Cookie Bake and Exchange, Meet at my house between 11AM and 5PM, We'll mix, and bake, and sample many cookies, bars, etc. Depending on the number of participants we could satisfy sweet tooths for weeks. For family members who want to come but are allergic to cooking, we'll have games to play and short hikes to my creek. For those who wish we could finish up with a holiday potluck at 6:00. Please call John for directions and other details at 872-8258.

Thursday, November 22 - Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe (grade 1, class A) Ski or snowshoe followed by Thanksgiving Dinner at the Mineral Lodge. If there isn't enough snow cover we'll take an easy hike. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Turkey dinner in Mineral 1:30PM and return to Chico around 4:30-5PM. Cost: \$18 for dinner, plus \$ for drivers. Reservations required. Call Larry, 342-7998 for more info.

December 2007

Saturday, December 1 - Cross Country Ski (grade 2, class A). We'll go where the snow is good. This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Saturday, December 15th - YAH! Annual Holiday Dinner at the Chico Public Library. Set-up will start at 5:00 p.m. with dinner at 6:00 p.m. Bring your specialty dish or a suggested donation of \$5.00 and enjoy the feast and the camaraderie of your fellow Yahis and friends at the group's last event for 2007.

Directions to Meeting Places For Yahi Outings

Chico Park and Ride: From Highways 99 and 32, go east on 32 and make an immediate left onto Fir Street (it's only about 100 yards from Highway 99). We meet in the lot closest to the freeway.

Oroville Wal-Mart: Exit Highway 70 at Oro Dam Blvd., go east one block. Wal-Mart is on south side of Oro Dam Blvd. at Feather River Blvd. We meet at the northwest corner of the parking lot.

Paradise SaveMart: The parking lot is at the corner of Wagstaff and Clark Roads; we meet in the northwest corner.

Wildwood parking lot: Take East Avenue or Manzanita to Wildwood Avenue, the entrance to Upper Bidwell Park.

Sierra Club

Hike Classifications

These are general guidelines. If there are questions, ask the outing leader.

Distance Rating

Grade 1: up to 6 miles

Grade 2: 6-10 miles

Lassen Forest Preservation Group

Lassen Forest Preservation Group, forestry committee for the Yahi Group, Sierra Club, is having a busy spring and summer season monitoring projects in the Lassen National Forest.

Jim Brobeck, Trish Puterbaugh and Steve Mosher went on an excellent field trip with Forest Service personnel of the Almanor Ranger District to look at the Minnow Oak, Aspen and Pine Enhancement Project. This is a 475-acre project near Inskip and Philbrook to create a Defensible Fuel Profile Zone (DFPZ) designed to "enhance" old pine, aspen and black oak habitat. We are supporting this project with the goal of thinning around these species to return the stands to a more historical structure.

With 100 years of logging, fire exclusion and grazing, our National Forests have often become overgrown, thick and very fire susceptible. Species such as aspen, black oak and ponderosa pine have been crowded out by shade-tolerant species like white fir and cedar. The habitat that the old pine, aspen and oak provides for birds and other species is invaluable.

Another excellent field trip we all took was to the Champs project area in the Eagle Lake Ranger District up in Lassen County. We spent the day with Forest Service biologists, fire experts, silviculturists, botanists and others discussing this 10,000-acre project. The project is again a thinning operation designed to render the forest more fire resistant and bring it back to more historical conditions. We have written extensive comments on the project and are still in negotiations regarding the intensity. There are California Spotted Owls, Northern Goshawks and Pileated Woodpeckers as well as Pallid Bats in the area. We want to be sure the habitat for these species is maintained and enhanced within the project area.

July 26 and 27, Trish Puterbaugh and three other staff members from the Sierra Forest Legacy, our parent group, toured the Almanor and Hat Creek Ranger District with Forest Service personnel. We were joined by several senior members of Lassen National Forest staff from the Supervisor's Office.

We spent two long days with over 12 LNF staff discussing the Creeks and North 49 projects. These are two huge projects on the Lassen that we have won lawsuits on against the Forest Service. Our main concern in both projects is California Spotted Owl, Marten and Northern Goshawk habitat with old forest characteristics and watershed. Connectivity for these species is crucial in these two areas, as both are corridors and islands of old growth in a very fragmented Sierra Nevada. Both contain Areas of Concern for the California Spotted Owl.

Our days were very productive and informative with both sides discussing problems and solutions. We felt very positive after the trips that projects could be designed that would

Saving Our Rivers, Preserving Beauty, Understanding Nature

"A Message on Natural Beauty of Our Country."

President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965

"For centuries Americas have drawn strength and inspiration from the beauty of our country. It would be a neglectful generation, indeed, indifferent alike to the judgment of history and the command of principle, which failed to preserve and extend such a heritage for its descendants.

Yet the storm of modern change is threatening to blight and diminish in a few decades what has been cherished and protected for generations...

...To deal with these new problems will require a new conservation. We must not only protect the countryside and save it from destruction, we must restore what has been destroyed...Its concern is not with nature alone, but with the total relation between man and the world around him. Its object is not just man's welfare, but the dignity of man's spirit.

Beauty is not an easy thing to measure. It does not show up in the gross national product, in a weekly paycheck, or in profit and loss statements. But these things are not ends in themselves. They are a road to satisfaction and pleasure and the good life...Association with beauty can enlarge man's imagination and revive his spirit. Ugliness can demean the people who live among it. What a citizen sees every day is his America. If it is attractive, it adds to the quality of his life. If it is ugly, it can degrade his existence.

Certainly no one would hazard a national definition of beauty. But we do know that nature is nearly always beautiful...we have not chosen to have an ugly America. We have been careless, often neglectful. But now that the danger is clear and the hour is late the people can place themselves in the path of a tide of blight which is irreversible and always destructive.

Those who first settled this continent found much to marvel at. Nothing was a greater source of wonder and amazement than the power and majesty of American rivers. They occupy a central place in myth and legend, folklore and literature.

They were our first highways, and some

remain among the most important. We have had to control their ravages, harness their power, and use their water to help make whole regions prosper.

Yet even this seemingly indestructible natural resource is in danger.

Through our pollution control programs we can do much to restore our rivers. We will continue to conserve the water and power for tomorrow's needs with well-planned reservoirs and power dams. But the time has also come to identify and preserve free-flowing stretches of our great scenic rivers before growth and development make the beauty of the unspoiled waterway a memory.

To this end I will shortly send to Congress a bill to establish a National Wild Rivers System...

It is true that we have often been careless with our natural beauty. At times we have paid a high price for this neglect. But once our people were aroused to the danger, we have acted to preserve our resources for the enrichment of our country and the enjoyment of future generations.

The beauty of our land is a natural resource. Its preservation is linked to the inner prosperity of the human spirit."

On March 5, 1965, Stewart Udall, Secretary of the Department of the Interior, drafted a bill for Congress to establish a National Wild Rivers Systems to preserve and conserve the scenic, fish, wildlife, and outdoor recreational values.

There are numerous state and federal programs to clean up many of our major rivers. All these advances and those which may have happened since that time and which will hopefully happen tomorrow and the next day and in the next century, are heartening. They are, however, no more than what we owe to the explorers and the colonizers of another era, who found only pure, good, wonderfully wild rivers. The Wild Rivers bill, the natural-beauty message, provide immediate hope that the rivers which made America great will be saved in their beauty and usefulness.

"The prosperity of the human spirit--this is what the explorers were seeking and that many of

move the forest to a more fire-resilient state, yet protect important habitat for these old-growth-forest-dependent species. We will continue to work with the Forest Service to move these projects forward, as we all agree that thinning is needed. It is always a good sign when we can meet out in the forest and agree on solutions more than we disagree!

Being up on the Lassen in always a pleasure and makes the hours behind the computer writing comments or poring over maps absolutely worth it. I spent the last night sleeping at Summit Lake in the Park and then driving the twisting road home. It was magnificent: the lupine are in bloom, it is green, and yet the volcanic character is so stark.

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Gold The Degrader

By Rex Burress

When it comes to degradation of the environment, the quest for gold is a human pursuit that destroys habitat, alters landscapes, and obliterates conservation efforts.

You can look at the California gold rush of 1849 as a good example of what unregulated transgressions into wild places where gold is found can do to the land. As we know, that maddened stampede across the plains and into the mountains was a free-for-all without any regard for trees, streams, and animal homes. The land was left in shambles, forests devastated, streams diverted, and finally there was the hydraulic erosion that silted the waterways to overflow onto agricultural land. It was all because of a metallic mineral that civilization has placed a high value upon. Between 1848 to 1856, the CA gold rush produced 80 tons per year.

Connected to this environmental invasion was the great dredging operations around Oroville where much of the river basin was grubbed out by gigantic machines tearing through sand and cobble to scrape the bedrock for golden wealth. Nature is resilient and in time can cover the scars of earth, as we can see in the boulder mounds south of Oroville where trees and plants are constantly trying to recover a niche for growth. Many of those piles of up-heaved rocks remain, coated with lichens and mosses, but are visible as a mute reminder of what misuse of our natural resources can do to the landscape. That mushrooming of mining settlements led to towns and cities and further displacement of natural history. No wonder the mountain lion and bear have such a difficult time to find a home. Man the mover has moved in!

The same mad rush hit the Alaskan Klondike back in the 1890's, sending men plunging into a harsh climate, over snowy mountain passes, and into the Yukon Basin, again slaying forests and upsetting the ecology of the stream basins as the gold grab was on. The oil grab is on now, and those fragile permafrost regions are very sensitive to intrusion.

There have been gold rushes all over the world, usually with the same land-altering results, often with mining chemicals left over to wreak havoc on the environment for ages. We've seen the destruction caused by the Spanish raping the gold from South America Incas. The destruction has occurred in South Africa where monstrous pits have been sunk in quest of gold and diamonds. Mighty machines have obliterated an entire mountain at Rhyolite, Nevada, processing the gold-bearing rock formations into heaps of rubble, just as the same process has taken place at Carlin, Nevada, Battle Mountain, Nevada, and the Manhattan Mine near Middletown, CA. Beautiful onyx was once there, but now it's all gone because of microscopic specks of gold. Plundering the land for gold has evolved far beyond the gold pan and sluice box.

But one of the most imposing gold quests has been carved into a mountain in the South American Brazilian Amazon country at a place called the Serra Pelada mine. Discovered in 1980 on a small hill where a rainstorm exposed the lode, 20,000 prospectors swarmed over the source within a month. One miner found six million dollars' worth of gold in a single day, hence the madness spread as miners hacked away at the muddy earth with pickaxes and shovels, creating a pit of plots on different levels as thousands of mud-caked humans clambered over hand-made ladders like ants with bags of dirt for sluicing.

The government has imposed some regulations, but the word "conservation" has been thrown out the

So you Want to Be a Naturalist

When I read the "Ask Amy" column in the Oroville M-R newspaper, I mistakenly thought the item "Naturist Should Not Push His Clothing-Optional Way on his Wife" meant "Naturalist" instead of "Naturist." There is a difference. Naturist go nude when they can, and a naturalist is like a nature watcher! (not a naturist watcher!)

I would be shocked if someone expected me to walk along the river naked, thinking I was a naturist rather than a naturalist!!

I was reminded of an article I once wrote when I worked as a naturalist with the Oakland Parks. "So you want to be a naturalist?" was generated by a 5th grader who was at the lake with his class for a tour and he explained his plan to get a naturalist job. I strongly suspected that his ambition was powered by the sight of our baby ducklings which needed catching. (Half of his class had decided to become naturalists, he said, holding one of those cute fluffs.)

Here is "So you want to be a naturalist," that I wrote and sent to his class in 1964:

"I say to you, young man, as you voice your desire to become a naturalist; I say to you upon choosing this field as your life's work: I say—

If...you can have a loving interest in nature throughout your life;

If...you can maintain that interest and never grow weary of learning more about nature;

If...you can work in the narrow field of naturalist jobs that is often without riches or fame, leading only to the satisfaction of sharing discoveries with others;

If...you can believe in the good of our wilderness and speak for its protection;

If...you can be a conservationist and understand the fact that wildlife is plentiful or scarce, healthy or sick, according to the way we use our natural resources;

If...you can find continual pleasure in the flight of a bird or the freshness of a flower or the design of a mineral;

If...you can be patient with all living creatures, friendly or unfriendly, and remember that all life is precious;

If...you can work beyond the thrill of the chase [ducklings] and still retain your enthusiasm to practice nature interpretation;

If...you can believe that there are spiritual values and aesthetic qualities connected with nature;

If...you can keep observing nature and find continual joy in that relationship even above other interests that come and go;

If...you can meet these standards and carry them through time—

Then you will be a naturalist, my boy!!"

[With apologies to Rudyard Kipling and his poem, "IF"]

I would be shocked if some of those students

I was shocked by the book Bob Thoe of Oroville loaned me! "Flattened Fauna," by Roger M. Knutson; "A Field Guide to Common [dead] Animals of Roads, Streets, and Highways." (Published 1987). The grotesque subject is almost an insult to the fine natural history field guides available today for identifying [live] animals.

Animals killed on the roadways are a terrible tragedy, with untold thousands struck across the country every day. Although I will admit that on some cross country trips I have kept a count of some of the casualties, I am not obsessed to set records. To make a kind of a joyous game out of listing the dead bodies in competitive races to see who can get the most flattened fauna, somewhat like Audubon bird listing, is bypassing the essential problem of too many road kills. "The current world record for one day's observation, dating back to 1933, is 598 rabbits on 50 miles of two-lane asphalt road near Boise, Idaho."

"A trip from Boston to Chicago along the usual routes could be the occasion for seeing, enjoying, and even identifying anywhere from 400 to 3,000 animals....The flattened fauna of our highways-road fauna—allows everyone to discover and describe animals in a habitat that is abundantly available." [Since when is a road a habitat? The animals involved were trying to get to a habitat on the other side.] There it is suggested by the author again; "enjoying" the sight of flattened animals. The most disconcerting note of the book is a lack of sympathy or compassion for those luckless feather and fur pancakes.

The kind of kills advocated for noting are "flattened animals in which even flies have lost interest." It says, "Dead and flattened animals on the road are a part of the common experience of all Americans. Most of these animals have been pressed on the road for several days and may have assumed unrecognizable shapes. This book is devoted to making the experience of seeing dead animals on the road meaningful, even enjoyable," so states the author.

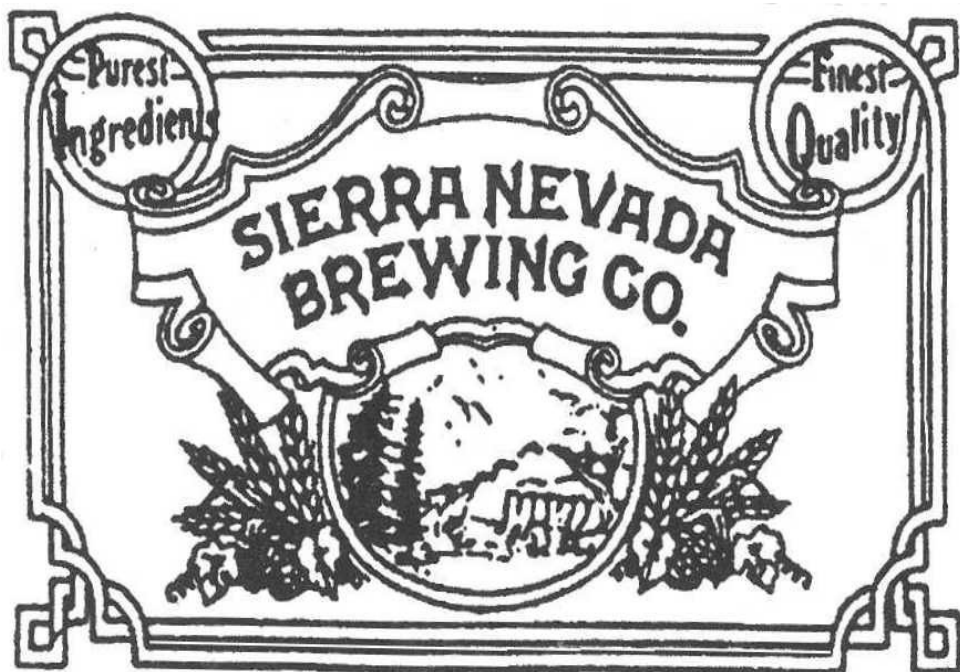
The book does suggest a national counting system of the flattened on the order of the Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count, "which would serve to alert the lovers of dead things as to increase or decrease of some favorite flattened species."

Instead of leaving bodies on the road to become even more flattened, they could be removed early by highway patrol or road cleaners to avoid other scavenger animals from being attracted to produce even more casualties, but it merely mentions that failure for the animal to eat fast enough "may carry a more permanent penalty: becoming the next course." Leaving dead animals on the roadways to be squashed into flattened cadavers for the game players is pathetic. When you can do it safely, it would behoove the humanness of mankind to remove the carcass to a more respective place on the soil where insects and scavengers can clean it up.

I didn't pursue the pages dealing with "best places" to find flatties, nor into the identification sector on interpreting the flattened remains, often no more than a silhouette with a few claws or feathers protruding. Is this the way you want to learn about wildlife?

"Stay with me on 62 and it will take you into Concord. As I say, it was a delicious evening.

The snake had come forth to die in a bloody S on the highway, the wheel upon its head, its bowels flat now and exposed. The turtle had come up too to cross the road and



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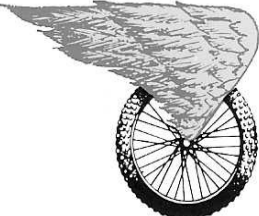


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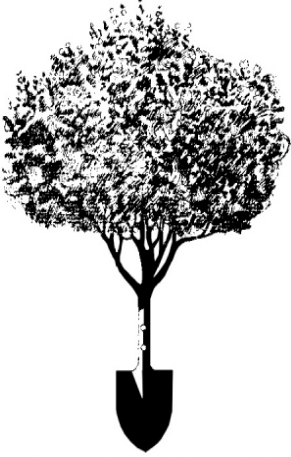
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