



# Yahi Group



News  Articles  Programs  Hikes and Outings  Meetings  Events

## The Sierra Club Campaign to Stop Clearcutting California



The election is over, and we have a new President in office and more hope for fundamental changes in the system.

The Campaign to Stop Clearcutting continues though. From September to November, I visited many Club groups and chapters as well as other organizations to present my slideshow, "Clearcut Nation." The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness and get people involved in working against the massive destruction occurring in our watersheds, especially that by Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI), California's largest landowner and owner of 58% of the industrial timberland in the state.

The clearcutting issue is like a really old, large tree that has a massive root system that spreads out much farther than the tree itself, because clearcutting is connected to so many other issues: climate change from deforestation, clean and abundant water, clean air, biodiversity of animals and plants, and the impact from massive use of herbicides to kill off the native vegetation that feeds everything from bees to deer.

In November, people who have joined the campaign called in to the headquarters of Home Depot, one of the larger buyers of SPI products, to put market pressure on the company not to buy from SPI. In the weeks after this call-in, Home Depot committed to talking more with our partner, ForestEthics, and SPI met with ForestEthics for the first time.

In the coming months, I'll be showing the slide show at many more places as well as working with different groups to staff tables at events and hand out information and collect signatures from businesses and individuals who are against clearcutting.

**Fast Facts:** Commercial logging/clearcutting and subsequent tree plantations increase the risk of disastrous fires by removing the large, fire-resistant trees while leaving behind highly flammable debris (slash) and tree seedlings that will need at least 30 to 40 years to become fire-resistant.

In a clearcut area, scientists find that the temperature increases 5-10 degrees while the humidity decreases 35%. Multiply this over many thousands of acres.

The source of 80% of the state's water supply is in forested areas.

## National Day of Service in Butte County

By Dave Garcia

Monday, January 19<sup>th</sup> was truly blessed with a fabulous day of sunshine and blue skies. All of the organizing, emails, phone calls and flyer postings came to fruition with over 141 area volunteers participating in President Obama's call to a National Day of Service. This was the perfect day to honor and commemorate Martin Luther King Junior's birthday by supporting and serving our communities and environment as Coretta King had requested and Congress enacted in 1994.

The local Sierra Club Yahi Group organized and teamed with California State Parks, City of Chico Park Division, Friends of Bidwell Park, Chico Creek Nature Center, and Habitat for Humanity to provide community service projects everyone could participate in on this historic day. Seven service projects were developed, publicized and posted on [www.USAservice.org](http://www.USAservice.org). Four of the projects filled to capacity and even had eager non-registered volunteers show up to participate.

City of Chico employee Raul Gonzalez, who led the bike path cleanup, said his project was a huge success. Volunteers arrived excited, energized and ready to work. Thirty volunteers collected 12 cubic yards of trash and debris along the five-mile bike path from Big Chico Creek to the airport. On the other projects, volunteers removed 1,100 feet of barbed wire along the Potter Ravine Trail at Lake Oroville; removed 1,500 invasive trees and saplings in Bidwell Park; cleared 2,400 square feet of invasive blackberry and periwinkle in Bidwell Park; planted five Santa Barbara sedges, 12 Deer Grass plants, and 10 Willow trees in Bidwell Park; worked in the native plant garden preparing for spring planting at Chico Creek Nature Center; planted over 30 Valley Oak seedlings at Woodson Bridge State Park; and removed trash, pruned trees and removed invasive trees in a pre-construction lot preparation for a Habitat for Humanity home.

A group of Pakistani students from CSU Chico International Student Exchange Program participated in the habitat restoration service project. They were in the U.S. to learn about community volunteer involvement programs, and got a real hands-on experience. We also had 15 eager students from the Oroville High School Ecology Club participate in the trail maintenance service project. Most of the students were of Hmong descent, obtaining their service experience in preparation for college.

All of this hard work and project accomplishments would not have been possible without the many dedicated agency staff and volunteer members who chose to work on their holiday. Many thanks go to Lisa Peters, Raul Gonzalez, Jim Dempsey, Tom McBride, Susan Mason, Don Button, and Nancy Schleiger, who organized and led the service projects. Carla Moreno, Gene McKenzie, Annette Carey, Jeanne Woodbury, Michelle Stenquist, Dave Garcia, Stephen Sayre, and Joanne Gerson were the Sierra Club Yahi Outings Leaders who volunteered to co-lead the service trips and make this whole project possible.

President Obama's call for a National Day of Service was an overwhelming success, with more than a million volunteers and 12,100



Barbed wire removal by the volunteers working on Potter Ravine Trail Lake Oroville, National Day of Service.

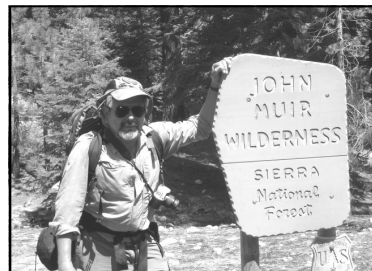
service projects across the nation rising to the challenge. Millions of Americans stood together and volunteered for team America to renew America, its neighborhoods, its communities, and its environment. With this new administration comes a sense of hope and the ushering in of a whole new era of social responsibility.

A community's power is based in its people, people who are willing to sacrifice their time and hard work for the community and its environment. These volunteers are truly the backbone of American democracy and the reason this nation is great. This is the meaning of true volunteerism and public service.

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# Message From the Chair



Dave Garcia

Greetings to all of our Yahi Members from Dave Garcia, the new Ex-Comm Chair. I wish to thank all who voted for me, and wish to say that I will try to do my best in executing my chair duties even though I feel overwhelmed already. We are in exciting times with a new administration that is working for and with the

people of this nation. I hope we will move forward in securing peace, security, and prosperity for all Americans. Unfortunately the fight has only begun, and we must stand united and be willing to sacrifice so that our future generations will prosper.

I have been in a whirlwind of activities since my appointment in January. I organized our local President-elect Obama's call for a National Day of Service by hosting seven service projects our local outings leaders helped co-lead (see National Day of Service story on page 1 of this newsletter). We accomplished a tremendous amount of work with the 141 volunteers who participated, and were front-page news on 1/20/09.

The Yahi Group participated in the Snow Goose Festival by staffing and providing a display booth which I built and developed, along with the themes and photo displays. Ex-Comm officers Annette Carey, Jan Hildenbrand and Laura Grossman and I helped staff the two-day event booth and sold over \$100 in trail guide books. Marily Woodhouse from the Coalition to Stop Clearcutting in California also staffed the booth, and we obtained nearly 100 signatures on her petition. Please visit the website [www.stopclearcutting.org](http://www.stopclearcutting.org) and learn about this practice that is destroying our watersheds and poisoning our drinking water. The science and the photos are overwhelming, and petition signing is urgent.

Some of you received a phone call or email from me soliciting your participation in the National Day of Service event. You can expect future calls from me requesting your help and assistance. Democracy is not a passive process, it requires

## About This Newsletter

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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 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.

vigilance and sacrifice. A club or organization is only as good as its members. For the Yahi Group to grow, be effective and successful, all of its members must participate. We all need to support our officers and outings leaders, they cannot run the club alone. Participate, attend outings and programs, meet members, make new friends, and bathe in the joy of camaraderie.

My objectives and goals as the Ex-Comm Chair are as follows:

- (1) Challenge each Yahi member to recruit one new Sierra Club member. The Sierra Club, like many other institutions in these economic times, needs money. Give the Sierra Club as a birthday, graduation, friendship or Christmas gift to your friends, family or neighbors. Help spread the philosophy of conservation and a healthy environment. I've already recruited three friends and family members.
- (2) Reduce our annual newsletter postage cost of \$1,590, which is depleting our club funds, by putting the newsletter online and starting a voluntary online newsletter group. Advertise a "No Mail List" and "Save a Tree" online newsletter campaign in our next newsletter. Mail a paper newsletter only to members who request it.
- (3) Organize a fund-raising committee for developing and implementing fund-raising events to increase our treasury funds. The national and chapter officers are reducing our funds due to club financial difficulties.
- (4) Continue Yahi monthly programs and maybe increase to twice a month in Chico and Oroville. Recruit volunteers to help host the programs.
- (5) Improve the image of the Sierra Club as a community organization by creating positive press events.
- (6) Post a questionnaire in the next newsletter about (a) ideas for fund-raising activities and volunteer sign-ups to coordinate them; (b) ideas for implementing an online newsletter program; (c) a vote tally for members interested in holding programs in Oroville; (d) what members like best about the Yahi Group; and (e) what members would like the Yahi Group to accomplish.
- (7) Build alliances with public agencies and other conservation organizations.
- (8) Improve club email communications.

I am hopeful that we can accomplish these goals. Our new outstanding Ex-Comm members of Gudrun Sweatt, Vice-Chair; Annette Carey, Secretary; Jan Hildenbrand, and Barney Hope, will be discussing these objectives and looking for input from our members.

In this economy, more than ever we need to stand together and support our community and our environment. A healthy environment sustains healthy families. Clean air, clean water, clean energy, safe food, sustainable forests and agriculture, freedom from pollution and poisons are family values we should all strive for. Our nation, our economy, our communities, our children, and our environment cannot endure another four years of multinational corporations running our nation.

We the people must unite and demand a sustainable society for our children and our future. In the words of Tim DeChristopher (Bidder 70), who risked his freedom to protect our public lands from greedy oil companies, "Hopefully all of us will realize that we are the ones we have been waiting for and each of us faces our own opportunities to make a difference."

Explore, enjoy, and protect the planet!

Sincerely, Dave Garcia

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Linda Stuke: 530-345-2696

*She will relay inquiries or comments to the appropriate person.*

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## Conservation Notes:

### What Difference Does the Mother Lode Chapter Make To Our Yahi Group?

Many of us *have hope*, at last, for positive environmental changes from our new US President. Yet we are aware of major ground, water, and air challenges faced by our country and the world, and so hope that the Obama administration continues to confront them effectively, e.g., supporting states' efforts to reduce CO2 levels. Of concern to many, as I write this at the end of January, is the following: to what degree disastrous environmental compromises are going to be made in order to get the California legislature to vote for needed economic policy changes. For example, our premiere check on environmental destruction, *CEQA* (the California Environmental Quality Act), is at risk right now.

But we can have faith that the Yahi Executive Committee and other Yahi members will bring about exciting changes for our club; some have already happened this year – as reported in this paper. Together with your help we might be able to address, locally, the priorities of the lobbying wing of the state's Sierra Club, *i.e.*, *Sierra Club California*. Their 2009 priorities are: **1. Fighting Global Warming, Generating Clean Energy and Stimulating Green Jobs** **2. Safeguarding Our Water Supply;** **3. Protecting Consumers from Toxic Products;** and **4. Preserving Our Natural Heritage.** (See <http://www.sierraclubcalifornia.org> for more details.)

The Yahi Group belongs to the Sacramento-based Mother Lode Chapter (MLC) of the Sierra Club. Each of the MLC's 11 groups is required to send a representative to the MLC meetings. (Our *subvention*, or financial allowance, depends on it!) Since I am continuing on as the Yahi Group's Conservation Chair as well as the Yahi representative of our Group to the MLC, I would like to briefly discuss how our conservation concerns relate to the chapter. My overall roles are both fascinating and tedious: attending quarterly meetings of the Chapter (usually in Sacramento) and answering much chapter-related email often on a daily basis. (Note that the Chapter paper is online at [www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/Bonanza](http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/Bonanza). Substitute *Outings* for *Bonanza*, if you want to review our 11 groups' numerous outings.)

And the content of MLC Conservation and Executive Committee meetings? I cannot give justice to all that is covered (the agenda last time was a full two page single spaced outline), but I can present you with some examples of topics covered. Here are samples from the meeting on 1/11/09:

1- One of the 5 *Action Items* we discussed involved the **Delta**, *e.g.*, our state's *plans* for changing the flow of river water to add to the water supply south of the Yahi region, and the MLC's concerns about the increased diversions already talking place. The MLC is emphasizing the need to increase conservation efforts, especially through more efficient uses of water. The club, therefore, is taking the stance that we want no infrastructure changes to the Delta without first exhausting conservation efforts (we know can be made). Of special concern is the Westlands Water District that gets a huge portion the water.

2- We also considered proposals about numerous *programs and litigation* for which MLC money is needed. Three of these included a) **fighting clear cutting by Sierra Pacific Industries**, b) **Shasta Gravel pit litigation**, and c) **helping McCloud activists fight the (now smaller) proposed Nestle water plant.**

3- We heard updates on 10 *current legal actions*. One of these was a very brief Yahi report about the once proposed four season development at **Dyer Mountain**. Together with local activists and two other environmental groups, we have been successful in fighting this development near Westwood in Lassen County. Local activists are seeking an environmentally friendly purchaser of the land, *i.e.*, one that is far more interested in *preservation* of this beautiful meadow and mountain area than in the kind of reckless development that had been proposed.

4- Among the seven *reports and campaigns* we heard was the MLC's **Save the Sierra Campaign**, headed by the very knowledgeable and energetic Marily Woodhouse. As you may know she was at a recent Yahi Program with her very impressive multimedia presentation about clear cutting. Subsequently, she organized a campaign to get Home Depot to terminate its purchases of clear cut wood from Sierra Pacific Industries. The success so far: the CEO now wants to discuss the issue with Marily! Among the other reports / campaigns was the proposal for **Berryessa Mt. National Conservation Area**, and the current victory over **Auburn Dam**. But we also discussed how some "victories" and other seemingly old concerns can pop up as issues all over again. For example, certain legislators might well resurrect the Auburn Dam proposal, in exchange for their support of budget legislation that their opponents are proposing.

5- Note: I thanked the MLC for its willingness to hear a Yahi guest (and member) at a prior meeting. Jim Brobeck had

## Bidwell Park Habitat Restoration Project

Friends of Bidwell Park volunteers have been removing invasive Japanese privet trees, European hackberry trees, Himalayan blackberry and Algerian ivy from a two-acre site in Lower Bidwell Park, working there at least one day a week since last May. So far, in about 400 hours, approximately one-third of the site has been cleared of invasive plants. Our goal is to provide space for the site's Western Sycamore, California bay, and Oregon ash trees, California grape, California spice bush and native blackberry to expand and thrive. We'll also be planting sedges and other low-growing native plants to suppress future weed growth.

To finish the initial removal of invasives in a reasonable length of time, we need more volunteer help. Most of the work isn't difficult, just time-consuming, but there are some challenging projects too. If you have a group that's looking for a team community service project, have some free time on a Sunday morning (see calendar at [www.FriendsofBidwellPark.org](http://www.FriendsofBidwellPark.org) for times and location), or could do some weed-pulling on your own, please contact Susan Mason at 892-1666.

## Bidwell Park Docent-led Tours

Friends of Bidwell Park is creating a series of Bidwell Park docent-led tours, focusing on various areas of the park. These tours will discuss park history, natural resources, park rules and etiquette, park management and funding, volunteer programs, etc. Preliminary tour areas and content are available at [www.FriendsofBidwellPark.org](http://www.FriendsofBidwellPark.org). These tours will be offered through the Chico Creek Nature Center, probably starting in late spring.

If there's any information that you would like to have included in these tours, or if you would like to help prepare the tours or know someone else who might want to help, please contact Susan Mason at 892-1666. FOBP is also looking for people who would be willing to participate in practice tours and critique the tour content.

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explained why we are concerned about the state's push to divert our ground and surface waters to other regions, without our first being able to find out if we will have adequate water to meet our own needs. The MLC then provided written support for a related local lawsuit.

As is usual, the MLC's Executive Committee meeting followed the Conservation meeting. There, many administrative tasks were undertaken, one of which included appointments to committees. I accepted an appointment to the MLC's **Climate Change and Energy Committee**. Much time was devoted to budgetary considerations, as the recession has hit the club very hard. We also voted on recommendations made by the morning conservation committee, such as awarding **\$5000 to fighting the Nestle water plant**, and setting aside **\$5000** for Marily Woodhouse to use for the **SPI campaign**.

*Personal comments:* I hope the discussion, above, of one meeting helped you to better understand the relationship between the Yahi Group and the Chapter. Noteworthy are many highly committed activists who participate at the MLC meetings with the devoted MLC staff Conservation Coordinator. I recommend your attendance wholeheartedly!

## YAH! Awards

At the most successful Yahi Christmas party, the following awards were given: Laura Grossman, Norma Odell and Robert Woods in recognition of their work the past two years on the Executive Committee; Mary Davis received hers in recognition of her work on the new-member volunteer list (that's how we keep up with you, new-member volunteers!); and last but not least, to thank Gene McKenzie and Carla Moreno for being our newsletter couriers to Gridley where the newsletter is printed and back to Chico for mailing.

Thank you so much!

## YAH! Programs: Spring 2009

**March 12:** The film "**Flow**" was described as "**the scariest movie at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.**" Join the Sierra Club in previewing and discussing parts of this film. Robert Redford commented, "Flow' opens our eyes about the greatest threat of our time – the global water crisis. It is a compelling and passionate film." Come learn about our most precious resource.

**April 15 (Wednesday):** Sierra Club member Mary Ann Pella-Donnelly, science teacher at Chico Junior High, will tell us about the **Pacific Leatherback Turtle's Use of Temperate Habitat**. She will give an in-depth slide show and explain what is now known about the largest turtle in the world.

**May 14:** Dave Garcia will be giving a presentation on **Sierra Club National Service Outings**. Come learn about the work and the sense of accomplishment, the camaraderie, and the cognition of making a difference.

Meetings are held in the Conference Room of the Chico Public Library at East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue and Sherman. Programs start at 7 P.M. and refreshments will be served. Meetings are open to the public. For further information, call 343-9277.

## Sierra Club Calendars

There are a few 2009 calendars and/or engagement books available at \$13. Contact Joanne Gerson at 893-2154 [joanne.gerson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joanne.gerson@sbcglobal.net).

## Call for Yosemite Valley Volunteers

LeConte Memorial Lodge is a 105-year-old visitor center, environmental education center and library operated by the Sierra Club in Yosemite National Park. We are looking for Sierra Club members who have visited Yosemite at least once within the last five years and are interested in volunteering for one week between May 2 and September 26.

Hours of operation are 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. Wednesday through Sunday and 7:30 to 10 P.M. for weekend evening programs on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All volunteers arrive on Saturday by 3 P.M. and volunteer at the Lodge that evening, then depart the following Saturday between 1 and 4 P.M., after volunteering. Training takes place on Sunday morning at 9 A.M.

Volunteers enjoy free entrance to Yosemite National Park, free camping at the campsite during the time they volunteer, and Monday and Tuesday to spend at their leisure. To provide the best opportunity for visitors, excellent communication skills are essential.

For more information, visit [www.sierraclub.org/education/leconte/volunteering.asp](http://www.sierraclub.org/education/leconte/volunteering.asp) or contact Bonnie Gisel, the LeConte Lodge curator, at [leconte.curator@sierraclub.org](mailto:leconte.curator@sierraclub.org) or (209) 403-6676 (before May 2). After May 2, call (209) 372-4542.

**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. 16<sup>th</sup> Street and B Street in Chico). Cost: \$4 per night. Some experience required, free lessons included. For more information call Karen, 899-8305 or Betty, 345-7205.

### March 2009

**Sunday, March 1 – Paradise Lake Hike** (grade 2, class A). Enjoy the spring beauty of Paradise Lake on this 5-6 mile hike on a flat path along the lake. Bring lunch, water and comfortable shoes. Meet at 9AM at the Chico Park & Ride or at Paradise Lake trailhead around 9:45AM. Entrance fee: \$2. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Annette, 872-3557.

**Saturday, March 7 – Cross Country Ski, Heart Lake Wilderness** (grade 2, class B). This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$\$for drivers. Unusual weather or snow conditions may change destination. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

**Saturday, March 7 - 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 springtime greenery and 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 9:30AM at the Five Mile Parking Area. Leader: Julian, 893-1994; Asst. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

**Thursday, March 12 - Yahi Program: The film "FLOW" was described as "the scariest movie at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival".** Join the Sierra Club in previewing and discussing parts of this film. Robert Redford commented "FLOW" opens our eyes about the greatest threat of our time - the global water crisis. It is a compelling and passionate film. come, learn about our most precious resource. Meetings are held in the Conference Room of the Chico Public Library at East 1st Avenue and Sherman. Programs start at 7PM and refreshments will be served. The meeting is open to the public. For further information call 343-9277.

**Saturday, March 14 - Butte College Wildlife Area (Educational) Hike** (Grade 1, Class A) Walk around the hidden natural areas of the campus with stream side forest, wetlands and grasslands. Mike Williams, a faculty member will guide us with emphasis on the fire recovery areas. Bring lunch (no food service open), water and money for carpool. Meet at 9:00AM at Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

**Saturday & Sunday, March 14-15 – Antelope Creek Proposed Wilderness Day Hike or Backpack (Educational)** (grade 2, class A). We'll hike the beautiful wildflower-strewn trail from High Trestle down to the old settler's camp near McClure Place and Antelope Creek. Those doing the day hike will continue on to end of the trail and be shuttled back. Those backpacking will camp by the beautiful creek and return by the same route the next day. Individual commissary for backpack. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM (for a 120-mile round-trip drive), Hog Lake parking lot at 10AM (off Hwy 36 east of Red Bluff) or at Paynes Creek store about 10:30AM. Rain cancels. Call leaders in advance to sign-up. Leader: Alan (backpack), 891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net) or Bill (day hike), 527-8203 (Red Bluff).

**Sunday, March 15 – Peace Valley, Sutter Buttes Hike (Educational)** (grade 2, class B). Come explore California's newly acquired Peace Valley, remotely sequestered behind the hilly ramparts of the north side of the Sutter Buttes. On this ranger-led hike we should see wildflowers, Indian artifacts and remains of pioneer settlements more than 100 years old. An approximately 6 mile hike with uneven ground which may be wet. Bring boots, lunch, water, carpool \$\$ and \$4 per car entrance fee. Limited to 25 participants. Call leader to reserve your space. Return time around 4:30PM. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 7:45AM. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

**Saturday, March 21 – Vina Plains Hike (Educational)** (grade 1, class A). The beautiful Vina Plains Preserve, managed by the Nature Conservancy, is located 12 miles north of Chico. The seasonal wetlands and grasslands support many rare and endangered species and come alive in spring with colorful wildflower displays and vernal pools. We will hike for about two hours and 1-2 miles on the uneven, but flat surface. Wear boots, layered clothing and a hat. Only a serious downpour will cancel. Please RSVP to Christianne Belles at 530-897-6370 x200 or [cbelles@thc.org](mailto:cbelles@thc.org).

Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9:30AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789; Asst. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

**Sunday, March 22 – Yahi Group Trail Maintenance Committee Meeting (Conservation)** Any Yahi Group members wishing to share ideas and decision-making about trail maintenance outings or other service projects should RSVP to attend this meeting at Outings Chair Alan Mendoza's house in Chico, from 6 – 9PM. Please email or call YGTMC Chair Stephen Sayre at [stephensayre@att.net](mailto:stephensayre@att.net) or 876-1391, or Outings Chair Alan Mendoza at [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net) or 891-8789 for location & directions. Please also email Stephen with suggestions for service projects or Alan if you may wish to become a local Sierra Club outings leader. In the spirit of President Obama's call to national service we would like to coordinate some of our outings or service projects with other organizations, especially those primarily serving younger folks, to share our knowledge with and help empower future leaders for conservation and environmental activism. If you're interested in becoming a Yahi Group outings leader see June 5-7 in this spring's outings schedule.

**Sunday March 22 – Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve Hike (Educational)** (grade 2, class A). We will follow the creek upstream for a round trip of 6 miles on a gently rolling road. This hike includes a shuttle and a moderately steep ½ mile descent early on. Bring lunch, water, binoculars and camera, carpool \$ and sturdy footwear. Wear layered clothes and boots. Limited to 20 participants. Call leader to sign up and get meeting place and time. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: John, 872-8258.

**Saturday, March 28 – Table Mountain Hike (Educational)** (grade 2, class A). Enjoy the wildflowers, views and waterfalls of spectacular Table Mountain on this moderately strenuous 6-8 mile hike. Will also discuss the on-going efforts to preserve this unique area. Bring plant guide, camera, lunch, water and sturdy footwear. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Return time around 4PM. Leader: Julian, 893-1994; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789

**Saturday, March 28 – Kayak or canoe North Forebay in Oroville (Educational).** Paddle the cool, calm waters of the North Forebay. We will search for aquatic wildlife on this leisurely 4 mile paddle. Bring your own kayak or canoe and you must wear a PFD to attend. The tour is limited to the first

12 boat sign-ups by calling 533-2357 or email [rangerdave@myvfw.com](mailto:rangerdave@myvfw.com). This is an entrance fee of \$4 to the park. Meet at the boat ramp at 8:30AM. Leader: Dave, 533-2357.

### April 2009

**Saturday, April 4 – Wildflower Walk (Conservation)** (grade 1, class A). Tidy tips, yellow carpet and popcorn flowers should all be out to greet us on the docent-led wildflower walk on or near the Bidwell Ranch Property. The walk will last about 1 and ½ to 2 hours. Wear sturdy shoes (it may be wet). Heavy rain will cancel. Meet at 1PM at the east end of the parking lot at Wildwood Park near the entrance to Upper Bidwell Park (at the corners of Manzanita and Wildwood). Leader: Betty, 345-7205; Asst. Leader: Pat Kelly.

**Saturday, April 4 - Bike Ride to Chico Airport** (grade 2, class A) Meet at 11:00AM at the Chico Nut Company, Esplanade & 11<sup>th</sup> Ave. (park on E 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. by Chico Nut Company parking lot). We'll take the nearby bike path to the Airport. While eating lunch by the runway we'll watch planes take off and land, then we can tour the airport museum. Round trip ride of 8 miles. Helmets required. Bring water and lunch. Rain cancels. Leader: Gene, 873-1552; Asst. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

**Saturday, April 11 – Deer Creek Hike** (grade 2, class B). Experience the full spring beauty of the Deer Creek trail in a 5-6 mile round-trip hike. Deer Creek in spring offers several small waterfalls as we pass through the newly green buds of Douglas fir, ponderosa pine and incense cedar. Bring lunch, water, carpool \$ and a camera. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Leader: Julian, 893-1994.

**Wednesday, April 15 - Sierra Club member, Mary Ann Pella-Donnelly, science teacher at Chico Jr. HS will tell us about Pacific Leatherback Turtle Use of Temperate Habitat.** She will give an in-depth slide show and explain what is now known about the largest turtle in the world. Meetings are held in the Conference Room of the Chico Public Library at East 1st Avenue and Sherman. Programs start at 7PM. and refreshments will be served. The meeting is open to the public. For further information call 343-9277.

**Saturday, April 18– Feather Falls Hike** (grade 2, class B). Come enjoy the 6<sup>th</sup> highest waterfall in the U.S. and the beautifully flowered and shaded, 8-9 mile round trip trail to it.

## 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](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net).

We'll take the lower trail to the overlook, then go above the falls for lunch by the creek and return via the upper trail. Please wear boots or sturdy hiking shoes and bring lunch, water and carpool \$\$\$. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or at the NW corner of the Oroville Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:35AM. Leader: Julian: 893-1994; Asst. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

**Saturday, April 18 – Yahi Group Trail Maintenance Committee Meeting (Conservation).** In an ongoing effort to make our decision-making more democratic, this will be a repeat and continuance of the Trail Maintenance Committee meeting of March 22, this time at the Paradise branch of the Butte County Library (5922 Clark Rd, just south of Elliot Rd.), from 6 to 9PM, to finalize summer service outings and confirm leaders. Other organization coordinators may also be invited. Please email Stephen Sayre, [stephensayre@att.net](mailto:stephensayre@att.net), to confirm attendance, for more information, to share your ideas or help with this effort, and to get on our contact list for future projects.

**Saturday, April 25 – PG&E Flume Trail Maintenance, TBA (Conservation)** (grade 1, class A). Pending confirmation with PG&E & coordination with the Stewardship Council managing their public lands, and permission from private landowners possibly affected, we hope to do some trail maintenance, and assess the need for more, along one of these popular hiking routes. Please email or call Stephen Sayre [stephensayre@att.net](mailto:stephensayre@att.net), 876-1391, for location & time, questions or suggestions, or with information and assistance.

### May 2009

**Friday-Sunday, May 1-3 – Castle Crags Camping and Hiking** (grade 2, class A) Enjoy beautiful Shasta County for a weekend of tent camping, amphitheater programs and evening campfires. Day one, we'll hike along the crystal clear water of the Sacramento River —an easy 3-mile round trip stroll, enjoy a potluck dinner and campfire. On Saturday, we'll join the Shasta Group for a strenuous (grade 2, class C) 6-mile round trip hike up a steep (2200'), but very scenic trail to Castle Dome. Bring a camera to capture the spectacular views of Castle Crags and Mt. Shasta. On Sunday, we'll take an easy 3-mile roundtrip hike to beautiful, Hawaiian-like Mossbrae Falls. For more info and to sign up, call leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leaders: John, 872-8258 or Bill, 527-8203.

**Saturday, May 9 – Yahi Group Fund Raiser \$17 Donation (Educational).** Support our local Sierra Club Group and enjoy a marvelous dinner and moonlight paddle. Feast on grilled chicken and Caesar salad with garlic bread followed by a guided sunset paddle on the cool, calm waters of the North Forebay. Muskrat, beaver and an assortment of riparian birds have been sighted in the past. Moon folklore and a tour of the constellations will climax our magical evening. Reserve your spot early for this popular paddle. You must have your own kayak, PFD, flashlight and warm non-cotton clothing to participate. Limited to the first 12 sign-ups by calling Dave Garcia or email [rangerdave@mynw.com](mailto:rangerdave@mynw.com). Leader: Dave: 533-2357.

**Sunday, May 10 – Chambers Creek Trail Exploration & Maintenance (Conservation)** (grade 2, class C). Bring long-handled loppers or a pulaski, lunch, & water for the 1920' climb, on good trail, to the bridge & falls, then a 3360' climb through fire-ravaged terrain to the top of the North Fork Feather River canyon, and perhaps also an off-trail exploratory loop over to Oliver Lake and Murphy Lake. Asst. leader will also bring extra tools. This will be up to 10 miles round-trip depending upon the snow elevation and energy level of volunteers. We will assess trail conditions as far up the trail as feasible, to see what last summer's fires and fire-suppression efforts did to the eastern part of the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized section of the High Lakes, now undergoing NEPA analysis. Lassen National Forest will probably still be accepting public comment on a management plan specifically for the High Lakes. This historic trail was

adopted by vote of the Yahi Group Trail Maintenance Committee last year, but fires and forest closures prevented scheduled maintenance trips. We also need to find more members with 4WD vehicles, prepared for transporting volunteers & tools on bad roads in the backcountry. Please bring \$ for drivers and meet for carpooling at Chico Park & Ride at 8:00AM or Spring Valley School (Hwy 70 and Pentz Rd.) at 8:30 for the pretty drive up Hwy 70 to trailhead opposite the Injun Jim campground at 2160' elevation. Leader: Stephen, [stephensayre@att.net](mailto:stephensayre@att.net), or 876-1391; Asst. Leader : Alan, 891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net).

**Thursday, May 14 - Dave Garcia will be giving a presentation on Sierra Club National Service Outings.** Come learn about the work and the sense of accomplishment, the camaraderie, and the cognition of making a difference. Meetings are held in the Conference Room of the Chico Public Library at East 1st Avenue and Sherman. Programs start at 7PM, and refreshments will be served. The meeting is open to the public. For further information call 343-9277.

**Saturday, May 16 - Lower Deer Creek** (grade 1, class A). A fairly easy stroll down a section of Deer Creek rarely visited. Spring flowers and new leaves on the trees should be abundant. Hopefully we'll catch a glimpse of Spring Run Chinook Salmon. You will see swimming holes you'll want to return to in the dog days of summer. Meet at Chico Park-N-Ride at 9:00AM, and return there by 4:00PM. Bring lunch, water, carpool \$, and your cameras or imagination to capture the north state's spring beauty. Leader John 872-8258 or [hubhollister@yahoo.com](mailto:hubhollister@yahoo.com).

**Thursday, May 21 – Sierra Club Newsletter Folding.** Join us to help fold 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.

**Saturday, May 23 – Sacramento River Loop Bike Ride** (grade 2, class A). A flat, leisurely 15 mile round trip past orchards along Sacramento Avenue to the Sacramento River and return to Chico on River Road. After lunch at Indian Fisheries, we'll take the Nature Trail there. Bring lunch and water. Helmet required. Meet at Subway Restaurant, corner of W. Sacramento Ave. and Nord Avenue at 10AM. Leader: Gene, 873-1552; Asst. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

**Sunday, May 24 - Green Gate to Five Mile** (grade 2, class A). A mostly downhill (except the last mile) trip through lovely Upper Bidwell Park. We should catch the end of the wildflowers, gorgeous butterflies, and the calming of the spring flood waters of Big Chico creek. This is a shuttle trip, leaving some cars at 5 mile to ferry drivers back to the green gate. The trip is for intermediate hikers as the distance and last mile are challenging to those who have spent most of their time resting through the winter and early spring. It is a perennial favorite. Meet at 5 Mile on the side with the paved parking lot at 9:00AM. We should return between 4 and 5:00PM. Bring lunch, water for the day, and minimal carpool \$. Leader John 872-8258 or [hubhollister@yahoo.com](mailto:hubhollister@yahoo.com).

### June 2009

**Friday-Sunday, June 5-7 - Outings Leader Training at Claire Tappan.** Interested in becoming a Yahi Group Leader or better developing your outdoor leadership skills? This is the opportunity for you. For only \$45 you get two nights at the Lodge (near Donner Summit), all meals and the best training available from top-notch National Sierra Club leaders on how to lead outings for the Sierra Club. The training will give you certification for leading both day trips and overnight backpacks. Sierra Club membership required. Sign up early as it will fill up by going to the website: [http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training/brochures/2009\\_California.asp](http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/training/brochures/2009_California.asp)

**Friday-Sunday, June 5-7 – Burney Falls Campout** (grade 2,

class A). Enjoy the beautiful campground at Burney Falls State Park, with its 129' spring-fed spectacular waterfall, several miles of easy hiking trails and large Lake Britton for canoeing/kayaking. To sign up and get more info call leader. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Annette, 872-3557.

### 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.

Distance Rating	Elevation Gain Rating	Sierra Club Hike
Grade 1: up to 6 miles	Class A: up to 1000 feet	
Grade 2: 6-10 miles	Class B: 1000-2000 feet	
Grade 3: 10-15 miles	Class C: 2000-3000 feet	
Grade 4: 15-20 miles	Class D: over 3000 feet	
Grade 5: over 20 miles		

## Ringling in the Holidays



Dave Garcia and Jazzy

Jazzy was bathed and anxious to get out the door. He was wearing his bright red ruffshoes and reindeer antlers. Always a big hit and moneymaker at the Salvation Army bell-ringing sessions, Jazzy enjoys all the attention and petting. Last year, bell-ringers raised over \$60,000, helping provide food for 872 families. Jazzy helped by raising over \$350 in just four hours of volunteering.

Today he was volunteering seven hours for the Sierra Club with his owner - me. It was a crisp morning in front of J.C. Penney that lingered into a warm lazy afternoon. I rang my Salvation Army bell to the rhythms of the New Orleans Christmas CD playing in the background. Broad smiles greeted us with laughter and remarks of "he's so cute," and "I love his shoes." Jazzy, the Bouvier des Flandres that looks like a bear, was weaving his magic as the Salvation Army donation kettle filled with money.

You get a great feeling of accomplishment and esteem while making people smile and laugh. A few hours of your time provides food and shelter for the less fortunate in the community, and it gives the people donating a sense of humanity. Bell-ringing for the Salvation Army is the true spirit of Christmas in bringing compassion, humanity, charity and goodwill to all involved.

It was an honor to help raise funds for the less fortunate and enjoy the sunny day at the same time. Other Sierra Club members who volunteered and made the day-long event a success were Jeanne Woodbury, Betty Volker, Steve Miller, Mike Sullivan, Tesh Bhattacharya, and Carla Moreno. Supporting and serving our community and environment is what the Sierra Club is all about.

## Bidwell Park Volunteer Events

For Bidwell Park volunteer opportunities listed below, project tools, instruction and water will be provided onsite - please bring your own water container if possible. Wear closed-toe shoes. Volunteers under 18 need to have a parent/guardian release form signed prior to work. Heavy rain cancels. For more information, contact the Volunteer Coordinator at (530)896-7831 or by email at [lspeters@ci.chico.ca.us](mailto:lspeters@ci.chico.ca.us) or check <http://friendsofbidwellpark.org>.

- **March 5, 12, 19, and 26, 2:00-4:30PM:** Volunteer Thursdays in the Park - Sycamore Restoration Site at One Mile.
- **March 19, 6:30-9:30PM:** Park Watch Training
- **April - Saturdays to be announced - 9:00AM to Noon:** Spring Trail Days in Upper Park.
- **April 16, 23, and 30, 2:00-4:30 P.M.:** Volunteer Thursdays in the Park - Sycamore Restoration Site at One Mile.
- **April 25, 10:00AM to 1:00PM:** Earth Day in Bidwell Park.
- **May 7 and 14, 2:00-4:30PM:** Volunteer Thursdays in the Park - Annie's Glen.
- **May - Saturdays to be announced - 9:00AM to Noon:** Spring Trail Days in Upper Park.
- **May 21, 2:00-4:30PM:** Volunteer Thursdays in the Park -

## The Steal Age

The new book by Donald Worster, "A Passion for Nature: The life of John Muir," is also a review of the conservation movement in America. Partly activated by Muir's nature writings, the conservation awakening started about the time of John's presence in California from 1868 to 1914.

As Muir observed the effects of uncontrolled use of the land, particularly the destruction caused by herding sheep and hogs in the Sierras and the destruction of habitat by rampant gold miners, he could sense the waste and greed that had become part of the New World's mentality.

Muir railed against the thoughtless use of natural resources, the slaughter of wildlife, the devastation of forests, and rampant agriculture, all primarily fueled by the products of steel - the plow and the ax and the gun. His vocal and literary passionate outcry, echoing from a naturalist's wanderings and observations, alerted influential people to start organizing some control and preservation through setting aside parks and national forests.

Muir became a reluctant leader in the conservation movement and, although a gifted, knowledgeable speaker, he was basically shy, happier to be out in the wild. Nevertheless, he accepted the presidency of the newly-formed 1892 Sierra Club and held that position for the remainder of his life. Not just a man of the woods, either: even though he wrote, "Going to the woods is going home," he became acquainted with and influenced just about every important person of that time through his widespread travels and lectures, making many friends for life through his friendly and concerned demeanor.

Even in Alaska's land of plenty, he denounced the ship's captain in the cruise of the Corwin for needlessly shooting a polar bear that was swimming beside the ship and for shooting walrus as so much target practice. He witnessed the destructive change that had come in Alaska when modern man moved in, slaying vast quantities of animal life and trading guns to the natives that lured them, too, into the overkill, much like what had happened in the lower states with buffalo and passenger pigeons.

Muir knew the plow and farming from his Wisconsin youth, and how flowery meadows became fields for crops. Tilling of the land to feed civilization while retaining some natural conditions has long been a problem all around the world. Without protected "reservations," even the tattered remnants of the original wildland would be lost.

When John Muir first came to California in April 1868 and walked across the Central Valley to Yosemite, wildflowers stretched away like a living carpet all across the unplowed land. "Here it is not as in our great western prairie," he wrote, "flowers sprinkled in the grass, but grass in the flowers." Muir marked off a square yard and sat down to inventory its vegetation. He carefully counted a total of 7,260 flower heads representing 16 species, in addition to thousands of grass panicles and tiny mosses. But alas, unarmed as with thorns and unable to defend themselves against man's plow and his livestock, the "bee-pastures" of California were reduced to an agricultural land.

*The battle for conservation will go on endlessly. It is part of the universal warfare between right and wrong.* - John Muir

Join the YAH! Blog

## Students Amazed By Clair Tappaan Lodge

"The Internet is on a different plane than Clair Tappaan Lodge," said one student as an argument against offering Wi/Fi services to its guests. Another student said, "Clair Tappaan is a family-oriented place. It is one of the few places left where you spend time with people...[if the Lodge had Wi/Fi] the guests would be spending all their time on the computer and would miss the beauty and amazing scenery around them."

Two groups of teenagers made a presentation to the membership meeting of the Sierra Nevada Group of the Sierra Club on November 21, 2008 in Nevada City. These were their responses to the question: "Should Clair Tappaan Lodge (CTL) offer Wi/Fi to their guests?"

The teenagers, under two different programs, spent time at Clair Tappaan Lodge, the Sierra Club's lodge at Donner Pass, in the summer of 2008. The South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) and Synergia Learning Ventures each received a small grant from the Sierra Nevada Group's \$3,000 Wilcher Award in September 2007 for outstanding work in fund-raising. Synergia's students spent time getting to know and interviewing many diverse visitors as they compiled a DVD about the Lodge and the experience it offers. SYRCL incorporated the overnight stay at CTL into their water studies and leadership programs.

One of the comments from both groups was how quickly they became a community with each other and with the other guests. They were surprised to interact with people of different ages, who were from different locations in the U.S. and from diverse ethnicities. Other groups were at the Lodge participating in a grandparents/grandkids outing and an Inner Cities outing. What's more, they found values and ideas in common, and that amazed them too. A common sentiment expressed was, "In a hotel, I never would have even met these people or talked with them. But at Clair Tappaan, that's what happens while you're eating in the dining room, or when you're washing dishes with someone from North Carolina or Houston or places like that."

They had "amazing" experiences in the outdoors. "Amazing," "awesome," "beautiful" were words used over and over as the students eloquently described their life-changing experiences communing with nature and with each other. A message they sent was, "Sierra Club, keep the Lodge and advertise it so lots of people will come and bring their children so they can see the beauty around them and make friends with people from all over the U.S. Keep Clair Tappaan forever so I can bring my family, my friends and my own children in the future."

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

Join today and receive a FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag



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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.



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## National Forest Logging Issues

The Lassen Forest Preservation Group, the forestry committee of the Yahi Group Sierra Club, has been working on several large Lassen National Forest (LNF) projects since we updated you last August. We have spent much of our time on the Hat Creek Ranger District, northwest of Lassen National Park, studying and planning with the Forest Service on the North 49 logging project. This project has been appealed, litigated, and finally resolved over the last four years. It is a very large project - 10,000 acres - and will be done in stages. After each stage, we will have the opportunity to see and study the results of the logging.

Most of the logging projects now proposed have new prescriptions to "restore" the forest. Some logging prescriptions thin heavily around large old trees, and also cut larger numbers of white fir. The theory is, as we have eliminated wildfire, these large old trees are suffering and white fir is now unnaturally dominating the forest makeup. This is important, as white fir is a less fire-resistant species, and large old trees generally withstand most wildfire. There are also often prescriptions for oak and aspen woodlands and meadows, as these have also been negatively affected by lack of fire, grazing, and past logging practice.

Another project we have been working on for years is the Creeks project. This 10,000-acre project stretches from Humberg and Humboldt summits east down to Yellow Creek. It is one of the most biologically diverse and ecologically important regions in the Lassen National Forest. Several major creeks drain to the Feather River, making fisheries and water quality a huge issue. The area is also home to the healthiest numbers of California Spotted Owl, migratory songbirds, American Marten, and Northern Goshawk on the LNF.

This area was not burned in the most recent fires, but

did burn during the Storrie fire. The Storrie fire was generally beneficial to the area. Presently we are negotiating with the U.S. Forest Service and other interested parties on this project. We feel confident, especially with a new administration in Washington, that we can design a project that will be beneficial to the ecology of our wildlands. Restoration ecology is a very new science, and we are proceeding with caution!

It was a very busy summer with many fires in our region. Many of those were beneficial to the forest ecology, but there were those close to communities where people very sadly lost their homes and forests. As you are probably aware, there is a lot of controversy regarding forest fire management and prevention. Fire ecology is another fairly new science, and fortunately there is more and more research being done. The Sierra Club depends on this science to shape policy regarding logging pre-and post-fire.

Wildfire is a natural process that has been excluded from our native landscapes for a century. During this time we also logged, grazed and developed most of our wildlands. Returning the forest to "natural" or true "historical conditions" is impossible. Global warming, pollution, population, water usage, land development and historical land uses will preclude that. As I have mentioned in past articles, the Sierra Club generally supports thinning projects close to communities and along roads. Some of these projects are finished or ongoing in Prattville, Butte Meadows, Jonesville, Mineral, and near the High Lakes. These projects remove the smaller trees and leave the forests in a more fire-resilient condition.

Considering the state of the economy right now, it is difficult to predict how much logging will take place

over the next few years. Loggers work on a very small profit margin, and there is already a huge surplus of logs from clear-cut Sierra Pacific lands. With the downturn in construction, there is very little market for timber. This may be an opportunity to look to alternative markets such as wood chipping, small log construction, and cogeneration of energy from forest waste products.

We also comment on some private land logging projects in our vicinity, but if you have taken a trip up into the foothills, you will see that the clearcutting continues. The Sierra Club has hired Marily Woodhouse to make presentations and educate the public regarding the travesty of private land logging. It is a long process and the laws are not in our favor. If you are interested in working on private land logging issues, please contact Marily at [marily.woodhouse@mlc.sierraclub.org](mailto:marily.woodhouse@mlc.sierraclub.org). Please contact me, Patricia Puterbaugh, at [cohasset@shocking.com](mailto:cohasset@shocking.com) regarding National Forest issues.

## Forest Travel Management Process Deeply Flawed

As you may know, our National Forests are undergoing Travel Management analysis in response to a November 9, 2005 Final Rule in the Federal Register directing Federal agencies "to ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands."

Previous regulations "prohibited trail construction and operation of vehicles in a manner damaging to the land, wildlife, or vegetation. However, these regulations have not proven sufficient to control proliferation of routes or environmental damage."

The Travel Management EISs will designate which user-created routes will be added to the National Forest Transportation System. Temporary Forest Orders have recently been implemented on each National Forest to ban off-road motorized travel to protect resources and help prevent additional user-created routes from being established.

On Lassen NF 1145 miles of miles of user-created OHV routes were discovered, but only 37 miles of those (3.2%) were considered suitable for possible inclusion in the National Forest Transportation System. On Plumas NF 1109 miles of unauthorized routes were found, but up to 364 miles (32.8 %) are proposed to be added to the NFTS, though many of those would be closed during the winter.

Unfortunately, according to the PNF Travel Management DEIS, p. 9, "The responsible official has determined that existing National Forest Transportation System roads and trails will not be considered for repair, reconstruction, or decommissioning as part of this proposal."

"Re-evaluation of previous decisions that established the current NFTS is not necessary for implementing 36 CFR 212, Subpart B of the Travel Management Rule." This means that comments requesting closure of any system roads will be dismissed as beyond the scope of this process. This was confirmed by the Travel Management Team Leader for Plumas NF, even though all alternatives analyzed in the Plumas NF DEIS, except alternative 4, show system roads into the Middle Fork Feather River Wild & Scenic corridor where no roads were authorized by Congress.

"Decommissioning occurs on an ongoing basis when roads and trails are no longer needed or are relocated for resource protection. Typically this occurs as part of vegetation

management projects, watershed restoration projects, fuel treatment projects, and trail construction projects."

That same document, on page 3, states, however, that with such previous projects, with the Plumas National Forest Land & Resource Management Plan itself, and with the Roads Analysis Process, only 56 miles of system roads and 91 miles of unclassified roads have been decommissioned on Plumas NF!

There are already 4,137 miles of system roads on Plumas NF; and a look at their maps shows that in many areas there are more than two miles of road per square mile.

Under intense pressure from Off Highway Vehicles users alarmed at the banning of cross-country motorized travel, the Forest Service is analyzing addition of many routes specifically for ATVs and motorcycles, plus considering the downgrading of some roads to allow loop drives and better access by such green-sticker vehicles to dispersed recreation sites.

However, to reduce the cumulative negative effects to watersheds and wildlife from such additional routes, a better strategy would include closure of redundant system roads in high-road-density areas.

Though distributing motor vehicle usage over the Forest results in less intense usage on any one route, in many places there are already plenty of road choices, if green-sticker vehicles were allowed on all system roads, even if many system roads were decommissioned.

That seems like a better compromise than what is proposed. Let the ATV and motorcycle users utilize the whole Forest road network, but close a lot of those system roads, especially routes in sensitive wildlife habitat and wherever there are now relatively low-road-density areas connecting such habitat, to allow for more unimpeded wildlife migration and genetic renewal of the species living in our National Forests.

On Plumas NF, all four alternatives analyzed for reducing the miles of unauthorized routes significantly reduce direct and indirect negative effects to habitat connectivity for marten, for example, over the no-action alternative.

Motorized trail-associated factors affecting marten include trapping, poaching, collisions, displacement or avoidance, habitat loss or fragmentation, edge effects,

reduction of snags and down wood, movement barrier or filter, routes for competitors, and alteration of meadow hydrology and vegetation having a negative effect on prey abundance.

Imagine how much better a chance for survival such old-growth-associated species would have if all roads within their forest home were analyzed for closure rather than just unauthorized routes.

The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail connects many types of roadless areas, which are refuges for many species besides humans, and could be managed for better wildlife habitat connectivity, as well as for quiet recreation, if many unnecessary systems roads adjacent to or crossing that non-motorized trail were closed.

The Sierra Club's guidelines regarding Off Highway Vehicle use include considering environmental impact and user interference, analyzing whether allowing motorized routes are appropriate for the overall area, closing all but one of several closely parallel routes, and where possible choosing route boundaries that are naturally self-enforcing.

As of this writing, comments on the Plumas NF Travel Management DEIS were due February 16<sup>th</sup> (though that may be extended), while the 45-day comment period for the DEIS on Lassen NF is expected to start by March 4<sup>th</sup>. More letters for the wildlife and for quiet, non-motorized recreation are needed.



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