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Group



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

# Yahi Group Online Newsletter

## March, April, May, June 2010

### SOS: Save Our State Parks

*By David Garcia, Yahi Group Chair*

Our natural, scenic and historic state heritage is in grave peril. Our world-renowned California State Parks have been on the brink of closure the last three years in a row. Governor Schwarzenegger threatened to close 80% of all our state parks just this last year.

California State Parks are on a budget roller coaster because they are funded through the state general fund, which is controlled by the state legislature. The total state park budget is less than 1% of the state general fund, but the legislature continues to cut the state park budget every year. This has continued even though it has been proven that every dollar invested in state parks generates \$2.40 to the surrounding communities – which translates into Jobs, Jobs, Jobs!

California State Parks are falling apart because of chronic underfunding. Budget cuts are causing State Parks to fall severely behind in needed maintenance and infrastructure repairs: a backlog of more than \$1 billion already exists. Our

State Parks are becoming less available to the public and are at serious risk of irreversible damage.

California State Parks need a stable, reliable and adequate source of funding. This is why the California State Park Foundation, Audubon California, and the Sierra Club support the **State Park and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010**.

The Trust Fund would be funded by an \$18 annual State Park Access Pass surcharge on all California cars, motorcycles and RVs that would be collected by the Department of Motor Vehicles as part of the annual vehicle license fee. Vehicles subject to this surcharge and all occupants in those vehicles would have free day use admission to all State Parks throughout the year. The Sierra Club needs your help in qualifying this initiative for the 2010 ballot. We need your help in collecting 700,000 signatures of registered California voters by April 2010. If you have three or four hours to spare, contact me at

[rangerdave@mynvw.com](mailto:rangerdave@mynvw.com) to team up and collect signatures at shopping centers in Chico and Oroville. The future of our state parks is at risk. Support our public trusts and be a part of the dreams of our forefathers who preserved these lands for posterity.

The Trust Fund revenues could only be spent on State Parks, wildlife, natural lands and ocean conservation programs. The Trust Fund revenues would amount to approximately \$500 million each year, and 85% would be allocated to State Parks and

15% to other state wildlife and ocean protection agencies.

With a new dedicated revenue stream in place, approximately \$130 million of General Fund dollars that provide a portion of overall State Park funding would now be available for other vital needs such as schools, health care, social services or public safety, making it a win-win situation for all agencies. For more detailed information on the initiative, please log on to [www.calparks.org](http://www.calparks.org).

# YAH! Club News

## Message From the Chair

By Dave Garcia, Yahi Chair

Greetings! We have started a new year and are busier than ever. Our Christmas party at Gooney Bird was a success, with 30 members enjoying good company, good food, and raising over \$280 for the Yahi Group. Two outgoing Executive Committee (Ex-Com) officers, Barney Hope and Goodie Sweatt, have been replaced by incoming officers Carla Moreno and Vice-chair David McKinney.

The Sierra Club is going through some difficult financial times like everyone else because of the economy. Our Mother Lode Chapter is passing down the financial squeeze by reducing our Yahi Group funds. We have also been told to curb our spending and to develop some fund-raising activities to maintain our budget. The Ex-Com is open to suggestions and ideas for possible fund-raising projects. We also reduced our budget expenses immediately by \$800 by changing

the Yahi Newsletter printing to three times a year instead of four. The newsletter is our largest budget expense and will now be printed in March, July and November.

We are still in the process of convincing members to convert to our online newsletter which is in color and is easily accessed by Googling "Yahi Group." Seventy-one percent of the world's paper supply is harvested from our forests, not tree farms. Did you know that a ton of recycled paper saves 17 trees, 380 gallons of oil, three cubic yards of landfill, 4,000 kilowatts of energy and 7,000 gallons of water? Imagine how much more of our precious resources you would be saving by signing up for our online newsletter. Please contact us ([yahinews@comcast.net](mailto:yahinews@comcast.net)) and become part of the culture change you want for this world.

Water issues continue to be a major priority, from the California State Drought Water Bank Environmental Impact Report (EIR) issue, to the water element in the Butte County General Plan 2030, to the Crystal Geyser water bottling plant proposed in Orland. Conservation Chair Grace Marvin and I spent half a day going door to door in Orland, handing out educational flyers with Orland's Save Our Water Resources (SOWR) citizen group, explaining some of the consequences of a bottling plant in the community without first conducting an EIR.

The Sierra Club has a strong stance against water privatization and commodification. The Club believes, "water is a public resource, not a commodity, and access to clean, sufficient and affordable drinking water is a human right necessary for human health and survival." Water is the source of all life, and multinational corporations are commodifying water worldwide and making billions of dollars on it: \$10 billion is spent on bottled water each year in the U.S., and multinational corporations like Nestlé and Crystal Geyser are in our backyards to profit from our naivety. We must all unite and work cooperatively to protect our precious resource and to stifle these multinational corporations' exploitive schemes. We must all remember, *"the most common way people give up their power is thinking they don't have any"* [Alice Walker].

### Newsletter Information

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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, June 1, October 1. A one week extension is available if the submission is sent by e-mail and advance advisory has been provided that the article is forthcoming. Submissions will be returned if specifically requested and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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

### Join the YAH! Blog

<http://yahinews.blogspot.com>

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# YAH! Club News

## YAH! Conservation Priorities for 2010

By Grace Marvin, Yahi Conservation Chair

The Yahi Group has identified ten conservation priorities for 2010.

The club will continue to participate in such local events as the Endangered Species Faire, informational tabling at the Saturday Farmers' Market, offering ongoing monthly forums open to the public on conservation topics of interest, fund-raising to help our club's efforts, and supporting other organizations' conservation efforts, e.g., in the annual Sustainability Conference at CSU-Chico.

In addition, some specific conservation issues for the Yahi include:

1- Meeting with Forest Service officials re appropriate kinds and amounts of tree removal activities—especially in Lassen Forest (Patricia Puterbaugh & Jim Brobeck).

2-Helping out Mother Lode Chapter forests coordinator, Marilyn Woodhouse, in organizational activities aimed at reducing clearcutting. (We can celebrate the fact that the national club's new Executive Director, Michael Brune, fought hard against destructive logging practices in California!)

3-Reducing OHV roads and trails (Stephen Sayre).

4- Addressing air quality and climate change issues (Julian Zener on Chico's Sustainability Committee).

5- Water preservation: we do not know enough about our aquifers' recharging; thus we are assisting with BEC's efforts in preventing more water from being transferred out of the region. We also hope to raise awareness about the Governor's renewed attempt to build a disastrous peripheral canal.

6- Working with Orland to get an EIR done re bottled water plant; providing related input in Chico City and Butte County General Plans and Habitat Conservation Plans.

7 -Preserving remaining wildness in Upper Bidwell Park while protecting various areas from abuse, e.g., erosion of soil due to misuse of trails, inappropriate sports and other activities, etc. To help, we will try to find more volunteers to participate in related City Council, Planning, and Friends of Bidwell Park meetings.

8-Raising awareness among ourselves, city and county officials, and area residents about environmental concerns, e.g., participating in city and county environmental meetings, attending/ participating in conservation-related conferences, writing letters to officials and to the newspapers, etc. (Of course, we hope that such activism will go on in many Yahi regions. Please let me know! We also may look for ways for the club to get involved with helping out the state parks; they, also, are victims of today's poor economy.)

9- We also could do more to raise awareness among the public about climate change issues that require more of our individual and community conservation efforts as well as adding needed "political" pressure to

get changes made -- on local, regional, state, and national levels.

10- At a recent city environmental meeting, a Chico staff person suggested that environmental groups could take a lead in planting trees, e.g., in parking lots, locally while raising awareness of their importance and value. This is a potentially excellent multi-club activity we should seriously consider.

Please let me know if you can help out with any of these activities. We need help, and we would love for you to find a cause that is truly meaningful to you!

## Buy a License Plate to Support Sierra Nevada Conservancy

By Olivia Diaz, Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee

Five years ago, the California legislature created a new state agency, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC). Since then, the Nevada County Land Trust along with other land trusts, the Nevada County Fire Safe Council, large and small non-profits, and counties throughout the Sierra and southern Cascades have benefited from their grant programs.

For the first time, state resources are coming to the Sierra – not enough, considering that the Sierra provides over 60% of California's water and some of the best recreation in the state, as well as timber and other resources – but it is a start, and a very good one.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy grant programs offer a chance to get rid of the "checkerboard" of private and public lands in the Tahoe National Forest.

Equally important is the fact that, because of the work of the staff and board of the SNC, people and organizations in the Sierra are starting to see themselves as part of the larger region. In time, this will foster solutions to problems and challenges in the Sierra and southern Cascades and bring more investment into the region.

You can help our entire region by buying one of the new Sierra Nevada license plates. It will be a source of continuing funding for the conservancy and will support its work. Sign up online at [www.sierralicenseplate.org/](http://www.sierralicenseplate.org/) and pass the brochure on to a friend. You can also order a license plate as a gift for that friend or relative who you know loves the Sierra as much as you do.

## Volunteers Needed

Yahi group is looking for volunteers who would enjoy helping plant trees in some parking areas to improve the environment and beautify Chico. We are in the beginning stages of planning this activity, but if you would be interested, please contact Annette at 872-3557.

## National Sierra Club 2010 Elections Coming This Spring

By Steve Krieg, National Sierra Club

The annual election for the Club's Board of Directors is now underway. Those eligible to vote in the national Sierra Club election will receive in the mail (or by Internet for those who chose the electronic delivery option) your national Sierra Club ballot. This will include information on the candidates and where you can find additional information on the Club's website.

The Sierra Club is a democratically structured organization at all levels. The Club requires the regular flow of views on policy and priorities from its grassroots membership in order to function well. Yearly participation in elections at all Club levels is a major membership obligation. Your Board of Directors is required to stand for election by the membership. This Board sets Club policy and budgets at the national level and works closely with the Executive Director and staff to operate the Club. Voting for candidates who express your views on how the Club should grow and change is both a privilege and responsibility of membership.

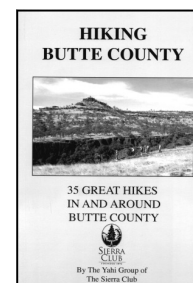
Members frequently state that they don't know the candidates and find it difficult to vote without learning more. You can learn more by asking questions of your group and chapter leadership and other experienced members you know. Visit the Club's election website:

[www.sierraclub.org/bod/2010election/default.aspx](http://www.sierraclub.org/bod/2010election/default.aspx)

This site provides links to additional information about candidates, and their views on a variety of issues facing the Club and the environment.

You should use your own judgment by taking several minutes to read the ballot statement of each candidate. Then make your choice and cast your vote. Even if you receive your election materials in the mail, please go to the user-friendly Internet voting site to save time and postage. Alternatively, you will find the ballot is quite straightforward and easy to mark and mail.

## YAH! Group Trail Guide



The hikes in this book are all within a relatively easy day's drive of the selected starting point of the Chico Park and Ride (Hwy 99 & Hwy 32). Included are trips to waterfalls, lakes, rugged canyons and gorges, secluded forests, peaks and wildflower-filled meadows.

Cost: \$10 plus shipping if bought directly  
Contact: Alan Mendoza - 530-891-8789 or [ajmendoza777@comcast.net](mailto:ajmendoza777@comcast.net)

# The Conservation Forum

## The Fight against Crystal Geyser is Stepping Up

By Grace Marvin, Yahi Group Conservation Chair

What a disappointment but not a real surprise! On February 1, the Orland City Council heard two lawyers and more than 30 members of Save Your Water Resources (SOWR) appealing the decision of Orland's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). TAC had voted to allow Crystal Geyser to build a water bottling plant without doing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). After several hours of powerful, very well-reasoned testimony the city council voted down our appeal unanimously. Our club and representatives of Butte Environmental Council (BEC) joined Orland's citizens -- who had formed SOWR -- in seeking a comprehensive EIR. We believe that it would show that Crystal Geyser would do more harm than good to Orland (as well as to the region's ecosystem).

Our Yahi Group became involved when a resident of Orland called on the club to help her fight Crystal Geyser's plans for Orland. Since our club's area includes Glenn County, where Orland is located, and because the Sierra Club as well as most Americans view water as a PUBLIC trust, the fit seemed very appropriate. Moreover, as indicated on the Sierra Club website, we have a strong stand against water privatization. Water bottling companies can lead to:

1. destruction of ecosystems, e.g., groundwater, streams and rivers (necessary for orchards in Orland's case)
2. increasing prices for public water,
3. decreasing safety and availability of public water,
4. proliferation of damaging plastics, and
5. false claims about the superiority of bottled water to tap water.

It did not hurt that Orland is only a half-hour drive from your Conservation Chair's home. Beginning in early fall, I drove to two TAC meetings and many other SOWR meetings, taking BEC representatives as my passengers. Our club's president, Dave Garcia, Sustainability activist, Julian Zener, and a BEC member helped hand out informative flyers to Orland residents for several hours the previous Saturday.

Orland's SOWR will continue to hold meetings, first addressing the need to raise money to pay for legal expenses. But we are determined! Some points that illustrate our desire to keep on fighting:

1-TAC acted as a planning commission, but it is not representative of the town: most members do not even live in Orland! Yet their (so-called) research on the issue was deemed valid by city council. We know that some individuals stand to benefit, economically, since Crystal Geyser would be using their land, but we do not

know what all has gone on behind closed doors. We do know, however, that a member of TAC had unsuccessfully pressured two leading county officials to declare that Crystal Geyser's plans for Orland would not raise problems for its water quality.

2- It can be extremely dangerous to farmers and other local citizens when new pumping of groundwater takes place. In this case, the pumping by this international company would be for consumption by consumers living elsewhere, who do not even NEED Orland's water. Too much of the public believe false claims that bottled water is superior to tap water or even filtered tap water.

3- We do not know how much water would need to be taken by Crystal Geyser beyond their planned 160 acre- feet per year--especially if the nearby PCE plume contaminates the groundwater and Crystal Geyser demands better water. (Calistoga was sued by Crystal Geyser when the water they wanted became contaminated.)

4-We do not know how much water Orland has, whether residents' wells and Orland's aquifer would be seriously affected by Crystal Geyser's pumping, or how Orland's aquifer interacts with the larger Tuscan aquifer upon which so many of in our region depend. Nor do know whether sufficient recharging can take place.

5- Questions remain about the huge amounts of waste water Crystal Geyser would produce in the process of blowing up and rinsing their plastic PET pre-forms, i.e., the bottles, in which water would be packaged.

6- Other kinds of pollution have not yet been adequately studied, including the degree to which emissions from trucks would affect air quality, and how noise from the chillers would disturb the rural tranquility of Orland. Moreover, our state is taking seriously the need to reduce greenhouse gases.

7- Decreasing amounts of snow pack mean we all must carefully plan our water usage, even while growing populations outside of Orland demand ever more water. Why is that important? The state is already insisting on getting more water from the north state, so local protection efforts are vital.

8- Truck traffic can also be expected to (a) cause safety dangers on rural roads as well as (b) raise expenses for Orland, since it will need new traffic signals and more road repairs. The net economic benefit that seems to sway Orland's politicians is questionable. While Crystal Geyser is promising 20 new jobs, we do not know how many will be filled by locals. Nor do we know if Crystal Geyser's other putative economic benefits for the town -- an increasing tax base and enticement for new businesses to locate there -- would be worth the decline in the multi-generation faith, that is, that there is enough good water available for farmers and their neighbors.

9- There are many other reasons for calling for an EIR which we hope to see our lawyers address. Please stay tuned to different types of media (and get involved if at all possible).

It was only last fall that we learned how citizens of McCloud were finally successful in keeping Nestle from building a water bottling plant. Nestle and Crystal Geyser are both eager to tap into new sources of ground water -- even when their operations harm the communities where they can establish themselves. May McCloud continue to be an inspiration to all of us who need to keep up the good fight and who do not want to buckle under to multi-billion-dollar corporations that cause damage to citizens and the environment alike.

## Vernal Pools 2010 Conference

By Barbara Vlamis, AquAlliance

This prestigious conference is brought to you by AquAlliance and its Vernal Pool Landscapes Committee and will be held on Thursday, March 25, 2010 at Sierra Nevada Brewing Company in Chico. Fieldtrips to explore some magnificent local sites will take place on Friday, March 26th. Sponsors include the Rose Foundation, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Department of Fish and Game.

Eminent scholars, agency representatives, and other professionals will present research and case studies regarding plant and animal species dependent on the vernal pool ecosystem, conservation efforts, legal cases, and management techniques that have been used to enhance the economic and habitat viability of certain lands. Ellen Bauder of San Diego State University will present the keynote address during the banquet: *Science and vernal pool conservation: research questions, methodologies and applications.*

California has lost 95% of the estimated five million acres of wetlands that were present in the 1780s (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service 2000). With the Central Valley growing at twice the rate as the rest of the state, vernal pool landscapes continue to be lost at an alarming rate. The conference will assist planners, ranchers, conservationists, students, and builders to understand the importance of the vernal pool ecosystem and what mechanisms exist or are currently under development to protect it.

**For more information, call 895-9420. To attend the conference, you may sign up online at [www.aqualliance.net](http://www.aqualliance.net).**



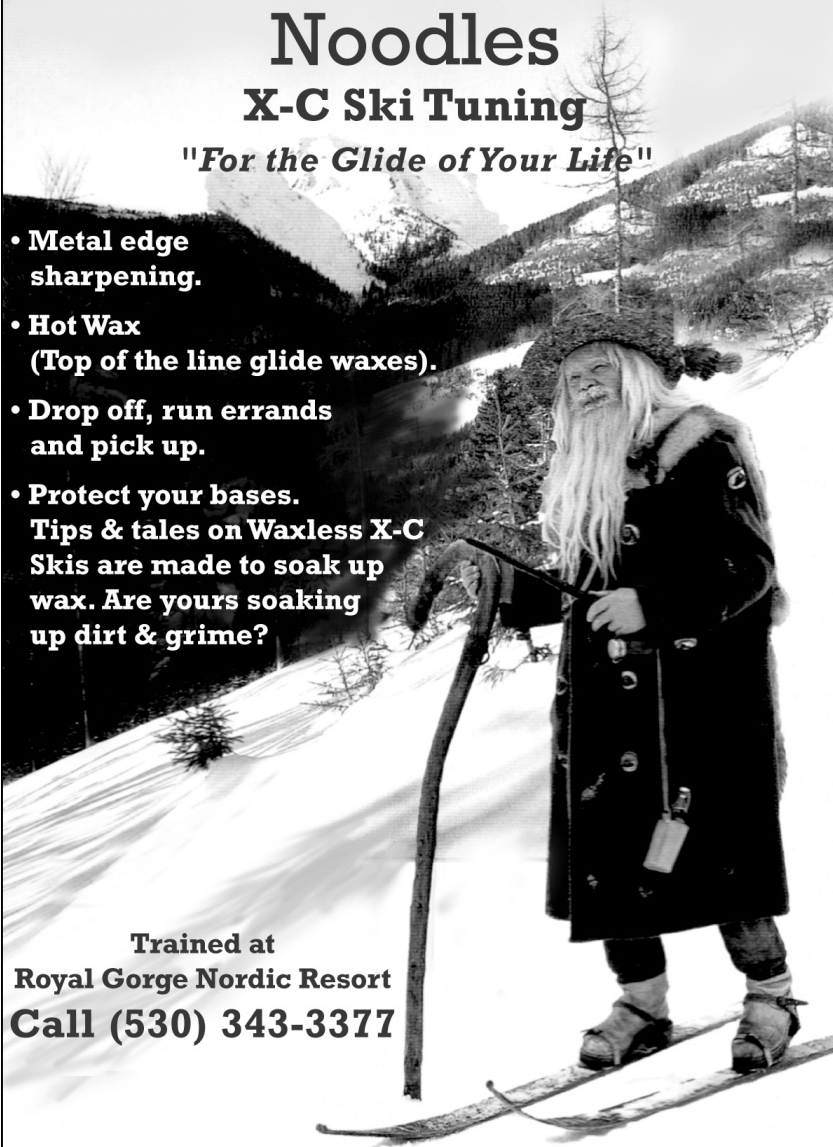
# YAH! Outings and Events: Spring 2010

## Yahi Spring 2010 Outings

(follow link below to current listings)

<http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/outings-f.htm>

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza



**Noodles**  
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## YAH! Spring Programs

By Gerda Lydon, Yahi Group Program Chair

Please join the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club at our monthly program meetings the second Wednesday of the month from 7 to 9 PM.

**March 10** - Barbara Hennigan, Natural Resources Chair of the Butte County League of Women Voters, will present "What you need to know about California hydrology, hydrogeology, history, water law, politics, and money in thirty minutes or so." Learn more about this very important subject for our area.

**April 14** - If you have wondered how Table Mountain was formed or why it has such spectacular wildflower displays, Albin Bills, retired botany professor from Butte College, will give a presentation of the wildflower display on Table Mountain. A very timely topic, inasmuch as the display should be spectacular this year due to the rains we've been getting.

**May 12** - Dave Garcia, Chair of the Yahi Group and retired State Park Ranger, will show us the film "I Drive 55." Watch and learn a simple way to help reduce our consumption, lessen carbon emissions and increase safety on our roadways.

**June 9** - Marianne Werner, Sierra Club member and retired instructor from Butte College, will tell us about the Mayan civilization: "The Day of the Dead, and Edward James and an Endeavor of Las Pozas."

The meetings are held in the conference room of the Butte County Library at East First Street and Sherman. Meetings are open to the public, and refreshments will be served. For further information, please call 343-9277.

# The Conservation Forum

## What Goes in the Skies?

By Rex Burress

Theodore Roosevelt, a bird lover who established 51 Federal Bird Reservations during his presidency in 1901-1909, would be aghast to know that in 2009 there were about 10,000 collisions between birds and airplanes!

During the early 1900s, there were only a few "gas buggies," few roads, and no "gas hawks" in the sky, although lack of wildlife laws was killing more birds than today's plane-congested atmosphere. Due to feather and egg hunters slaughtering millions of birds for the millinery "bird feather" business, many bird species were depleted and some approached extinction.

Roosevelt's first Bird Reservation (now National Wildlife Refuge), procured under the President's executive order, was Pelican Island in Florida, on March 14, 1903. The protective order, together with the Audubon Society and bird devotees, started a trend that saved the snowy egrets and other bird life. The establishment of the Lacey and Hewett Antiquities Act of 1906 allowed the President to acquire bird reservations and monuments without going through the slow objection-prone process of Congress. Roosevelt made conservation a universal endeavor by acquiring 230 million acres of National Refuges, Forests and Parks during his term. "More people were for the birds," with Theodore's preservationist / conservationist / naturalist inclinations!

In this energy-obsessed age, more birds are killed by giant windmill generators than by jet planes. The huge spinning blades strike birds of prey especially, and there seems to be no way to generate electricity without environmental consequences. Oil spills, dammed streams, water turbines and solar panels all alter habitats and imperil wildlife. What does aerial transmission of electronic communication do to the sensitive hearing of living things?

It's a jungle of dangers out there for unsuspecting birds. They fly into power lines and high-rise constructions including the Statue of Liberty, not to mention collisions with house windows. Many are smacked by automobiles, and hunters take a toll. Birds run a gauntlet of perils, and it's a wonder that reproduction can keep up with fatalities...and sometimes it doesn't.

There are other ominous things in Planet Earth's skies since the days when only birds, bats, pterosaurs, insects and the like flew there. The formidable meteorite and asteroid strikes, plus volcanic blasts, have clouded the skies with sun-blocking dust and debris in the past, and now industrial air pollution has affected the skies as well.

A lot goes on up there in air and space! Space stations, satellites and space junk are floating around our planet. Ever

## Lassen Preservation Group News

By Trish Puterbaugh

What a fabulous winter we have had so far. We had 18" of rain here in Cohasset during the biggest part of our January storms – that translates to a minimum of 15 feet of snow in the Sierras. What a gift! It also probably means that our group will not be doing any field trips into the Lassen Forest until very late in the spring.

We welcome anyone interested in National Forest management to accompany us on our field trips. Send an email to [cohasset@shocking.com](mailto:cohasset@shocking.com) and I will keep you on a mailing list. We travel to the Lassen National Forest (LNF) 1-3 times monthly during the summer and fall to monitor potential and ongoing logging projects.

Our last field trip was at the end of October to a project in the Almanor Ranger District (ARD) near Mineral. This is the Dry Hills "Forest Restoration Project," a Quincy Library Group (QLG) project that will log thousands of acres using Individual Tree Selection, Defensible Fuel Profile Zones, Group Selections and other methods. The objectives are to reduce fuels, restore the forest to a more fire-resilient, pre-settlement condition, and provide logs to regional mills. The site contains 3-4 California spotted Owl nests, several Northern Goshawk nests and American marten sightings. There is habitat for Mountain yellow-legged frog and potential for red fox. The creeks in the project – Martin, Nanny and Summit – are headwaters to Battle Creek, an anadromous fishery. The plan is to log trees up to 22-29.9 inches in the project area. The Lassen Forest Preservation Group (LFPG) has been monitoring the Mineral area since 1999. We will follow this plan as it unfolds, to steer the Forest Service toward a project that will reach their objectives, and also protect the species dependent on mature forests and riparian areas.

In October we also visited the Willow Springs Restoration Project in the Eagle Lake Ranger District (ELRD), southwest of Eagle Lake and east of Highway 44. This forest area is practically surrounded by clearcut private lands and rangeland. We have taken several trips to the area with Forest Service staff and have

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since mankind finally mimicked the birds and lifted above terra firma, the skies have been alive with activity.

There seems to be some kind of fallout all the time. I am reminded of a cartoon involving two hunters. One hunter says, "Duck," and the other fellow looks up to the sky and says, "Where?" only to be hit with a blob of bird defecation!

*What I say unto you, I say unto all, watch!*" [and watch out] – Mark 13:37

written extensive comments on the project. It is also a QLG project where group selection and Defensible Fuel Profile Zones are used as logging methods. While we agree with many objectives of the project we do not agree with the extent and intensity of the logging, in an area surrounded by clearcuts. We have also recently written comments on two Hat Creek Ranger District (HCRD) plans that are post-fire logging projects. Logging after fire is a very controversial subject, and new studies are showing the benefits of natural regeneration of burned forests and the huge benefits to plant and animal life after burns. Post-burn salvage logging and replanting has been the mantra for silviculturists for one hundred years. Using the newest science, we are attempting to show how post-fire habitat is absolutely essential to healthy forest ecology.

The Creeks Project, spanning the area between Humbug and Humboldt Summit in our backyard, is in the planning process. Several "hazard tree" projects have been proposed. A black oak, Ponderosa pine enhancement project and several aspen enhancement projects are in the planning process. The Whittington Project in the HCRD is just beginning planning, and the North 49 project near Hat Creek will begin logging this summer.

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) is busy filing lawsuits against the logging industry. Lawsuits often seem to be the only way to stop the destruction, especially clearcutting on private lands. CBD recently filed a lawsuit against the EPA for failing to evaluate and regulate nearly 400 pesticides that are killing endangered and sensitive species throughout the U.S. This will mostly affect private-land logging, where millions of pounds of chemicals are used, including atrazine after clearcutting to control brush and oak regeneration. In January, they also filed lawsuits against the California Department of Forestry (CDF) to halt logging plans for 5,000 acres across our Sierra Nevada and lower Cascades. As California is attempting to decrease its carbon footprint and decrease carbon emissions, clearcutting is obviously a clear contradiction. With huge negative impacts on our wildlife, water quality, fire resilience and biodiversity, there is no excuse to allow clearcutting in our California forests. We are very happy the CBD is filing these lawsuits, as there has been very little improvement in any forest practices in California for decades. Sierra Pacific Industries, the largest private landowner in the state, pretty much calls the shots.

The Lassen National Forest is a wealth of opportunity for us in the Yahi Chapter. At this time of the year there are many areas to cross-country ski, snowshoe, fish and camp. The summer brings more fun to hike, boat, bird-watch, swim and enjoy the mountains and foothills. Thank you for your support of our forest work.

# The Conservation Forum

## Controlling Uses of Natural Resources

By Rex Burress

A new item about the large-scale gathering of "chartreuse moss" from the Butte County region by "The Flower Market" of Chico, CA, to "scout, scavenge and shape" to supply the Rose Parade floats in Pasadena, made me think of our natural resource inventory.

I suspect the "moss" was actually staghorn lichen, but both mosses and lichens add to the habitat and beauty of those environments where they grow. It makes me uneasy when businesses invade the out-of-doors to harvest nature's products, especially when some new fad demands large quantities of material. Overuse can outpace recovery, and some things are not recoverable. Even cavemen and Indians seemed to have little consideration for conserving, but merely moved to a new location when animals became scarce. Human nature is often an attitude of "get all you can when you can where you can."

Nearly 4,000 acres on Oroville, California's Table Mountain is a protected wildflower reserve, a project of the State Wildlife Conservation Board, and one of the objectives was to save some rare mosses found there. There is always the threat that someone will get an idea to pack and sell moss or some other nature commodity, and greed will often creep in to expand the profit angle.

It is the "overuse" scenario that has been the culprit down through the ages, often started where no laws exist and no thought is given to conservation. By the time management is enacted, resources may be stripped, as we have seen with unregulated forest removal, passenger pigeons, buffalo, and a host of other losses all over the world. Even the California gold rush of 1849 not only stripped the streams of gold, but also decimated trees, terrain, and water quality – the birthplaces of pollution.

Rock hunting and lapidary are admirable hobbies, and at one time seekers of gemstones could go out into the desert or other suitable locales and find seemingly unlimited specimens on the surface. But over-collecting reduced good rocks until you had to dig for them, and some sites, like the choice Christmas Agate in a Nevada Black Rock Desert deposit were literally wiped out by "rock hogs" blasting and hauling it away by the truckload. Now a limit of 25 pounds plus one piece applies to petrified wood, and many sites, like Horse Canyon in the Mojave, are off limits.

I enjoy the beauty of staghorn lichen around Oakland Camp along Spanish Creek near Quincy, and Art Camp artisans use a judicious amount in craft work, but wholesale gathering for profit is a different story – a process that can disrupt the natural function of habitats. Lichen, for instance, takes many years to grow, as it does for a grand old monarch tree. Sample nature sparingly!

Natural resources are protected in parks, but it is in the larger private domain that a sense of land and resource stewardship is needed for healthy wild domains. Hunting and fishing regulations were finally established in America, but not before many wildlife populations succumbed.

At one time not only buffalo were plentiful, but even Lewis and Clark reported herds of up to 100 deer bunched along the Missouri River. By the early 1900s, they had been hunted out, especially when buckskin clothing came into vogue and hides were marketed. There were no deer, turkey, beaver or otters in Northern Missouri during the 1940s when I grew up there, but now those animals have been restocked by the Missouri Conservation Department and are plentiful, with an established hunting season.

Just as waterfowl, egrets and beaver have undergone declines in the past, improperly regulated mining and rampant lumbering have further degraded the country. Even the pursuit of ginseng and other desirable plants has had its hits, not only from collectors but also from habitat loss due to changes in land use.

The use of synthetic, scientific substitutes, planting natives, restocking animals, and conservation ethics can be the salvation of our natural resource legacy.

*In wildness lies the Preservation of the World. What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on...or if you can't tolerate the planet it is on? – Henry David Thoreau*

## Youth Scholarships At Tappaan

By Olivia Diaz, Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee

The Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee is proud to announce a new scholarship fund in the Sierra Club Foundation. Its purpose is to supplement funds needed by youth groups to participate in the environmental education programs at Clair Tappaan Lodge.

Proceeds from the successful Gala Anniversary Celebration in August 2009 went into this special fund and are earmarked for exposing young people to the beauty, ecology, history and need for conservation of the Donner Summit area of the Sierra Nevada.

To qualify for the funds, call the Lodge at (800) 879-6775 to obtain an application. Fill it out and send it to the Scholarship Committee for review. The mailing address is on the application form. The funds must include at least one overnight stay for environmental education at Clair Tappaan Lodge (CTL). A grant from the CTL fund at the Sierra Club Foundation can be used to augment funds raised by the school or group itself.

If you would like to help youth groups learn more about the environment, please share this information with local school teachers boy or girl scout leaders or other youth groups, to inform them about the Lodge and the wonderful program available there.

Another way to help is to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Clair Tappaan Lodge fund in the Sierra Club Foundation. Please make your check payable to Clair Tappaan Lodge – Sierra Club Foundation, and send it to Peter Lehmkuhl at the Lodge, P.O. Box 36, Norden, CA 95724.

## i Drive 55

By David Garcia

What a simple, effective and immediate way for each individual to make a collective change in 1) the reduction of our nation's oil consumption, 2) in the reduction of our nation's air pollution and 3) in the reduction of our nation's traffic collisions, vehicle damage, and traffic injuries (especially involving the severity of injury and fatalities).

It only takes a conscious commitment from each one of us to reduce these formidable factors. It is estimated that if everyone drove 55 the amount of petroleum saved would be equal the amount of foreign oil we import from the Persian Gulf.

This conscious commitment costs you nothing and actually saves you 20% to 50% of the money you spend on gasoline. You don't need to buy an expensive hybrid or electric car, or invest in some gas-saving contraption, it only takes a conscious commitment to want to change the business-as-usual economy that is ruining our communities, our economy, and our planet.

i Drive 55.org was created by Tim Castleman of Sacramento. Tim is a no-nonsense kind of guy who is challenging the fallacies of the giant petroleum corporations. Armed with facts, testimonials and backed by the laws of physics he shows on his website how you can save 20% to 50% on your gasoline bill and help protect and save our fragile planet.

Tim's new DVD titled **i Drive 55** was premiered at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival in Nevada City. We will be showing the DVD in the spring at one of Yahi's monthly programs. I will try to get Tim Castleman as the guest speaker also.

My wife and I have been lead-foots for years but realize now that it is not about us and our poor time management schedules but about a collective conscious commitment everyone can make right now and truly make a difference and it costs nothing, only better time management skills. I am trying hard to be a convert and slowing down whenever I go over 55, remembering I am doing this to help save polar bears.

I have a **free** limited supply of \$4 i Drive 55 bumper stickers for people who wish to grow the movement. Contact me at [rangerdave@mynvw.com](mailto:rangerdave@mynvw.com) for your free bumper sticker while supplies last. Please drive safely.

# The Conservation Forum

## Jaguars in America

By Rex Burress

On January 12, 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicated that they are setting aside habitat for the endangered jaguar that once lived throughout the Southwest. The cats were considered eliminated from the country until two were seen in 1996 in eastern Arizona.

In the ups and downs of policies, opinions, theories and beliefs, advancing jaguars is a far cry from the attitude toward predators in previous times during the settlement of the West, when the general thought was, "the only good varmint is a dead varmint."

The same attitude prevailed toward coyotes, wolves, fox, mountain lions, snakes, and practically any other animal with predatory ways of life. People thought they were doing a good turn for nature in killing meat-eaters, and especially livestock menaces. In fact, up into the 1940s, bounties were paid on coyotes and other large predators.

It is with sadness that I say on the Missouri farm in the 1940s, in environmental ignorance, farmers regularly killed anything able to kill livestock, especially "chicken" hawks, owls, weasels and fox. Steel traps were set on high poles in the pasture to catch hawks, a gruesome bit of misdirected information. Snapping turtles were killed in the belief that they

were wiping out catfish in the creek. Every snake was considered a poisonous critter and killed, especially the harmless hog-nosed snake that the locals called the deadly "spreading vipers." It took a lot of laws and conservation sermons to change the mind-set, but many old-time beliefs still prevail.

Incorrect information, myths and misunderstandings about the web of life have accounted for the downfall of many beautiful animals and created irrational fears. It sometimes starts with something as simple as the "Little Red Riding Hood" stories, or old folk tales about a "hoop snake" rolling down a hill and killing anything its tail strikes, including trees. It was an ominous indicator to hear a panther screaming in the ravine after someone had died. It took a lot of environmental education and nature interpreters to unravel destructive attitudes and fears of the misinformed toward nature. It still goes on.

Even our grand "conservation President," Theodore Roosevelt, had it wrong about wolves and mountain lions, as he considered them detrimental killers of game animals. He once went on a coyote (prairie wolf) roundup in Oklahoma, and the poor creatures were run down by greyhounds, killed and hung on fences as signs of good riddance. Theodore's attitude did change, and he acknowledged the benefits of wolves and lions in helping to control over-populations of elk and deer.

But it took the work of Aldo Leopold to

illuminate the truth about predators. In his 1949 book, "A Sand County Almanac," (incidentally illustrated by my deceased artist friend, C.W. Schwartz, from my hometown of Trenton, MO), Aldo had originally supported wolf removal to benefit deer, but in killing a wolf family, he saw the green light die in a mother's eye, and it occurred to him that the wolf had a place in that mountain ecology. He researched to prove his theory and establish new conservation ideas.

Aldo's land ethic of "think like a mountain" was developed, in that the wolf kept a balance in preventing the land from being denuded by deer, just as other predators were important for a proper wildlife balance. He said, "I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer."

After the "elimination" attitude was subdued, wildlife agencies began trying to restore wolves, grizzlies and lynx in Yellowstone, while keeping game laws in place to protect other predators.

*For every action, there is a reaction! Everything in the Universe is hitched together. – John Muir*

*In wildness is the preservation of the world. – Henry David Thoreau*

## Life on the Feather River

By Rex Burress

When we step back and consider the world we live in – its oceans, animals, plants, land masses, and even ourselves – plus the atmosphere, sun, water and soil that foster life, the magnitude of it all is overwhelming.

There is also the spiritual aspect from whence various religions have arisen, and some of those beliefs have resulted in religious sects where some even condone murderers that are believed to be whisked away into paradise when they die in carrying out their cause. (It is said that the greatest tragedy in life is doing the right thing for the wrong cause.)

Given these conditions, and the paltry few facts we have gleaned from fossils and geological and biological discoveries, it is little wonder that mankind has been mystified in finding his species, along with nearly two million other forms of life, spinning through space on an unexplainable, uncontrollable Earth in a vast Universe.

The photographic program, "Blue Planet," reveals some of the incredible life that has risen from the embers of Earth in the 4.6 billion years of the past – the sea life, dinosaurs, the alleged asteroid that

plunged into Earth and wiped out 90% of living things, the caveman, Homo sapiens – events that are all bathed in mystery.

Thus it is gratifying to settle down to watching one location of this planet – like life on the Feather River – since the basic planetary building blocks are right here with a sampling of species and the life processes. Robert Frost said, "Life goes on," as it does in the recycling system vital to life on Earth, and whether it goes on in another dimension, Planet, or Universe, "I can only imagine," in the lyrics of an old Christian song.

I know that as I write, it is late November 2009, the day after the Thanksgiving holiday in Oroville, CA, on planet Earth, and the seasonal happenings are in progress, not only the holiday shopping, but there is the last flap of the meager salmon run, the mergansers diving, the white egrets plying the shores, and the hopeful vultures watching for the dead.

A few mushrooms have lifted their spongy blobs from the mycelium threading through the dark decay, and more will pop forth in the fall of more rain, almost as if the droplets carried the substance for fungi growth. Today there are four Barrow's Goldeneye on the river, and half a dozen Common Goldeneye along with two Bufflehead – all migratory diving ducks targeting the underwater spoils in the frigid

depths.

In the thickets the insect-eating warblers, kinglets and bushtits patrol the branches, picking off a passel of minute flies, gnats and aphids...one by one...until they have a meal. Search and discover is a tedious system of finding food, but they persist, inspecting every niche for plunder. "A store of small strengths makes one strong."

The deer are there, and the beaver eagerly scan the river banks for a tree to chew under cover of night, each in its own way finding sustenance for the day. Thus there is life on the Feather River just as on the shores of the Amazon. It will hopefully be there as long as some is saved in the name of conservation by the human stewards of the land.

*One is constantly reminded of the infinite lavishness and fertility of Nature – inexhaustible abundance amid what seems enormous waste. And yet when we look into any of her operations that lie within reach of our minds, we learn that no particle of her material is wasted or worn out but eternally flowing from use to use. – John Muir*



# The Conservation Forum

## Trails of Debris

By Rex Burress

It is no secret that mankind has left an excess of litter in his wake down through the ages. Few animals have deposited so many objects as humans, using dexterous hands that worked making stone tools, shelters, and stone carvings. Mankind is the king of the leftovers, unless it's fossils and the mineralized bones of dinosaurs, or the organic pileups of bat guano!

Later on the time scale, industrial byproducts and millions of metal and glass articles became part of the debris – plus paper and plastic dropped out from expanding populations. There are few places on the planet that don't contain some form of fallout, either tangible or chemical. Indeed, there are great whirlpools containing tons of floating scraps of Styrofoam and papery, plastic debris that collects far out at sea, some becoming wave-borne flotsam from litter tossed onto beaches around the world.

Old gold mining camps and western migration implements have contributed to the debris trail, too, and agricultural machinery, windmills, and deserted homesites dot the land of America. Some of those relics are intriguing and photogenic, and nature will eventually reclaim the land more quickly than the massive material overflow from the cities, but the signs of littering-mankind linger for ages. The route of the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1803-06 has been traced by finding the toilet places that are laced with mercury from the medicines the explorers used!

Las Vegas, for instance, features mountains of trash that are hauled away to a Nevada landfill that is the largest in the United States. An entire "out-of-sight" Dump Valley is layered on the land, completely changing the habitat for that particular section. Pipes crisscross the dump, carrying away the methane generated by the decomposing garbage – fifty million tons of rotting trash...so far! Paving companies dig out the surrounding mountains to make more room for debris! Think about cities larger than Las Vegas. Where is the garbage going?

The Bureau of Land Management is struggling against illegal dumping in protected reserves, such as junked TVs, computers, furniture, decrepit appliances, and garbage, often creating toxic hazards and costly cleanups.

The county roads around Butte County, CA, are littered with couches and electronic equipment difficult to dispose of, and the scenic Cherokee Road that winds 12 miles over Table Mountain has also been hit. Signs posting rewards for reporting violators have cut down somewhat on the dumping, but a brushy ravine seems like a good hiding place for trash. American residents are up to their ears in unwanted merchandise, and the flow continues with excessive manufacturing that has become an apparent need in order to bankroll the economy.

## The 11th Annual Snow Goose Festival

By David Garcia, Yahi Chair



Photo by Dave Garcia

Annette Carey volunteering at the Sierra Club booth.

We just wrapped up another exciting weekend with the Yahi Group participating in the exhibitors' section of the Snow Goose Festival. It is always great to partner with other local environmental groups to promote the environment and sustainability. I especially wish to thank Annette Carey, Betty Volker and Jan Hildenbrand, who volunteered at the booth and helped advance the club's goals and philosophy.

This year the Sierra Club's immediate objective is to help pass the **State Parks and Wildlife Conservation Trust Fund Act of 2010** (see "S.O.S. - Save Our State Parks").

We received enthusiastic approval by festival participants who signed our qualifying petitions to place this initiative on the 2010 ballot. Audubon California also endorses this ballot initiative and is extremely interested in its passage. Audubon sent its regional conservation coordinator all the way from Berkeley to help collect voter signatures. This is an extremely important initiative that you will be

Some of that litter is directly detrimental to wildlife plus being unsightly and cluttering up the landscape. Bird deaths result when plastic bottle holders become stuck around their necks, and when tangles of discarded monofilament fishing line constrict their legs. I once saw a flying squirrel dangle to its death via a fisherman's errant artificial lure stuck on a tree branch. Broken glass and metal cans take their toll, too, and I once found dying tree-frogs that became trapped in a bottle of rainwater. At a dumpster, I once found a dead cat that had stuck its head too deep into a can, got stuck, and suffocated.

Undoubtedly you, too, have found lethal litter disasters that imperil living things. Recycle! Designated roadside litter removal, patrolled by individuals or

hearing about more and more and that we hope you will help promote.

The Yahi Group continued to educate the public on Sierra Pacific Industries' massive destruction of our Sierra Nevada forests through their irreversible clearcutting practices. Numerous people signed our **Stop Clear Cutting California** petition.

Besides recruiting new Sierra Club members, Yahi sold almost \$200 in merchandise with our hiking guide the biggest sales item, along with our logo calendars, T-shirts, ball caps and water bottles. The Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge was also a big hit, with our supply of 75 lodge information brochures quickly disappearing.

It was a fabulous experience for me, especially because I had my first big birding day of seeing 117 different species of birds with the assistance of leader Scott Huber and his son Liam. The banquet had plenty of good food, along with great silent auction items. Guest speaker Stephen Shunk presented an enjoyable slide show with fascinating tidbits of our avian species. Plus, I sat next to a gentleman at the banquet who had flown in all the way from Great Britain, giving the festival a touch of international recognition.

If you missed this year's festival, don't be melancholy – you still have a chance to experience it on the "California Gold" PBS program series. Yes, Huell Howser attended the festival for two days to show everyone how amazing our Snow Goose Festival is.

I hope to see you there next year volunteering with the Yahi Group to help make the festival even bigger and better and help support and promote our environmental community.

businesses, have also helped stem the debris flow. If everyone disposed of their litter properly, there would be no litter problem.

*Ask not what the country can do for you, but what you can do for your country!*  
– John F. Kennedy

As sterling examples of what the citizens can do for their country's appearance, I nominate two ladies: deceased naturalist Elizabeth Terwilliger of Marin County, and Jo Burress of Oroville, although many caring individuals qualify, including Peter Maki, formerly of Oroville. Elizabeth always carried her pick-up stick on nature hikes she led, and would grab every piece of litter – even cigarette butts. Jo, no less, is very conscientious about picking up others' litter wherever she goes.

# The Last Word



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