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Yahi Spring 2017 Outings and Events

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza

www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/outings

Happy New Year, Yahi Members!

By Chris Nelson, Yahi ExCom Committee Member

The Sierra Club is as American as apple pie and is famous for its concerted efforts on behalf of our environment and wild places. Unfortunately the Club is construed as subversive by some and by those who now control our Congress and Presidency. The probable scenario is that the regulatory framework that has protected us will be undermined and public lands will be taken for logging or mineral/oil/gas exploitation or sold outright. We face ecocide by climate change, and that will exponentially worsen with the profit-driven focus on fossil fuel exports. It is difficult to know what will slow it down or stop it, but this is everyone's issue now, not just those in structured environmental groups.

Many Americans are also mobilizing to protect vulnerable groups but few have the structure and expertise of the Sierra Club. Armchair members may be rethinking how they participate. Did you join to be part of something that was successfully keeping our environment safe, or did you join for the hikes and cross-country skiing?

Both of those reasons are as valid today as they ever were. The leadership of the Sierra Club needs our organization to stay strong. Many gains will only be held through court battles. In other cases, people will be grieving and longing for simpler times. Our guided outings into the high country may be more therapeutic than ever before. We need more trip leaders and more active members.

Every month I am happy to see my Sierra Club magazine. I read the thoughtful articles that appeal to me. The same is true with the Yahi Newsletter. I always read through it and fantasize about going on the trips. It is hard to know what you would like in your Yahi Newsletter, (a questionnaire?) but we are expanding it at least for the next year so we can include more information. We encourage you to become involved in local coalitions, to walk in the woods and to write/post/tweet even if you think no one is listening and to help us stay strong.

It is a very well known fact that there is no Planet B. For the love of our planet I urge you to do your democratic best to use your skills in the times ahead. I also urge you to use your love of nature to nurture yourself and others. I'm including my email in this article so you can contact me. We want you to offer ideas on how to build our Sierra Club base of active members, give a letter to the editor that is relevant or ask for information. (eg. I want to donate but what is the money used for?)

As a new Ex-Com member, activist and outdoorswoman, I join you in greeting this new year with trepidation but also with great admiration for past accomplishments and resolve to save and nurture everything we can. We are all in this together.

Chris Nelson, chris4pax@gmail.com

Who's New in the Yahi Group in 2017 and What Will They Be Doing

By Suzette Welch, Yahi ExCom Chair

There are three new members in the Yahi Group who took office at the Jan. 9, 2017 meeting when the results of the election held in 2016 were announced. The new members are Chris Nelson, Mary Kay Benson and Jane Coleman. These people make up the Yahi ExCom:

- **Suzette Welch** was re-elected to the ExCom and will continue as Chair.
- **Annette Carey**, a continuing board member, will be Secretary.
- **Laurel Heath** and **Celeste Garcia** are our retiring ExCom members. We really appreciate their many years of service as secretary and co-chairs.
- **Wendy LeMaster** is our new Outreach Chair. The scope of her projects will include tabling and the publicity for all activities except outings, which are advertised by Skip Augur.
- **Mary Kay Benson** is our new Political Chair. She said that she is the person to contact if any art work needs to be done.
- **Sharon Fritsch** is leading some cross country ski trips this winter so look for information about those in the Outings Section.
- For contact information on Forest and Clearcutting issues, **Patricia Puterbaugh** will continue to be the group's expert and go to person.
- **Grace Marvin** will continue to be our representative to the Mother Lode and Conservation Chair.
- **Alan Mendoza** continues to be our Outings Chair.
- Our Treasurer for many years has been **Paul Krause**.

We still have need for a Membership Chair. If any of you are interested in helping the club increase its membership please contact Suzette Welch booksontape@rocketmail.com.

Contact information for all of these people may be found on our "about us" section of the Yahi Group Webpage.



38TH ANNUAL ENDANGERED SPECIES FAIRE
SATURDAY, MAY 6TH, 2017
11AM - 4PM
ONE MILE PICNIC AREA
IN LOWER BIDWELL PARK

The Endangered Species Faire is a Free event for all ages, with environmental education being offered alongside music, eco-entertainment, a rescued animal show, and a larger than life puppet parade. <http://www.becnet.org/endangered-species-faire>

The March and Our Environment

By Grace Marvin, Yahi Conservation Chair



While more than 600 marches were taking place across the world and in our Yahi region, my husband (Julian Zener, a Yahi Outings leader) and I participated in a *truly* huge Women's March in Washington, D.C. On the prior Monday (January 16), we attended the Martin Luther King march/parade in a predominantly black section of the city (Anacostia), where similar themes were expressed.

The main messages included: the government should ensure all of us good and affordable health care, public education, and social security, and it should do all it can to prevent any discriminatory treatment of groups or individuals-- no matter anyone's religion, social class, gender or ethnic identity. While these reflect basic human rights in our country, march attendees exclaimed that the new president would violate these rights.

As it is turning out, Mr. Trump and his appointees often maintain that existing laws defending these rights must be changed AND as soon as possible. The president does not *seem* to take into account the effects of his actions, some of which have engendered ever increasing hostilities between people in our country and between countries. And how does that relate to our environment? If there are ever more reasons for riots and wars here and abroad surely our planet's precious resources (including humans) will be damaged or destroyed. One example: increasingly, thousands of highly vetted foreign students, scholars, and refugees who could be helping the planet pursue world peace and earth friendly policies are facing severe discrimination through new policies to keep people (from seven countries) out of our country.



The Sierra Club and the hundreds of thousands of other people in Washington, D. C. stood up to power by joining the D.C. Women's March. While the Club expressed its fear of new policies that will aggravate climate extremes and water, air, and land pollution, the Club is also taking a broader view of our planet's welfare. That is, banners proclaimed that “women's rights are human rights.” In order for us to have good air, water and climate, we must have *gender justice*, a principle that the new president does not seem to respect. But when women are better able to care for their own bodies and advance themselves, their families, communities, and the whole world improves – socially and physically.

Another more assuring and contagious message was that the marchers were not there just for the day nor just for their individual causes. They/ we are willing to be activists for people's well-being over the long haul. So, even in sometimes more environmentally friendly California, we must continue our efforts-- small and large-- to address human rights and promote *healthier* energy, transportation, economic, trade, education, international, and environmental policies.

Lassen Forest Preservation Group

By Patricia Puterbaugh, Lassen Forest Preservation Group Committee Contact

It has been years since I have written anything for the newsletter so it is time!

I have continued to monitor environmentally significant projects on the Lassen National Forest, and a few on the Plumas National Forest. Unfortunately, fire has been a huge driver for much of the logging on the Lassen.

Post-fire logging is expedited and often brutal, especially on private lands. The USFS does temper their actions and leaves many lands untouched to reforest naturally. They are also introducing various re-planting regimes instead of the usual row plantations; very susceptible to future wildfire. Many projects are also planned around communities, to protect them from wildfire. The dilemma is always how to protect the community without destroying the surrounding habitat, ecology and watershed. Challenge and Forbestown are examples of these “Wildland Urban Interface” (WUI) projects.

One of the biggest challenges is to allow wildfire to burn when appropriate and to introduce prescribed burning everywhere and quickly. Many of our public lands are overgrown due to 100 years of fire suppression, logging and grazing. The logging industry has also shrunk considerably in the last decades, so often there is little infrastructure to do the necessary, responsible, small diameter thinning. Add to that the enormous mortality due to bug kill, especially in the Southern Sierra and we have what many call a “wicked problem” which is extremely difficult to solve.

The Creeks logging project is on-going up near Humboldt and Humbug Summits. The Grizzly Environmental Impact Statement is being written for lands around Scotts John Creek in the Almanor Ranger District. Many restoration projects are focusing on the Storrie Fire burn area. On the Hat Creek Ranger District logging is on-going in the North 49 area. Eagle Lake Ranger District has done extensive logging in the last 5 years for meadow restoration and to “return the Eastside forests” to a more resilient condition. I will monitor those logged areas to watch how resilient these forests will be to fire and climate change and see how the wildlife fares after logging.

The Forest Plans for all Sierra Nevada & Cascade US forests are up for revision in the next 1-5 years. The first forests were the Inyo, Sierra & Sequoia. It has been a long, laborious process and very imperfect. All major environmental organizations in the state are working on these Forest Plans. It has been an honor and very educational to collaborate with Sierra Forest Legacy, Sierra Club, Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife, California Wilderness Coalition, The Wilderness Society, California Native Plant Society and others on these plans. The next forests in the process are El Dorado, Plumas, Stanislaus and Tahoe. I will be working on these and anyone interested in helping is welcome!

I am the environment and watershed representative on the Butte County Forest Advisory Committee, appointed by Maureen Kirk. We meet monthly for this public meeting and the public is encouraged to attend. More advocates for our local environment are always welcome! Our role is to educate ourselves and others regarding issues on public lands surrounding our county; especially USFS, BLM and state lands. We advocate for public access and public opportunity for input on management of these lands regarding recreation, (motorized & non-motorized) trails, roads, watershed, environment, tourism and economics. If you have a question or concern related to these lands and issues, please contact me.

As we are all aware, we have many challenges ahead. If anyone is interested in forest issues, or attending meetings or trips to the forest, please contact me. Patricia Puterbaugh, 530-342-1641, pputerbaugh@yahoo.com (best).





My Report to Yahi Group: AquAlliance Water Conference

By Mary Kay Benson, Yahi Political Chair

In November, 2016, Mary kay attended a conference presented by AquAlliance - Defending Northern California Waters: Water for Seven Generations: Will California Squander or Protect It?

My overall impressions:

This was an impressive array of presenters from science, academia and law. There was one activist Native American presenter, Caleen Sisk, other than those in the audience. Questions were severely limited.

I liked the information we were bombarded with, inasmuch as it clearly illustrated how interdependent we all are from air, soil, seeds, insects, mammals, fish, wetlands, rivers to oceans, microcosmos to macro environments - all through water. Water is life. And as Caleen said, "You white people make it all so complicated, while Native Americans make it simple."



Facts and terms that stuck with me and struck terror:

There is no such thing as "excess" water. Only 5% of CA wetlands remain. Salmon and other riparian species will likely become extinct soon. Damn dams cause loss of water flow and wildlife habitats, and there is no data from before Shasta Dam was built. CA Science Center denigrates traditional Native American ways including laying fire to restore native habitats. Short documentary. <http://dancingsalmonhome.com/>.

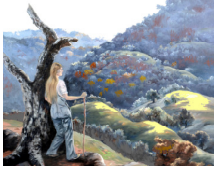
SoCal knows their water from the Colorado River will stop flowing to them in 2 years, so all eyes on NorCal water. Our groundwater tables have not been fully replenished since 1980's. Ground collapses. On/off Pumping conserved water but demands keep increasing, now double what GSPS recommends. Salinity, desertification and dust storms will increase until all vegetation dead. DWP refuses to compare current pumping with their own baseline. Avoiding does not equal to mitigating after the fact. Aquifer privatization. Groundwater Sustainable Management Act, some local management of water basins, under Water Boards, but landowners want to rig. Water banking fears.

"Have nots get regulated. Haves do not."--Adam Keats, Center for Food Safety. The last is my passion project, but no one discussed or answered questions about Big Oil polluting our water & food.

Actions and solutions suggested by presenters:

- **To approach legislators effectively: include personal stories + data + solutions.** The Sites Reservoir was only item that had 1 pro and 2 con presenters. Since that is our local state Assemblyman's proposed legislation, Jim Gallagher, AD3: I think we should focus on a meeting with him as a group - the bigger the better. I was not able to get an appointment for just myself. Nationally now that President Obama supports fast tracking Gov. Brown's Delta Tunnels fiasco, we need to do same with Brown.
- **The politics of water is for all 58 counties not just Central Valley.** Vote out old white men, inside beltway is the problem, work with students who have knowledge & passion, plus use Native traditions which are the solutions. Embrace change.
- **Solution goals:** Get 6 month data reviews down to 1 month. Expand water re-use. Inject Fed dollars—now only \$20M. Partner with public/private orgs and with bonding agents. Support applied research. Expand capture of rainwater and snowmelt, do transparent data collection, utilize percolation basins. Diversify & expand. Roll back water rules & regs. Add "Values" water projects (transform the way we value water) via the Bureau of Reclamation, and Dept. of Interior. Organize. Be activists.

More Information: <http://www.aqualliance.net/>



River Watcher:

If a Bird Dies, Does Anyone Care?

By Rex Burress

Birds die everyday, usually not even noticed, but one bird that died on the Feather River a few days ago in January 2017, has created quite a stir for those who care!

Most of those who care are bird watchers and nature advocates, like Dawn Garcia, Carolyn Short, and Joanna Arroyo, who were hiking along the Diversion Pool-part of the river and saw an unusual bird for the Oroville area. It was a Long-tailed duck—and they saw it get shot by an illegal poacher! The culprit fled and the ladies retrieved the dead bird. Bird watchers had been traveling from afar to see the handsome stray, formerly called the Old Squaw duck, that normally lives near the ocean up into the Arctic.

I have seen *Clangula hyemalis* along the central Pacific Coast when winter storms drive them south out of their range, but it was a mystery why the lone juvenile male appeared on an inland river. Of such are the wonders of nature watching!

There are some parts of the wild where we can only speculate as to what happened. It happens on every wild animal out of its normal range and habitat. Often we can suspect climatic occurrences or injury that strands a species in some distant location. Whatever the cause in the case of a bird, some bird watchers compile a list of what they see during their lives, and are very anxious to add toward the approximately 10,000 bird species living on Earth. A lot of travel and money is involved...unless a rarity lands nearby. We can wonder why two pintail ducks, banded at Lake Merritt in Oakland, CA, were shot 20 years later in Siberia! In the end, freedom wins, as we cannot control or know the mind of a wild animal.

I haven't started a list, preferring to study the beauty and over-all habitat of an animal, but I was watching in the Everglades once, and a Bahama Pintail landed at my feet! It was only the 13th sighting in America, and listers were flocking in from as far as New York to see it!

When I worked at Lake Merritt Wildlife Refuge in Oakland, a Tropical Kingbird, Tufted Duck, and a Brazilian Cardinal created that kind of stir. There is the possibility that someone releases a pet, but wild is wild so count it! It is less likely wild in the city when it's a Gila Monster, Macaw, a four-foot rattlesnake, or parakeets—all found in Lakeside city park while I was there. The Cassin's Auklet I found in the duck yard had probably been blown in from the ocean, as was a pair of Laysan Albatross we nurtured with many smelt, and I had the honor of escorting them back to the sea via a U.S. Coastguard boat!

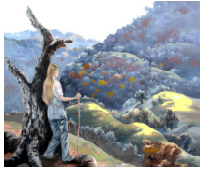
Who cares about the reported 70,000 birds killed at the Kennedy Airport since the goose-caused 2009 plane crash in the Hudson River? Gulls, starlings, geese, and other birds have been slaughtered, mostly by shooting and trapping, aimed at preventing plane-and-bird collisions. Included in the kill record was about 6,000 brown-headed cowbirds and 4,500 mourning doves.

Sportsmen hunt waterfowl and game-birds in a harvest of the surplus that is closely controlled by wildlife management. The goal is a balanced population.

Air space for birds often conflicts with civilization progress, especially when involved with windmill turbines that can knock down raptors and migrating songbirds. An estimated 6.8 million have died by collisions with cell and radio towers in the last few years...but 2 billion from house cats!

We are familiar with road kills that involves a large number of birds and other animals. There is a certain number of birds killed by flying into windows. Birds fail to recognize the dangers involved in human habitation, and the reproduction ratios barely keep pace with survival. Already over 157 bird species have become extinct since human affairs have been involved with wildlife in the last 500 years. Does anyone care?

“Birds have wings; they're free; they can fly where they want when they want. They have the kind of mobility many people envy.” --Roger Tory Peterson



River Watcher:

Cottonwood Along the Feather River

By Rex Burress

One by one I watched the last ten leaves disappear from the branches of a small cottonwood down by the riverside. It was rather poetic to see them twisting in the breeze until they all joined together on the ground, “to make one texture of faded brown,” as Robert Frost said.

Cotton? Although cotton of industrial use is mostly grown in cotton fields of southern states, California does have some plants producing cotton-like, wind-dispersed seed carriers, most evident in the cottonwood trees all the way from the Feather River Canyon to the end of the river. Cottonwoods love water, as do the other major groups of the Salicaceae, or willow, family. That includes the widespread quaking aspen that will tolerate higher elevations, and the riparian zone's willows.

Oroville loves her cottonwood trees that grow along the 'river that runs through it.' The deciduous leaves become tinged with yellow in the autumn before they descend to the soil to “fit the earth like a leather glove.” The silhouetted old monarchs stand like sentinels in the winter, savoring a time of rest “before the leaves mount again to fill the trees with another shade,” and the deep-furrowed bark is quite protective of the inner heart.

Beaver cherish the cottonwood, perhaps not so much for the beauty of a tree, but rather for the wood that is soft with sweet inner fibers. You find gnaw marks on many of the old giants along the river, and some are chewed down by the rodent's efficient teeth.

Our cottonwood species was discovered by John C. Fremont and was named *Populus fremontii* in honor of America's “Pathfinder.” Fremont made 5 exploratory expeditions of the west from 1842 to 1854, and discovered over 30 new plants that bear his name, including the Flannelbush, Goldfields, Barberry, and Silk Tassel.

Fremont first found *P. fremontii* cottonwoods along the Rio Grande, as they grow along most streams west of the Rockies, and he was impressed to also find them in California. The wind borne cottony seeds really get around.

Many of his 1,400 collected plants of the 1844 expedition were lost when the mule carrying pressed specimens fell from a precipice into a river.

Although the cottonwood was undoubtedly seen by the 1820 Spanish Expedition along the Feather River when they camped there and saw what they thought to be feathers floating on the

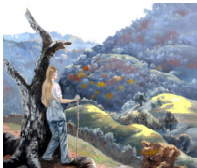
water, from where the name of the river came, but Fremont was the first to describe the tree scientifically. The 'feathers' might have been cottonwood fluff floating on the surface! Of the two species of cottonwood that grow in California, the Black Cottonwood grows in higher elevations, and I saw it near Oakland Camp up Toll Gate Creek. Eastern America has several species including abundant *Populus deltoides*.

The popular “Poplar” hardwood actually comes from the tulip tree, native to eastern U.S. and in the Magnolia Family, but you can see them planted around Oroville as a decorative tree.

Although Amerindians made canoes out of large cottonwoods and pioneers cut them on the plains for livestock food and fuel, the *Populus* are more poetic than commercial. The Hopi Indians, who carve Kachina dolls out of cottonwood, believe the rustle of the wind through the quaking leaves to be the gods speaking to people. Who can deny the comfort and joy of sitting in the summer shade under a cottonwood or aspen tree, watching the rhythm of nature at its fullest? Visually fulfilling and mentally refreshing, give homage to the life-giving leaves of all the trees in your life!

“...Listen to the murmur of the cottonwood trees...” 'Don't Fence Me In,' sung by Gene Autry.

“In the cottonwood by the river,/A mourning dove calls his mate,/He has true love to give her,/But love for me must wait...” 'Bend in the River,' sung by Marty Robbins



River Watcher:

What is Your American Dream?

By Rex Burress

When I read about sculptor-artist Kyle Campbell's art exhibit in Chico and his impressions of “the American Dream,” I wondered what The Dream represented for other people, especially those involved in the interpretation of nature.

Generally, success in a chosen field is a prime ingredient for dreamers, as expressed in the phrase “a life richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunities for each according to ability or achievement.” Probably a house, car, and similar luxuries are basic goals, but everyone is different with different desires and ambitions. Some, such as the homeless, have run up to a worrisome wall where even a simple shelter becomes their dream.

The American Dream ambition or goal is often shrouded in a veil of physical and mental difficulties, as anyone seeking a career or job knows, extending right through to retirement-survival. How different it is for wild animals that have little concern for the future since they are adapted by nature to fulfill all their immediate environmental needs...as long as they have habitat. Without sufficient shelter and food, they can be up against extinction.

There are the random extremes of weather and other natural processes that sometimes dictates the direction of dreams for both wildlife and mankind. The ultimate wild-- wind, rain, hail, flood, fire, – are factors of uncontrollable characteristics, able to change the course of history,

and even skewer the best laid plans of mice and men. Natural forces are truly the essence of the wild and free, even though that power can be disruptive and dangerous for life, as in tornadoes and earthquakes. “Untamed!”

What is the American dream for migratory wild animals that seek no permanent residency? Take the case of the wild goose : A water-filled swamp or food-filled field are dreams for it and other incoming winter waterfowl, even though they aren't able to express that in human terms.

There are hundreds of examples of shifting migratory animals and their critical needs, as the winter snow goose status shows in the Sacramento Valley, and then again in the Arctic tundra where habitat is being hard-pressed in the summer for space to accommodate expanding populations. It affects the Canadian dream of nesting success versus the American dream of winter food sufficiency and settling space. Nature usually balances things out with natural limitations in time.

What was the American Dream for John Muir after his father brought him and family from Scotland to America in 1849? John had to work on the Wisconsin farm from daylight to dark to help support his father's dream, and only broke free to pursue a course of his own when he was dismissed from the parental binding at age 21.

Although he spent a couple years in college [without any formal schooling after leaving Scotland when he was 11, except for what books he could smuggle into the basement at night], John was largely nomadic, going from a job in Canada to a job in Indiana to a botanical walk to Florida, and even making a week-long home in a Savannah, Georgia cemetery! His life journey finally took him to California and Yosemite.

John Muir didn't have “an American Dream house” until he married into the Martinez mansion and fruit ranch in 1880 at age 42. He settled down for 10 years with his family and what would be a dream home for most people, but nature and the mountains was his ultimate calling. “I have made a tramp of myself,” he said, “seeing the wonders of the world.” That rings true, especially when your dream is anchored in the interests of nature and the call of the wild!

Thus an American Dream-concept can go beyond a house and property to all realms under Mother sun.

“What I say unto you I say unto to all,'Watch! '“ Mark 13:37

“What is the use of a house if you haven't got a tolerable planet to put it on?” --Thoreau

“My [Sierra campfire] was in all its glory about midnight, and, having made a bark shed to shelter me from the rain and partially dry my clothing, I had nothing to do but look and listen and join the trees in their hymns and prayers...Going to the woods is going home.” --John Muir

“Oh that I had the wings like a dove! For then would I fly away and be at rest.! –Psalms 4:6

YAH! Club Information

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Newsletter Information

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For submissions, comments, or inquiries, contact Louise Casey, 872-9159, YAHInews@comcast.net. Please include name, phone number, and address with each submittal. Short, single-topic articles are preferred. Deadlines for proposed articles and letters to the editor: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1.

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

The Last Word

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