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Yahí  
Group



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

## Paradise Emerging

By Ed Schilling



*Stump of once mighty grey pine on our property border, then the neighbor's cratered lot. Beyond that begins the long march of blackened trees.*

The town of Paradise since the Campfire is still very often a wild and uninhabited place. Certain contours of the town have survived--like roads, buildings, churches, stores--and they all lend coherence. And yet when I drive down once familiar streets I sometimes wonder: Where am I? A lot of partially rebuilt homes and trailers dot the landscape. Tens of thousands of trees have been removed, tens of thousands more are slated for removal.

I hear chainsaws buzzing almost every day, trees falling. Sounds of new construction are constant as well. Sometimes I feel like a pioneer. We are roughing it here on our own land in a trailer and "shedroom". Our family's recently framed-out house won't be done until late Spring, two and a half years after that one single day in November wiped out everything.

With so many trees being removed, one wonders: what about replanting? There will be a "large-scale effort to replant trees in the Camp Fire burn scar this spring with a boost from the Arbor Day Foundation, the American Forest Foundation, American Forests, the Department of Agriculture and others," according to a recent article in the Enterprise Record. It will bring 600,000 trees to around 2,600 acres in the Carr, Delta and Camp fire footprints. According to Wolfy Rougle, a health watershed coordinator at the Butte County Resource Conservation District who will facilitate the on-the-ground replanting, we can expect a different mix of trees than before the fire. Whereas once the trees were 80% pine and 20% oak, those averages could be

switched due to climate change projections. But Rougle added that these numbers were rough estimates. It wouldn't be a strict formula, for example, of 3 oaks for every one pine tree planted. Landowners can plant whatever trees they choose.

On March 13, 2021, many tree seedling varieties (pine, oak, redwood, etc.) will be given away. For where this will take place, check the Butte County Resource Conservation District's website: <https://www.bcrd.org>. Or call them at 530-693-3173.

Besides new trees in the future, new construction steadily continues. The latest weekly town of Paradise recovery update stated that 1,464 permit applications had been received for single family homes

to date. (961 stick built, 503 manufactured) Also, 607 homes have been rebuilt and certified for occupancy. Trailer dwellers have until June 30, 2021, to submit housing plans.

When I look south, down our dead-end street, all the ten or so lots where houses once stood are now barren and empty. Beyond that, about 150 dead oak and pine trees still remain, blackened ghosts in the distance lining the creek side. And to the southeast, I can now see the next street over, where only five of about thirty former houses have been rebuilt. Their distant lights are somehow reassuring after nightfall, but increased darkness also means the reassurance of a now more visible canopy of stars.

I'll soon plant a redwood tree where a huge ponderosa pine used to stand on our land until it finally died from fire damage last summer. We will "build back better". For example, good southern exposure now means a solar powered home is on the way, which was not possible before the fire. A better Paradise is emerging.

## Hope Is In the Air and On The Ground

*From Grace Marvin, Yahi Conservation Chair*

Many Sierra Club members worked very hard to elect a new US President who would help restore and improve our natural and social environment. We congratulate you and your friends on all the work and its success!

One example of the benefit of the new administration: Alejandra Nunez, who was senior attorney at the Environmental Law Program at the national Sierra Club has been newly hired by the EPA ( Environmental Protection Agency). According to a February 2021 Sierra Club announcement, her work for the club

*focused on litigation and regulatory advocacy on federal greenhouse gas and corporate average fuel economy standards for light- and heavy-duty vehicles, carbon dioxide standards for new and existing power plants, state transportation and clean energy policies, and the integration of environmental justice in climate policy.*

May she, as a new Administrator at the EPA, and other incredibly talented new hires throughout government (and in other organizations) be inspired to pursue the highest ideals of environmentalism, and/or civil and social service.

At a February (ZOOM) meeting of the Mother Lode Chapter (MLC), we learned that the MLC is coordinating legal challenges with other CA chapters on numerous fronts – such as fighting habitat destruction resulting in the killing of owls, cranes, and other birds. The MLC Conservation Chair, Sean Wirth, is among leaders who are playing important roles here, while dealing with controversies that seem inevitable. These include what our response should be to the building of hospital helicopter landing areas that endanger birds, how to make progress on tearing down dams and preventing the Delta Water Tunnels, and whether we should add one or more tribal names to *John Muir Trail*.

### **Climate Change: The hot topic of this new era**

Unfortunately, "down ballot" elections generally did not result in environmentally progressive political leadership in most races within CA -- such as Chico, which now has a much more conservative city council. Still, climate change (and other issues) must be addressed not only by states and countries, e.g., Paris Climate Agreement, but also by local governments. For example, on the local level, we may need

to stop unnecessary local highway expansion efforts. Why? Because we want to fight the sprawl-producing impacts of such highways, while also preventing air pollution that the traffic on such highways cause. Or we may need to challenge developers' proposals for other large projects, e.g., large structures in endangered species zones, not only to protect wildlife, but also because we members of the human species do not need more "urban heat islands".

Some members of the MLC suggested that some of our chapter's work may not be necessary, as when progressive politicians as well as the state and national levels of the Sierra Club are already fighting climate change. Thankfully, one dynamic woman recognized the need for local climate activism and volunteered to be chair of the Mother Lode Chapter (MLC) Climate Change committee. Barbara Brydon and other leaders in the MLC certainly will help when local Group members need information or ideas about working on Sierra Club supported conservation issues.

For example, you and I may need ideas on how to mobilize people to protect local land from over-development -- as in areas where forests serve both to reduce global warming and protect endangered species (and their habitat). We can seek information to educate others about what else we can do to reduce ozone. Other possible questions: What must we do to prevent the further reduction of water in our rivers, stream, and groundwater? How can we help end excessive damming, clear-cutting, and housing developments in the Wild Urban interface ( *WUI*)? How can we find allies to fight tree plantations and exploitative agricultural practices that destroy current water balances and harm agricultural workers?

P.S. For me, it has been useful to find out which people and groups could be local allies. Locally, I have been working on social and environmental issues relating to homelessness, policing reform, and "smart growth"-- focusing on infill and affordable housing. Our world needs any free time *you* now may have for letter writing, phoning, zooming in on meetings, and/or organizing to combat a variety of climate change and other environmental challenges in your locale. Raising local awareness may be step one. *Climate change begins at home!*

## Yahi 2021 Leadership

By Suzette Welch, Yahi Group ExCom Chair

The Yahi ExCom election resulted in re-electing Jane Coleman, Betty Volker, and Suzette Welch to the Board for another two-year term.

**Suzette Welch** will continue as Yahi Group Chair. **Annette Carey** will continue being Yahi ExCom secretary and **Wendy LeMaster** will continue as Outreach Chair. **Jane Coleman** and **Betty Volker** are continuing in their third year in office as members at large.

Continuing as our representative to the Mother Lode and Yahi Conservation Chair is **Grace Marvin**.

**Alan Mendoza** will remain as Yahi Outings Chair.

Our new treasurer is **Danisa Ramirez**.

For contact information on forest and clearcutting issues, **Patricia Puterbaugh** is the group's expert and go to person.

We still have need for a Membership Chair and a Program Chair. If any of you are interested in either of these positions please contact Suzette Welch [booksontape@rocketmail.com](mailto:booksontape@rocketmail.com).

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

## Yahi Donations

By Suzette Welch, Yahi Group ExCom Chair

The Yahi Group made a donation to support the Butte County Resource Conservation District's Post-fire Reforestation Program which will give money specifically to the Tree Planting Fund, a 501(c)3 charity under the care of the North Valley Community Foundation. This is a project which Trish Puterbaugh and Wolfe Rogle suggested. We donated \$500 to the tree planting project which will emphasize oak trees.

Yahi Group also gave a donation of \$500 to Chico City Parks to help Bidwell Park and City Greenways and earmarked it for "vegetation management".

A farewell gift card was sent to Paul Krause to thank him for his 15 years of service as the Yahi Group Treasurer. Paul elected to have the group buy a Sierra Club gift certificate in his honor.

Donated \$500 to Friends of Butte Creek Wild and Scenic Film Festival to support their 2020 virtual film festival.

We also donated \$500 to Butte County Local Food Network which is working on a variety of projects in the community. They install victory gardens, community gardens, are involved in seed banking, providing free educational programs, and bring food directly to those in need.

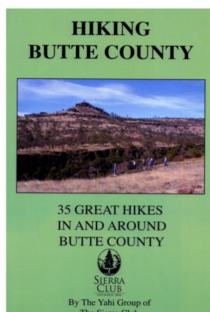
## Yahi Outings and Events

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza

When this newsletter was published, the Yahi Group did not have any scheduled outings because of the COVID restrictions. Please check the Yahi Group Facebook page or our website at <https://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi> for outings when the Covid19 pandemic restrictions are eased.

## Hiking Butte County

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza



*Hiking Butte County* is a wonderful field guide to hikes in and around Butte County. It was assembled by the outings leaders in the Yahi Group under the direction of Alan Mendoza. In it you will find descriptions directions, distances and difficulty information for 35 hikes. This is the only book of its type for this area.

You can purchase it for \$11.95 at **Mountain Sports, The Bookstore** in Chico (118 Main Street) and the **Lake Oroville Visitor Center** (917 Kelly Ridge Road). Or you can order one directly from Alan for \$10 plus shipping. Contact Alan Mendoza, 891-8789 or [ajmendoza777@comcast.net](mailto:ajmendoza777@comcast.net).

## Yahi Facebook

The Yahi Group of the Sierra Club has a Facebook page where people can find information about local environmental issues and events and post items of interest. Anyone can go to the page and ask to become part of the conversation. Check it out!



# Yahi Group Information

## Executive Committee

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## Newsletter Information

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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.

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