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Yahi  
Group



News  Articles  Programs  Hikes and Outings  Meetings  Events

## Wildfires and Forest Management

### Introduction: by John Shower

Although I have a masters degree in Field Biology and Ecology, when I retired and moved to Plumas County ten years ago, I had no more real understanding of what a healthy forest looked like than any other person with an untrained eye. Generally speaking, the forest looked green, and mostly healthy and normal to me ... except in areas that were clear-cut or heavily logged.

Since that time I have come to understand that Sierra Nevada forests really are not very healthy. One hundred years of mostly poor management including a program of total fire suppression has resulted in an unnatural forest that is very prone to devastating stand replacing fires.

Then last summer, the Moonlight Fire made this situation all too real on a personal basis. The fire burned over 65 thousand acres and unleashed more CO<sub>2</sub> than the North state normally produces in an entire year.

My wife and I were ordered, along with all of our neighbors in the North Arm of Indian Valley, to evacuate our homes. However, as a volunteer fireman in the Indian Valley Fire Department, I was able to stay in the fire zone and help in the effort to save homes and property. I was able to see it all close-up and personal. The fire was so severe that much of the burned area will probably not fully recover within the lifetime of my grandchildren.

The loss of potential Carbon sequestration alone is enormous and the magnitude of the damage is monumental. This unnatural condition of fire prone conditions extends throughout the Sierra and much of the rest of the west.

### Implications of the Moonlight and Antelope fires of 2007

by Mike Yost

The Moonlight Fire, which started on September 3, 2007 was a rude awakening to all the residents of Indian Valley. On the third day, the fire was moving so rapidly that all households in the North Arm of Indian Valley were ordered to evacuate. Many residents left their homes and moved in with friends and relatives in nearby Taylorsville only to be told the next day that residents here were told to prepare to evacuate as well.



Devastation from the Moonlight Fire

Fortunately a change in weather conditions saved those communities.

The Moonlight Fire burned over sixty-five thousand acres. Thirty-six thousand of those acres suffered more than 90% tree mortality. Only two months earlier, the nearby Antelope Fire burned over twenty-three thousand acres, one half of which suffered more than 90% mortality. The area burned by these fires is contiguous so that 55 % of the area, or 75 square miles was burned so severely that few trees survived.

Along with millions of trees lost there has been a severe loss of wildlife habitat including 24 spotted owl nest sites. The intensity of the fires has impacted watershed, recreation, grazing, carbon sequestration, and scenic values to the extent that there won't be full recovery for many decades.

Fire has been an integral component of Sierra Nevada mixed conifer forests for millennia. Prior to Euro-American settlement, frequent fires played a significant role by reducing accumulated surface fuel and maintaining open under-stories relatively free of fuel ladders that carry fire into the forest canopy. Fire was also a major factor in maintaining the ecological balance of tree species in these forests. Frequent fires reduced the density of shade-tolerant, fire-sensitive species and favored the more resistant species.

Fire ecologists use tree

ring data from fire scars on old trees and stumps to show that pre-settlement fires were frequent, with return intervals of 10 to 20 years in most of the Sierra, resulting in 5% to 10% of the land being burned annually. This frequency insured that ground fuels and fire ladders were much lower than current conditions.

In fact, fire scars on old trees from the Moonlight and Antelope areas indicated that light surface fires occurred approximately every 15 years on any given site. Since the beginning of fire suppression efforts by the U.S. Forest Service in the early 1900's the area inside these burns as well as most areas in the Sierra have not experienced fire.

Nearly 100 years of fire suppression, combined with logging of large, fire resistant, old growth trees, mostly ponderosa pine, has resulted in mixed conifer stands with dense under-stories and fire ladders of shade-tolerant, fire sensitive, white fir and Douglas fir. Prior to Forest Service fire suppression and logging, ponderosa pine was the predominant species and now White fir and Douglas fir are far more numerous

Under these conditions, fires tend to be larger, more severe, and increasingly more difficult and dangerous to control. These were the prevailing conditions in the Moonlight and Antelope areas prior to last summer's fires. Foresters and fire ecologists have been aware of this situation for some time and have developed some management techniques to begin correcting the problem.

One solution is aggressive under-story thinning to remove much of the accumulated living and dead fuel. The Plumas and Lassen National forests adopted a strategic fuel reduction method recommended by the Quincy Library Group called Defensible Fuel Profile Zones (DFPZ's). These are linear fuel breaks constructed in strategic locations -- usually along roads or ridge tops -- creating a defensible place for fire fighters to attack a fire. They may be up to one-quarter mile wide and several

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# Conservation Concerns

A major concern the Yahi have along with other environmentalists in our region is preserving a sufficient amount of our ground and surface water. Before even considering so-called conjunctive use or management, e.g., plans for using both our surface and ground waters in other parts of the state, we need to find out how much water we have. That means careful research must be undertaken, including so-called "water budgets" for our ecosystems (such as Big Chico Creek). We are quite fearful of the state, cities, or other interested parties taking water from our counties, when we are already seeing major declines and "depressions" in many areas. Moreover, climate change has meant less of a snow pack to feed the water sources we now have. We do not want to become another San Joaquin Valley that previously had a great underground reservoir, but now needs water from elsewhere.

Sufficient safe water is a basic element of life, and now is the time to see that it is "sustained" for us and future generations. Government officials need to hear from many *more* of us about our concerns that surface and ground water and other natural habitats ought to be protected. They need to know, for example, that you consider our water ecosystems so important that they should be addressed in city and county General Plans. While WATER is only an "Optional Element," in a General Plan, these officials have the power to add it to other major points currently being considered. General Plans are bases for deciding where new housing, stores, and highways are to be built for many years to come, so why not encourage your leaders to first see what parts of our natural environment need to be

preserved, including precious water recharge areas, before building? Please ask to make water a CORE element of General Plans!

As you consider writing letters to government officials and newspapers, or addressing officials at public meetings, you might want to draw ideas about "Smart Growth." This planning concept is increasingly being used by many environmentalists and progressive planners and public officials. Check the website [www.smartgrowth.org](http://www.smartgrowth.org) for a more thorough review than the one I have below. The point is that we must encourage the public and planners to address dwindling natural resources, including open space, clean air and needed water—while making communities more livable, i.e., people friendly and attractive. Basic principles include:

1- Allowing for different kinds of housing types for our diverse population. This should include affordable housing – a concern addressed by Butte County Community Action Agency's Tom Tenorio at a recent General Plan meeting.

2- Creating neighborhoods where people can safely and comfortably walk or ride bicycles. This should create a greater sense of community, accompanied by less CO2 damage, more safety, and less crime.

3- Increasing the amount and kinds of people and organizations making decisions about how our neighborhoods and communities develop. Let's continue to open up the process to allow more public input, and thus, more widespread investment in our future.

4- Ensuring that our communities are not designed to look like "Anywheresville, USA" but are attractive and unique, instead. That would mean preserving historically unique buildings, discouraging Big Box stores and decreasing our highway parking lot centered culture.

5- Making sure that governmental planning and private developers' decisions are open to the public, helping ensure that choices are economically reasonable and fair.

6- Planning for mixed and not separated uses of land. For example, truly walkable communities might include small industries, houses, stores with apartments above, schools, and parks.

7- Ensuring that environmental protections become a central part of the plan, so that we maximize open space, and protect tree canopies, farmlands, forests, air, and water systems. Thus, to protect our aquifers and

## About This Newsletter

SIERRA CLUB YAH! GROUP NEWSLETTER is published quarterly in March, June, September and December by the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club, Post Office Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 or 5590 Feather River Place, Paradise, CA 95969, Attn: Louise Casey.

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

The newsletter is mailed free to all current members of the Sierra Club residing in the Yahi Group area. It is also available, without charge, at selected public places and merchants in the Yahi Group area.

For submissions, comments and inquiries, please write to Sierra Club, Post Office Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 or contact the content editor Susan Sears at 530-532-0149 or the copy editor Louise Casey at 530-872-9159.

For advertising in the Newsletter, please call John Woods (530-899-8607). For changes in membership address (which also affects the address for receiving the newsletter by mail) please write to Sierra Club Member Services, Post Office Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80328-2968; sending a mailing label for the old address will speed the process.

## Submission Guidelines:

Please include name, phone, and address with each submittal. Short, single topic articles are preferred. Deadlines for proposed articles and letters to the editor: February 1, May 1, August 1, and November 1. A one week extension is available if the submission is sent by e-mail and advance advisory has been provided that the article is forthcoming. Submissions will be returned if specifically requested and

## Sierra Club Contacts In the Yahi Group

### General Contact

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

### Executive Committee Officers

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## Chambers Creek Trail Chosen

By Stephen Sayre

Invitations for an organizational meeting May 4th were mailed out to new Yahi Group members within 50 miles of Chico, who had returned questionnaires indicating an interest in trail maintenance; but it was mostly members who had already adopted a trail who showed up.

In response to an invitation from Friends of the High Lakes (FOTHL), the Yahi Group had also put a notice in our newsletter calendar to judge interest in forming this new committee. As fate would have it, 3 of the 5 members attending had already been hard at work trying to keep hiking trails open in the High Lakes. FOTHL at [www.friendsofthehighlakes.com](http://www.friendsofthehighlakes.com) should be happy to learn that our focus will be deep within the Semi-Primitive Non-Motorized area of the High Lakes, as they work to keep the more popular Motorized sections accessible via 4-wheel-drive.

Chambers Creek Trail is one of the gems of the North Fork Feather River canyon (see hike # 24 in our new trails booklet Hiking Butte County), passing a waterfall above a bridge built by the CCC in the early 1930s. Actually in Plumas County and mostly in Plumas National Forest, this 9- mile trail, ascending 3800 feet, will need a long-term commitment in order to keep new brush from closing it near the top, where the 2000 Storrie Fire removed most of the brush-shading trees.

The adjacent Lassen National Forest is doing a High Lakes OHV Area Draft Management Plan ( see [http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lassen/projects/NEPA\\_projects/route/high\\_lakes/](http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/lassen/projects/NEPA_projects/route/high_lakes/) ) that is separate from the Motorized Travel Management Environmental Impact Statements currently undergoing National Environmental Policy Act analysis on both National Forests.

We hope more Yahis will join us in our endeavors this summer, June 1st and August 17th. Committee member Mary Davis at 530-345-3559 or [mdavis7878@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mdavis7878@sbcglobal.net) would also like to hear from members who missed our formative

## Picnic in the Pines

On Sunday, June 29 at 12 noon, we'll have a potluck picnic for members, their families and friends, in the Group Picnic Area of Bille Park.

After lunch, there will be optional short walks around the park, and along the rim of Butte Creek Canyon to a grotto, an Indian grinding rock, and/or lookout points for spectacular views.

There are playground facilities for children. Bring a dish to share, your own non-alcoholic beverage and table service, and comfortable shoes for a hike. A \$2 donation will help pay the park rental costs. This is a good opportunity to visit with old friends and make new ones.

The Group Picnic Area is at the west end of the parking lot accessed via the entrance at 501 Bille Road (one mile west of The Skyway). Those coming from Chico turn left at the corner of Bille

## Volunteer Corner

While the Yahi Group is an all-volunteer club, many members go above and beyond contributing annual financial support, and actively provide the effort needed to realize Sierra Club values and goals locally.

This quarter, it is the pleasure of the Executive Committee to recognize Mary Davis. She has undertaken the task of up dating and maintaining the "Enos List" of volunteers and has tabled at recent events. Her positive and well-considered attitude and Sierra Club support are readily apparent. Many thanks to Mary and to all

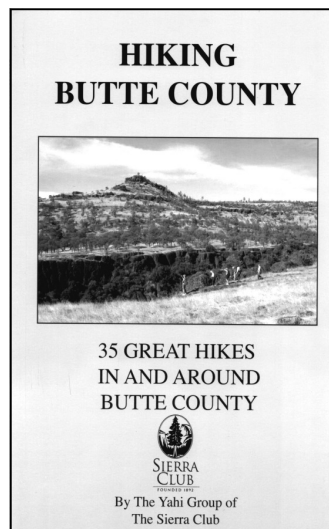
## Take Your Best Shot

### 2008 Sierra Club-Yahi Group Photography Contest

This year's theme will be divided into three categories: "The Good, The Bad and the Ugly" as found in the Yahi Group area. Maps of the subject area are available upon request. The contest is open to all members and non-members alike. Please submit your non-returnable, printed entries to P.O. Box 2012, Chico, CA 95927 by November 15, 2008. All submissions will become the sole and exclusive property of the Sierra Club-Yahi Group.

The top photos (as determined by the members of the Executive and Management Committees AND anyone else who would like to be involved) will be displayed at the annual

## New YAH! Group Trail Guide Now Available



The Yahi Group's new trail guide is now on sale. 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. Each hike was selected by long-time trail guides of the Sierra Club Yahi Group.

The book has a mixture of easy to reach, in-town, local trips and more distant treks to wild places. This second edition of the guide has carried forward several hikes from the original guide and added more than 20 new hikes. All proceeds from sale of the book will go to the Sierra Club Yahi Group.

Cost: \$10 plus shipping if bought directly

Contact: Alan Mendoza - 530-891-8789 or

## Green Baby Expo

Now more than ever, people are concerned about the environment and want to find ways to live a greener lifestyle. Parents want the best for their kids and seek out natural, healthy, organic, and gentle, products and services. A group of Chico businesses owners and concerned citizens got together to create the Green Baby Expo to educate families about all the wonderful green and natural products and programs available today.

There will be entertainment and fun for the whole family. The one day event will be held from 10am-5pm on Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup> at the Silver Dollar Fairgrounds. The \$5 per family entrance fee includes a Chico bag. There will be many vendors from the North Valley and beyond exhibiting products and services that will appeal to all young families as well as everyone who is eco-minded. Please visit the website for more information.

## Locally Grown Food

Did you know the food you buy in grocery stores has traveled an average of 1500 miles to get there? And many of the huge agribusinesses that produce it use unsustainable processes which include overuse of land and heavy use of pesticides and artificial fertilizers.

The best organic food is what's grown closest to you. This website will help you to find farmers' markets, family farms, and other sources of sustainably grown food **in your area**, where you can buy produce, grass-fed meats, and many other goodies.

## Stop Unwanted Catalog Mail

To stem the flow of catalogs to your house, register at [www.catalogchoice.org](http://www.catalogchoice.org) to search and decline unwanted catalogs.

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

Join today and receive a **FREE Sierra Club Weekender Bag**



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

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## Dyer Mountain Day

By Gerda Lydon

Attention members from Chester, Lake Almanor, Westwood, Susanville, Greenville and surrounding areas! We are planning a potluck picnic in Westwood Park, located at Second and Greenwood Streets in Westwood, on Saturday, August 16.

This is a good opportunity to visit with old friends and make new ones. Bring a dish to share, your own non-alcoholic beverage and table service, as well as comfortable shoes.

Lunch will be followed by a program by Steve Robinson of Mountain Meadows Conservancy.

Lunch is from 11:30 to 1:15, and then we plan to car caravan to Round Mountain, with a good view of Dyer Mountain and Indian Ole Dam.

Chico and Paradise participants, meet at Park and Ride in Chico at 9:00 for carpooling (bring money

## Yahi Group Outings Summer 2008

**On-Going Tuesday Volleyball.** Join Yahi Group members and friends for friendly, co-ed volleyball every Tuesday night at 7PM at the Chapman Center (corner of E. 16th Street and B Street in Chico). Cost: \$3 per night. Free lessons included. For more information call Karen, 899-8305 or Betty, 345-7205.

**Weekly Park Bike Ride/Walk** (grade 2, class A). Meet at the Chico Park & Ride each Tuesday evening at 7PM for a 1 1/2 hour bike ride along the creek. Walkers welcome for self-organized walk. Helmet and bike light required. Also bring water and a flashlight. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

### June 2008

**Saturday, May 31 and June 7 - Trail Days in Upper Park** (Educational). Join community volunteers to help provide trail repair and maintenance on Upper Bidwell Park trails. The workday will last from 9 am until noon or longer for volunteers who wish to continue. Volunteers should wear sturdy shoes, weather-appropriate clothing, a hat and bring snacks. Tools, water & instruction will be provided. Sponsored by the Chico Park Division. For more information, call the volunteer coordinator, Lise-Smith-Peters, at 896-7831.

**Sunday, June 1 – Upper Chambers Creek Trail Maintenance** (Conservation) (grade 1, class A). Join us on our newly adopted trail, as we hike and prune our way down into the North Fork Feather River canyon from the High Lakes. 4-wheel-drive vehicles are needed as we drive up from Rock Creek Crossing to our parking trailhead only 2 miles from where we will do most of the work. We also hope to spot some rare Cascade frogs in Murphy Lake. Please call for details. Leader: Stephen, 530-876-1391; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

**Sunday, June 8 – Lower Chambers Creek Trail Exploration** (grade 1, class B). This will be a leisurely 4-mile round trip hike with a climb of about 1700' to the old bridge and pretty Chambers Creek Falls, to explore the lower part of a Plumas National Forest trail newly adopted by the Yahi Group. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or Spring Valley School (Hwy 70 and Pentz Rd.) at 8:30 AM for the pretty drive up Hwy 70 to the old school site

1.2 miles past the town of Tobin. Leader: Stephen, 530-876-1391; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

**Sunday, June 15 – Bear Lake / Frying Pan Creek Exploration** (grade 2, class A). This will be an ambitious 10-mile loop hike, half off trail, in the granite grandeur of the upper Rock Creek watershed in the High Lakes, beginning at the end of the 25N05 road near Lotts Lake (4-wheel drive not required). Meet at Park & Ride at 8:00 AM for the drive up through Butte Meadows and past Philbrook Lake, and plan to return after dusk. Leader: Stephen, 530-876-1391.

**Saturday, June 21 – Moonlight Fire and**

**Proposed Copper Mine Tour** (Educational). This is an opportunity to learn about two major environmentally devastating events (one realized and one potential). You will see/discuss the effects and related ramifications resulting from last year's Moonlight and Antelope forest fires covering 100 square miles. You will also get to look over the open pit, acid heap leach copper mines locations proposed for the same area. Local experts and concerned citizens will be there to provide information and answer questions. Dress for hiking but distances covered will be short and not difficult. Baked treats and drinks will be provided, bring a lunch. Butte County residents meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9 am. Plumas County residents meet at Nelson and Main St. in Taylorsville at 11 am. Leader: John Shower, 284-6856; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

**Sunday-Thursday, June 22-26 – Pacific Crest Trail Maintenance** (Educational). Volunteers are needed for work on the Pacific Crest Trail from the footbridge over Bear Creek to the crossing of the Middle Fork of Feather River near Butte Bar. Camp near Deadman Spring without cars (backpack in). An exciting and interesting adventure with all meals provided to volunteers by the Pacific Crest Trail Association. Contact: Dennis, [dawashburn@comcast.net](mailto:dawashburn@comcast.net), 925-978-3939 or Larry, [larry.krumm@sccoe.org](mailto:larry.krumm@sccoe.org) or 408-270-4513.

**Saturday, June 28 - North Forebay Waterway Clean-up 9AM - 1PM.** (Educational) Join CA State

## Yahi Group's General Outing Information

The following information is intended for people who have decided to take or are contemplating an outing that has been organized by the Yahi Group of the Sierra Club. The information is based on the Group's established policy (available from the web site or from the Outings Committee Chair); it will be supplemented by trip specific information and by the outing leader.

**Updates:** Updated outings information can be found on our web site at <http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/>

**Transportation:** There is an active interest in car pooling, but leaders cannot organize car pools to Sierra Club outings. All trips begin and end at the trailhead, which is not necessarily the initial meeting place. Any car pool arrangements are private agreements between the driver and the passengers.

Riders are expected, as a matter of courtesy, to reimburse drivers to cover the transportation expenses of the trip. The customary amount is 10 cents per mile per passenger depending on the vehicle, the number of passengers and the road conditions. For example, one passenger only should pay the driver a little more and a car full of passengers should pay a little less. This is only a guideline.

**Membership in Sierra Club not required:** Outings are open to the general public unless otherwise indicated. If you enjoy the outings, it is hoped that you will see the value of joining; application information is available in this newsletter or on the website.

**Fees and costs:** Occasionally an outing announcement will indicate a cost. Unless the announcement specifically indicates that outing is a fund raiser, the cost indicated is only that which has been estimated to cover trip expenses. **Non-Sierra Club members are asked to make a \$2 donation if attending an outing to help defray our costs for outings**

**Sign-up:** Most activities do not require advance sign-up; it is merely necessary to show up at the designated time and place. For those outings where advance sign-up is requested, a call to the leader will initiate the procedure. If fees or deposits are needed, the sign-up is not considered complete until those have been paid. Deposits may not be refundable; please inquire at time of making payment.

**Outing Waivers:** All participants on Sierra Club outings are required to sign a standard liability waiver. If you would like to read the liability waiver before you chose to participate on an outing, please go to <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms/>, or contact the Outings Department at (415) 977-5528 for a printed version.

**All activities:** These are group outings. It is important that participants follow the instructions of the outing leader. Please be sure you are in adequate physical condition to undertake the activity you choose (see classifications for guidance). If you are unsure of the difficulty of the trip or of your ability, check with the leader before deciding to go. The outing leader may decide to disallow the participation of an outing applicant if the leader concludes that the applicant's reduced preparation or capability may negatively affect the outing for the rest of the group.

**Hiking and Day Activities:** Bring lunch, water, and essentials, as well as reimbursement money for your driver. Wear boots or sturdy shoes.

**Dos and Don'ts:** Plan to carry out anything you carry in. Pets are not allowed unless the trip specifically indicates "pets permitted". No firearms. No electronic music devices.

**Young people:** Please consult with the leader for a decision as to whether the outing is appropriate for a youth, whether accompanied by an adult or not. Any person under 18 not accompanied by a parent must have a written parental authorization to give to the outing leader. Forms may be obtained in advance from the outing leader or from the Outings Committee Chair at 891-8789. The completed form is required to be provided for emergency medical care if needed.

**Errors in the schedule:** If there is incorrect information in an outings announcement, please see the web site at <http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/> or call Skip Augur at 894-1366 to obtain a correction.

**Suggestions and Comments welcome:**

Any comments on the outings or suggestions for future ones are always welcome.

Mail to Alan Mendoza; 6 Patches Drive, Chico, CA 95928 or e-mail [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net).



Parks, Forebay Aquatic Center, Chico Paddleheads, Boy Scouts, and the community in litter pick-up along the waterway. Free use of kayaks to the first 25 sign-ups. Explore our waterways, wetlands, and wildlife while picking up litter. Have fun on the water and be part of our clean-up effort. A picnic shaded ramada and swim beach reserved for volunteers afterwards. Bring gloves, water shoes or tennis shoes, long sleeve shirt, sunscreen, and hat. Contact leader for details and to sign up. Leader: Dave Garcia, 533-2357 or [rangerdave@myvw.com](mailto:rangerdave@myvw.com)

**Sunday, June 29 – Yahi Group Picnic at Bille Park.** Enjoy a relaxing afternoon exploring Bille Park in Paradise. Meet at 12 noon in the Group Picnic Area (west end of entrance at 501 Bille Road - one mile west of the Skyway). Bring a potluck dish to share, your own non-alcoholic beverage, and table service. A \$2 donation will help the Park rental costs. After lunch there will be short walks around the park, and along the rim of Butte Creek Canyon to a grotto, Indian grinding rock, and/or vista areas. Information: call Mary or Jim Johnson @ 877-3906.

**Friday-Sunday, June 27-29 – Point Reyes Canoe/Kayak, Bike and Hiking Weekend.** We will be exploring Tomales Bay by canoe/kayak starting from Heart's Desire Beach, staying at the Pt. Reyes Hostel; potluck dinner Friday; biking/hiking in the wilderness refuge (which is

## Directions to Meeting Places For Yahi Outings

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

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

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

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

## Sierra Club Hike Classifications

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

### Distance Rating

Grade 1: up to 6 miles

Grade 2: 6-10 miles

teeming with wildlife) and any other spontaneous activities that tickle our fancy. Beat the heat of the valley and come to the seashore north of S.F. Limited to 12 fun-loving folks. Call leader to sign up. Leader: Jeanne, 530-899-9980; Asst. Leader: Michelle, 530-865-9491.

## July 2008

**Saturday, July 12 - Bidwell Park Day Hike** (grade 2, class A). Take a mostly flat 10 mile trek along the south side of Big Chico Creek. Meet at One Mile's Caper Acres parking lot at 10:00 AM. Our walk is on paved park road past Five Mile to the upper park (via a gravel pedestrian/bike path) and ends at the golf course. Bring water and lunch, (or buy at golf course). Rain cancels. Leader: Gene, 873-1552; Asst. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

**Saturday-Sunday July 12-13 – Mt. Eddy Climb and Car Camp** (grade 3, class C). Climb 9025' Mt. Eddy, the highest peak in the Klamath Mountains. The beautiful 9-10 mile round-trip trail in the proposed Mt. Eddy wilderness area climbs 2800' and passes Deadfall Lake, several streams and verdant alpine meadows and wildflower displays. At the top enjoy an incredible close up view of Mt. Shasta to the east and the Trinity Alps to the west. After our late afternoon climb we will camp overnight and do a short hike on Sunday to a nearby lake before driving home. Call leader for more info. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net); Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.

**Thursday-Sunday, July 17-20 – Backpack in Twenty Lakes Basin near Yosemite** (grade 2, class B) A relaxed mostly downhill shuttle trip from Saddlebag Lake east of Tuolumne Meadows to Lundy Lake. A joint trip with the Bay Area Chapter. We will backpack in 5 miles to the Twenty Lakes area and spend two full days day hiking or enjoying the wildflowers, lakes, green valleys and views of Mount Conness and Mount Dana. Hike out on Sunday about 4-5 miles through beautiful Lundy Canyon. Individual commissary. Leader has extra backpacks, sleeping bags, pads, tents for beginners. Contact leaders to sign up and get more info. Leader: Alan, 530-891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net); Asst. Leader, Rod (S.F.), 415-350-5282.

**Saturday, July 26 – Kings Creek Falls & Sifford Lakes Loop Hike** (grade 1, class A) Spend the day enjoying meadows, wildflowers and a spectacular waterfall and lakes. After hiking to Kings Creek Falls we will cross Kings Creek on a bridge and head east to Bench Lake and the beautiful Sifford Lakes before returning to Kings Creek Meadow. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

## August 2008

**Saturday, August 2 – Brokeoff Mountain Day Hike** (grade 2, class C). Join us to enjoy Lassen Park's best kept secret, the strenuous and scenic 7-mile trail up to Brokeoff Mountain. They'll be plenty of photo opportunities as we cross little creeks, hike along ponds, and pass through meadows full of flowers and climb 2600' up to a great view of Mt. Lassen. Thunderstorm cancels. Bring lunch, water and \$ for carpool drivers and

entrance fees. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Return time around 5-6PM. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491; Asst. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

**Saturday, August 16 – Yahi Group Picnic and Program in Westwood** (Educational). Join us for a potluck picnic in Westwood Park (Second and Greenwood Streets in Westwood) on Saturday, August 16 at 11AM. This is a good opportunity to visit with old friends and make new ones. Bring a dish to share, your own non-alcoholic beverage and table service, as well as comfortable shoes. Lunch will be at 11:30AM followed by a program by Steve Robinson of Mountain Meadows Conservancy and a car caravan to Round Mountain with a good view of Dyer Mountain, and Indian Ole Dam. Butte County participants meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM for carpooling (bring \$ for drivers). For further information call Gerda, (Chico) 343-9277 or Fred, (Westwood) 530-256-3197

**Sunday, August 17 - Upper Chambers Creek Trail Maintenance** (Conservation) (grade 1, class B). This will be our second official trail maintenance outing to our newly adopted trail in need of a lot of brush clearing at about 5000 feet in elevation. The hike in from Reese Flat is mostly level, but we will push further downhill this time, as our volunteer manpower allows. Please call for details. Leader: Stephen, 530-876-1391; Asst. Leader: Alan, 891-8789

**Thursday, August 21 – Sierra Club Newsletter Folding.** Join us to help fold and sort the newsletter for mailing; it only takes about an hour and we always have a lot of fun! Volunteers are always needed: newcomers and old members are both welcome. Call 343-9277 for directions and more info.

**Saturday, August 23 - Curtain Falls Day Hike** (grade 2, class B). A strenuous hike to the designated Wild and Scenic Middle Fork of the Feather River. Three miles of switchbacks and stairs with 1500 feet of elevation loss. Then swim, wade and scramble ½ mile upstream to Curtain Falls. Great scenery and swimming. There is no shade, so bring sunscreen, hat and water, as well as a swimsuit and old tennies or water shoes. Wear boots and bring lunch and snacks in a zip lock bag. Limited to 14 participants. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Call leaders for more info. Return to Chico about 8PM or later. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net); Asst. Leader: Doug, 345-0296.

**Saturday, August 30 – Cluster Lakes Hike** (grade 2, class A). Enjoy lakes, meadows and beautiful vistas in Lassen National Park during this mostly level 10-mile loop hike. Bring lunch, water, carpool \$\$ and dress in layers. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or at the Burger King/Applebee's parking lot in Red Bluff at

## Wildfires and Forest Management *(continued from p. 1)*



Open Pit Mine

miles long. The forest canopy is thinned and under-story fuels and ground fuels are removed, masticated, or burned. Large, fire resistant, old growth trees, are retained to provide shade.

DFPZs are not expected to be a final solution. They are the first stage of a comprehensive strategy -- a place to start. Eventually, large portions of the landscape will need to be treated similarly. The

*(continued on p. 6)*

strategic placement of DFPZ's is designed to create a network in which the average area of fuel-break-surrounded forest would be no larger than a few thousand acres. Firefighting efforts would be directed toward containment of fires within these areas.

This practice is widely supported by fire ecologists, and there have been several recent wildfire incidents where DFPZ's functioned as anticipated and were instrumental in reducing the ultimate size of the fire. Several DFPZ's were in place on parts of the Antelope fire which started on July 5, just two months before the Moonlight fire and in the area contiguous to Moonlight.

A scientific study of the Antelope fire has been published as [Fire Behavior and Effects Relating to Suppression, Fuel treatments, and Protected areas on the Antelope Complex Wheeler Fire](#) by Jo Ann Fites, et. al.

Key findings of that report include the following:

“ Treated areas had significantly reduced fire behavior and tree and soil impacts compared to untreated areas.

Treated areas were utilized during suppression along several flanks of the fire for both direct attack with dozers and hand crews, as well as for indirect attack with burn operations.

Treated areas that burned during the first two days—when suppression resources were limited and fire behavior more uniformly intense—had reduced fire effects compared to untreated areas. In some areas, these treated sites had moderate to high severity effects,

A Defensible Fuel Profile Zone treated area provided a safe escape route for firefighters when the column collapsed and two other escape routes were cut off by the fire.

Observations of fire behavior during the first two days suggest that large untreated areas allowed the fire to build momentum and

contributed to increased fire behavior (rate of spread and intensity). Thus, the influence of these untreated areas made it more likely that suppression resources could be overwhelmed, treated areas could be threatened and their effectiveness in thwarting fire spread and intensity diminished.

Satellite imagery reveals that protected areas (owl and goshawk nest stands) had significantly greater tree severity compared to untreated or treated areas. A majority of the larger blocks of untreated areas contained these concentrations of owl and goshawk habitat protected areas.”

There were no DFPZ's or treated areas in place when the Moonlight fire burned. However, the area burned in the Moonlight fire almost exactly covers the 99 thousand acre Diamond Analysis Area. Several years of planning the Diamond Project were put on hold by the Forest Service when planners, ecologists, and foresters were bogged down trying to respond to appeals and lawsuits filed by environmental organizations including: Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign, John Muir Project, Plumas Forest project, Sierra Club and others.

The Diamond Analysis included proposed 5,532 acres of DFPZ's and 8,820 acres of under story thinning. An indirect effect of the appeals was that no thinning or DFPZ construction had started.

This has become a disturbing trend. Forests throughout the Sierra are in an unnatural condition following years of management that failed to fully understand how these ecosystems function and are sustained. We certainly don't know everything there is to know about the complex ecology of mixed conifer forests, but to know what we do know and do nothing is criminal. We now know some of the steps necessary to begin to restore health and fire resilience. Every year that thinning and DFPZ projects are delayed or postponed means more destruction by stand replacing fires. It is essential that the environmental community and the general public understand and support these efforts.

### Is there a role for the Sierra Club ?

by John Shower

It is my hope that the Sierra Club can be an instrument of change. We need to be on the side of good science, willing to be open to measuring the overall health of the forest.

### Outing Planned For June 21, 2008

The Yahi Chapter of the Sierra Club is sponsoring an outing on June 21<sup>st</sup> to tour the Moonlight fire and the proposed Moonlight Valley, Copper Mountain, Superior and Engle copper mines in the same area. Plumas National Forest personnel

## Yahi ExCom Meetings

Yahi Group Executive Committee meetings usually will be held the **first Tuesday of every month from 3PM to 5PM**. Please contact Laura Grossman at [joebass@outrageous.net](mailto:joebass@outrageous.net) or 893-3882

regarding the specific time and place if you would like to attend and if you have an item you would like

## What is A Park?

At the City of Oroville, there has been conflict over land usage between two different agencies, the Feather River Recreation and Park District (FRRPD) and the City of Oroville. The item at issue is the distribution of impact fees from new development and who gets what.

Even though the city has an interest in recreation and museums, there is also a high interest in parks, and Oroville has a "Parks and Trees Department" specifically designed to nurture it as a "Tree City U.S.A."

FRRPD, on the other hand, is heavily weighted toward providing recreational aspects of park use, including ballfields, skateboard parks, soccer fields, disc golf courses, and the like. Even the River Bend Park fishing pond is flanked by concrete walkways and benches, metal fences, parking lot, a pier, a well, and a restroom. It is a recreational pond fitted for the public.. Nature aspects are seemingly given second consideration, and even the riparian border was removed. It's that way around most public thoroughfares, though, as alteration is expected and sometimes needed around congested cities as compared to more remote wilderness areas.

In view of these dual roles, just what is a park? Undoubtedly there are several definitions, depending on your objective.

If you consider "parks" as in California State Parks, you again confront recreation as in boating, equestrian and pedestrian use, but heavily weighted is concern about the natural environment and providing wildlife habitat. The boundary signs around State Parks indicate "Do not disturb natural features," and indeed that is enforced so that you can be arrested for digging out a rock along the shoreline of Lake Oroville. In some parks, even picking mushrooms is forbidden. Our National Parks are heavily dedicated to preserving the natural habitat, in spite of various struggles with snowmobiles, off-road vehicles, lawbreakers, and forest fires. People love animals, and plants and animals need a natural habitat in order to live.

Just as in the old adage, "Water isn't water anymore," in many places around civilization, "Nature isn't nature anymore." There have been modifications: water picks up pollution, nature becomes trampled with public usage. Some wildlife has adjusted.

If you seek a definition of "parks" in Webster's, it says, among several items, one appealing to recreationists: "A piece of ground in or near a city kept for ornament and recreation," while the nature side would lean toward the definition of, "An area maintained in its natural state as a public property." There is no doubt that these dual uses are interspersed around cities, with something for everyone often demanded, but it seems the nature side has to be constantly vigilant ere all the space and consideration go down the recreational tubes.

The City of Oroville's Feather River Nature Center and Native Plant Park has been an attempt to protect one small area for nature. These little natural reserves around cities are needed as a place for wildlife to live, because they invigorate and inspire mankind to see nature. It is visual recreation for free! And it is doubly important to have nature nearby to access conveniently. Not everyone can travel to Wilderness Areas in faraway places.

*Parks are for people...but also for wildlife and wildlife habitat, to be protected and interpreted by qualified naturalists.* – William Penn Mott, Jr.,

## John Muir in the Feather River Canyon

*Although John Muir died April 21, 1914, his spirit lives on in the nature world he loved and in the parks he helped preserve.*

*His name is also etched on the Naturalist Paul Covel Nature Trail stone monument plaque at Oakland Feather River "Camps in Common" near Quincy, CA, with one of his quotations: "Going to the woods is going home."*

*Whether Muir was in the exact campsite along the Spanish Creek tributary is unknown, but he did range widely in the Feather River watershed as he did throughout the Sierra Mountains. We also know that he spent several months with the John Bidwells at Chico while exploring Mt. Shasta and Mt. Lassen, and commented about the Lassen slopes feeding the Feather River system.*

*Mr. Harold Wood of the Sierra Club, who has been the lead authority in compiling information on John Muir, directed me to a letter Muir had written his sister Sarah Muir Galloway on February 26, 1875. He wrote: "My Dear Sister Sarah: I have just returned from a long train of excursions in the Sierras and find yours and many other letters waiting, all that accumulated for five months. I spent my holidays on the Yuba and Feather rivers*

*exploring. I have, of course, worked hard and enjoyed hard, ascending mountains, crossing canyons, rambling ceaselessly over hill and dale, plain and lava bed."*

*At that time, there were no roads through the Feather River Canyon, so he indeed would have had to "ascend mountains and cross canyons"! He wrote that "1875 was so warm that I was tempted to seek general views of the geology and topography of the basin of the Feather River in January." He undoubtedly was trying to get an overall picture of the watershed, but at the same time he would have been attracted to little segments of nature along his route. Perhaps he passed the gold mining camps such as Rich Bar, and clambered amid the granite formations of Grizzly Creek, comparing that segment of stone with the main granite bulk of the 400-mile-long Sierra monolith. I'm sure he would have explored the side streams of the North Fork's Yellow Creek and Indian Creek. The Feather River Canyon is just too filled with inhabitants of wildlife habitats, exquisite flora, and geological wonders for his keen eye to miss. The lava bed he referred to may very well have been Oroville's basaltic Table Mountain.*

As he crossed over to the Middle Fork

through the American Valley, he would have exalted over the Ponderosa Pines such as are along Spanish Creek, and especially the Sugar Pines – one of his favorite trees – that dot the ridges. Of course, Oakland Camp would not be there until 1925, but the Indian Rhubarb, alders, and rich riparian growth would have been in place as those species have been for thousands if not millions of years.

*One wonders if he found the Pitcher Plant bog in the forest above present-day Keddie. There is room for speculation about the pathways of the early explorers, since very little detailed information was recorded.*

*When in Feather River country, Muir did describe his experience in climbing a Douglas Fir tree during a storm near Brownsville, CA, in the Yuba River Valley when a winter gale descended into the woodlands: "The tree's wind-bullied top rocking and swirling in wild ecstasy." There he spent much of the afternoon, captivated by "so noble an exhilaration of motion." He continued, "I felt sure of my tree's elastic temper...I was therefore safe, and free to take the wind into my pulses and enjoy the excited forest from my superb outlook...the bass of the naked branches boomed like waterfalls...and*

## Notes on Preserving Open Space—Deer Herds

Did you know that Butte County migratory deer herds have been in decline for several decades? Critical deer herd winter range is generally on south and southwest facing slopes from 3000 feet in elevation down to about 500 feet, especially where the land has not been subdivided into smaller parcels with scattered houses and prioritized fire suppression. A regular interval of low-intensity wildfire is needed for fresh deer browse and biological diversity. It is not the resident herds eating ornamental yard bushes that are threatened. It is the herds that migrate up to 100 miles, twice a year, that are threatened by increased human presence.

In a presentation to the Butte County General Plan Citizens Advisory Council on 2/28/08, Fish & Game Biologist Henri Lomeli reported that the migratory deer herds are being decimated by lung worm disease causing 78% mortality among yearling fawns. Then the few that remain are subject to poaching and being run over by the ever-increasing number of motor vehicles found in the mountain forest and foothill chaparral, especially along their ancient migration routes. The ancient migration routes were used by native Americans following the herds. Those trails became wagon roads, eventually were paved, and now are where many highways are found.

The National Forests have recently been closed to off-road, cross-country, motorized travel to try to stem an incredible proliferation of poorly sited user-created routes, with their consequent adverse impacts to forest resources such as wildlife habitat connectivity, clean water, and quiet

recreation. Off highway vehicle routes are being evaluated for inclusion into the Forest road system. There is considerable pressure from ATV and motorcycle users to designate more circular routes just for them, which would further increase an already high road density.

In the Bucks Mountain / Mooretown Deer Herd Management Plan it states "From 1.5 to 6+ acres of habitat are destroyed for each mile (12 to 50+ feet wide) of road construction. Although the road mileage of the range is unknown, it is great enough to account for several thousand acres of land. Vehicular disturbance further reduces habitat utilization. Roads significantly compound the poaching problem by causing easy and widespread access to deer. Road kill can cause a considerable loss (see A.7.c above)." Section A.7.c states in part, "For both herds, a road kill exceeding 34% of the reported buck take is estimated."

Dogs allowed to run loose also take a high toll on migratory deer. The Department of Fish & Game allows free-running dog packs to be shot. Stress from loose dogs chasing them is one of the top 3 factors causing increased deer mortality. Shortening the hunting season would have little effect in preserving migratory deer herds because it is not the bucks that need protection. Current hunting restrictions leave plenty of bucks for breeding.

Ideally, some deer migration routes along sloping SW to NE ridges should have no roads so as to better exclude humans with dogs that scare the migratory deer causing the does and fawns to panic and drown in canals and rivers and use up

what little fat reserves they have from browsing sparse winter vegetation. A weak fawn is less likely to survive disease. The North American Mule Deer Conservation Plan recommends, "evaluating road densities to ensure that road densities are not adversely impacting mule deer habitat, particularly fawning areas."

As part of the Butte County General Plan update, Galloway Consulting has used Geographic Information System data to map where the best winter habitat is for migratory deer. Preliminary maps from that effort may now be viewed online by <http://www.buttegeneralplan.net/ebinder/2008/2008-02-28/default.asp> then opening and scrolling the Butte County Deer Range document.

Unfortunately the foothills are about 90% private property; and ideal deer habitat there is also favored as building sites. The existing parcel size restrictions in critical deer winter range are not the best way to protect deer habitat, but about the only tool Fish & Game has aside from acquiring preserves and conservation easements from willing sellers. This is just one of the reasons why subdivision of the large remaining foothill parcels into many, smaller ranchettes must be discouraged. Human population growth should occur within existing urban boundaries or, if allowed on the remaining large lots of 160 acres or

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