



**SIERRA
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FOUNDED 1892

**Yahi
Group**



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

Yahi Group Online Newsletter

July, August, September, October 2010

A Bigger Shasta Dam?

Shasta Dam's new owners: Westland Water District. The reason for their purchase has nothing to do with wanting to have a fishing resort, but rather to supply water to San Joaquin Valley crops and the raising of Shasta Dam. The Bureau of Reclamation has been developing a feasibility report on raising Shasta Dam, which leads me to this point: write about it and make it known.

Art Quilts of Northern California

You could win a beautiful art quilt of a scene from our local environment, These quilts were created by Betty Volker, Jan Hildenbrand, Goodie Sweatt, Phyllis Dempsey and Annette Carey. They depict scenes such as Honeyrun Bridge, Mt. Lassen, local wildlife and flowers. Each is a one-of-a-kind depiction of our local beauty.

Plumas County General Plan Update

This is the second in a series of updates regarding Plumas County's General Plan Update (GPU) process. Plumas County is knee deep into a two-year process of meeting State requirements and bringing itself out of the dark ages. It is trying to make its General Plan more user friendly, legally defensible, and in line with local goals and values.

Summer/Fall Outings and Events

And More...

YAH! Club News, Local Conservation updates, Tappaan Lodge updates, Volunteer opportunities, Two essays by local naturalist and writer, Rex Burris and more.



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A Bigger Shasta Dam?

By David McKinney, Yahi Group, Vice Chair

Part 1: The Impact of Raising Shasta Dam

I was looking through a fly-fishing catalog and browsing the trips section, as I often do, when I noticed a curiosity. Right smack dab in the middle of the Private Water/Trip section was a double-page advertisement for memberships and rentals for access to Bollibokka. Now to most people, this might not sound like anything, nor would they even recognize the name. But for a fly-fisher, this is the equivalent of obtaining tickets to a Beatles reunion.

Bollibokka is a legendary place, an old private fishing club on the McCloud River, established in 1904 by the founders of Hills Brothers Coffee from San Francisco and continued in the possession of the family for some time. When the club was initially founded, this area was quite remote, but now resides just above the present lake level and is the terminus of the McCloud River, emptying into Shasta Lake. It remained restricted with access impossible for the public in any meaningful way. Excited, I read on.

It was true. I could rent the facilities for a whole week for a not-so-nominal sum, but that was fine, since it could accommodate up to 14 guests. When I did the math, I concluded this could be an affordable trip for a group. Now really stoked, I continued on, already starting to formulate a plan. It was then that a note in the description caught my eye. A reference was made – in parentheses, I might add – to the new owners: Westland Water District. Huh? I had heard that name before. I knew these guys supply water for irrigation in some way, so why would an irrigation company now want to get into the fishing club business?

The answer, as is so common these days, is complex and anything but

straightforward, and once again represents the continued destruction and elimination of our natural, historic and scenic wonders. The reason for their purchase has nothing to do with wanting to have a fishing resort, but rather to supply water to San Joaquin Valley crops and the raising of Shasta Dam. The Bureau of Reclamation has been developing a feasibility report on raising Shasta Dam, which leads me to this point: write about it and make it known.

Background

The McCloud River has recently been in the environmental spotlight with the much-publicized battle over the Nestlé Company's proposal for water bottling, which fortunately has been defeated for now. The McCloud River flows east of the Sacramento River and is currently about 50 miles long. It was once longer, but the confluence with the Sacramento River was flooded by the creation of Shasta Lake. It was first described when the area was initially explored by the Hudson's Bay Company around 1830. The river's source is from several springs that drain the southern Cascades just southeast of Mount Shasta in Siskiyou County. The river is famous among fishermen for its rainbow trout, the McCloud River Strain. Noted for their stamina and fighting ability, they were often used as stock for fish-planting activities. At one time, the river boasted Salmon and Steelhead runs and was the southern extent of the Bull Trout, now extinct in this drainage. Scenically, it is known for a series of tumbling waterfalls, collectively referred to as the Falls of the McCloud River.

The river is generally divided into two sections, the upper and lower McCloud. The Upper McCloud, considered to be the section above McCloud Reservoir, contains all the referenced waterfalls and is prime kayak recreational water. The Lower

McCloud flows through a canyon into Lake Shasta, and the last several miles are comprised of two private fishing clubs, the McCloud River Club and Bollibokka as it joins Shasta Lake. The Nature Conservancy has a site on the Lower McCloud which was a gift from the neighboring McCloud River Club. Part of the Bollibokka property which was purchased by Westland has been subdivided and sold to a Silicon Valley developer. In these areas, river access is limited to the high-water mark. The Nature Conservancy section provides both fishing and unlimited hiking access, and there is a cabin supplied by the Conservancy for accommodations on a limited basis. I have had the good fortune to stay there and fish this marvelous river on several occasions. The McCloud River traverses what is at times a steep but pristine river canyon covered with mixed oak and coniferous woodland. There is a well-developed trail system. Wildlife, especially birds, are abundant; this is a prime destination for birders.

The Issue: We Need Water!

Westland Water District is the nation's largest water district, supplying more than 700 San Joaquin Valley farmers covering more than 600,000 acres and is based in Fresno, CA. Westland purchased some 3000 acres along a seven-mile stretch of the McCloud River (including Bollibokka) for some \$35 million. Their position was to purchase the property so as not to impede the potential raising of Shasta Dam. This land would then be sold to the federal government and inundated if the dam were raised.

Currently the Bureau of Reclamation is looking into raising the dam 6-18 feet, but Shasta Dam actually

(continued next page)

The Conservation Forum

A Bigger Shasta Dam *(Continued from p. 1)*

has a base that could support a raise of 200 feet, a fact that is often cited on tours of the dam. They point to the State's continuing growth and increasing agricultural demands which necessitate the search for more water storage. Lake Shasta tops the list because of the immense amount of water storage that raising the dam would allow. A 6-foot raise would increase storage by 290,000 acre-feet, enough water to supply about 1.1 million people for a year. An 18-foot raise would boost the reservoir by 636,000 acre-feet, enough for 2.5 million people per year and a raise up to the capacity of 200 feet would impound a staggering additional 14 million acre-feet. This would quadruple the current capacity of Lake Shasta and would provide enough water for an additional 56 million people per year. To put these massive numbers in perspective, California – as crowded as we think it is – has a current population of about 37 million by the 2009 census estimate.

Completion of this project would essentially be one of the most cost-effective ways to increase the state's water supply. It would also supply additional hydroelectric generation and recreational opportunity. Interestingly, a point that is often cited as a desirable outcome of enlarging the Shasta impoundment is the additional cold water that would become available for spawning salmon runs. Senator Feinstein supports the raising of the dam for this and other reasons. While true, this is only one part of that problem, and a more detailed study would be required. The issues of loss of spawning ground and the proper regulation of water flows are as, if not more, important.

Westland Water District has long been the target of environmentalists and in general has a varied reputation. Farm drainage from some of Westland's acreage in the San Joaquin Valley carries large amounts of selenium, which can be toxic to wildlife.

Westland actually successfully sued the federal government to clean this up. Recently, however, Westland has been instrumental in proposing a solar electric generating facility on agriculturally fallow land in Kings County, which has earned support from the state government, Sierra Club, and agricultural interests.

More Than a River

There is no question to all that hold nature sacred that a free-flowing wild river is a most precious and spiritual gift. The McCloud has long since ceased to run free, though, and few such rivers now remain in their native state. The McCloud has met the fate of most California streams: dammed high and low, its native species decimated, its water sold. It now remains only a question of what is there still to save and preserve. While Bollibokka is essentially a rich man's fishing club, it did preserve pristine river in its natural state for over 100 years and provided home and habitat to some of the remaining native species of the river. It is a part of our collective history, and we are not alone.

Before we settled this land, the area was sacred to the Winnemem Wintu tribe. Their name means "middle river," and is a long-established culture, but at this time they are not yet recognized by the federal government. Bollibokka is Wintu for "black manzanita," a bush that grows wild in abundance along McCloud River. In the 1850s there were about 14,000 Winnemem Wintu, but that number had decreased to about 400 by 1900. Their tribe currently consists of about 130 individuals. The tribe's leaders likewise opposed Westland's purchase. Within the approximately 3000 acres purchased are some 20-plus sites sacred to the Winnemem Wintu. Tribal members

that went off to fight in World War II returned to find Shasta Dam (completed in 1944) and their old homes under water. In 2000, when the Bureau of Reclamation first proposed raising the dam 6-18 feet, the remaining tribal members declared war on the United States. Obviously they take all this very seriously.

As a condition to the sale of the property, access by the Winnemem Wintu was to be continued, for now, and has been honored by Westland. Allied with the Wintu are several environmental groups, including the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC). Their view of the purchase is that it essentially eliminates an opponent, blocks development, heads off the tribe, the district will be bought out with public funds if the dam is built, and for now they have access to one of the premier fishing sites in the Lower 48 to lobby for the project.

The long-term result of such a project are difficult to predict, as it makes assumptions about the growth of this state that are hard to imagine. A California of nearly 100 million people is no doubt possible, but at some point impounding and moving water hundreds of miles, much of which goes to population centers near the ocean, will become prohibitive. This is especially true when coupled with the real effects of climate change and how that dictates rainfall distribution. Stated another way, this in the long run is a losing proposition, as it is the ocean that is really the only stable water source on the planet and as such the only one we can truly depend on. Understanding that utilizing the sea as our water source may be some time off, the question becomes what is a reasonable management plan for now, and what is considered reasonable is based upon individual perspective.

[To be concluded in Part 2]

Buy Local! YAH! Area Farmers' Markets

Magalia

14439 Skyway, Red Lion parking lot
Sundays, 10:00-3:00

Paradise

Alliance Church 6491 Clark Road
Tuesdays, 7:30am to noon (June-Oct.)

Chico

North Valley Plaza Mall
Wednesdays, 7:30 am to noon (June-Oct.)

Chico

Broadway and Third
Thursdays, 6 to 9pm (April-Sept.)

Chico

2nd and Wall
Saturdays, 7:30am to 1pm year round

Oroville

2767 Olive Hwy (Oroville Hospital)
Wednesdays, 11 to 5, (June –August)

Oroville

Myers and Bird
Thursdays, 4 to 7pm (June-Sept.)

Oroville

El Medio Fire Station, South Oroville
Thursdays, 11am to 3pm year round

Gridley

551 Kentucky St.
Tuesdays, 5 to 8pm, (May – August)

Glenn County Market

132 N. Enright Ave., Willows, CA
Saturdays, 8am to 1pm

Plumas Local Food Provider

Sierra Valley Farms
1329 County Rd., Beckwourth, CA

Red Bluff

Court House, 600 block , Washington St.
Saturdays, 8am to 12pm (June-Oct.)

Red Bluff

Court House, 600 block , Washington St.
Wednesday, 5pm to 8pm (July-Sept.)

Useful Websites

<http://guide.buylocalca.org/index.html>
(CA Farmers Market guide, search by zip or county)

<http://www.pickyourown.org/CAnorth.htm>
(find a pick-your-own farmer near you)

<http://www.slowfoodusa.org/>
(national slow foods movement)

<http://www.nrdc.org/health/foodmiles>
(produce by area and season)

YAH! Club News

Message From the Chair

By Dave Garcia, Yahi Chair

The world's worst environmental catastrophe has befallen us. My heart goes out to the Gulf Coast states with the impending devastation of the uncontrollable oil blowout. One of the residents described it as "the 9/11 terrorist attack in slow motion."

We need to support and act with the aggrieved Gulf Coast victims to guarantee that nothing like this ever happens again. Letter writing, petition signing, boycotts, and protests like "Hands Across the Sand" on June 26 are the attention-getters for the critical action needed in ending our addiction to Big Oil and embracing clean, safe, renewable energy. The momentum and the outrage are building with the continued gushing of the oil. We all need to act locally and nationally with commitment to rally everyone to legislate the needed changes.

Big Oil never rests: the Texas oil companies Valero and Tesoro are spending millions to push a deceptive November ballot proposition that would repeal California's clean energy bill, AB32, which does not go into effect until 2012. The "Dirty Energy Proposition" is based on two studies done by a Sacramento State professor claiming economic doom and gloom. However, the Legislative Analyst's Office evaluated these studies and said they contain "serious shortcomings" that render its estimates "useless." Highly respected economists from Stanford, UCLA and Tufts have also dismissed the research as "unsound and unreliable," "highly biased" and "deeply

flawed."

When are we going to stop believing Big Oil's statements that oil tankers are safe (Exxon Valdez), deep-ocean drilling is safe (Deepwater Horizon blowout), and California's clean energy bill, AB32, will hurt our economy and increase unemployment? California's green jobs have grown ten times faster than the statewide average. A 2009 study, The Clean Energy Economy, by the Pew Charitable Trust, listed California as the nation's leading state in clean energy businesses (10,209), clean energy jobs (125,390), and clean energy venture capital funding (\$6.5 billion for 2006-2008). Sounds like clean energy and green jobs are our new economic growth engine like the tech and housing industries used to be.

AB32 is California's future for clean, safe energy and a healthy, sustainable economy. To become involved in this critical campaign, contact Megan Norris, Campaign Coordinator, in the Sierra Club California Office at (916)557-1100, Ext. 106, or megan.norris@sierraclub.org.

The election of four new Executive Committee members for Yahi will be in December. Please contact the ExCom board or Betty Volker if you are interested in running. Help direct the future of the Sierra Club Yahi Group. It is a challenging and rewarding experience.

Newsletter Information

SIERRA CLUB YAH! GROUP NEWSLETTER is published three times a year, in March, July, and November, 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, June 1, October 1. A one week extension is available if the submission is sent by e-mail and advance advisory has been provided that the article is forthcoming. Submissions will be returned if specifically requested and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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

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YAH! Club News

Mother Lode Chapter Annual Awards Banquet

By Susan Sears

On the evening of May 8, this wonderful event was held at the Lions Gate Hotel at the former McClellan Air Force Base in Sacramento. This is now an area of graceful buildings, clean and quiet tree-shaded streets and lush green lawns reminiscent of gracious Southern cities – a pleasant surprise.

The evening's keynote speaker was Michael Brune, the Sierra Club's Executive Director. He described for us three trips he had taken in small planes.

The first trip, to British Columbia, took him to an area of old-growth forests, grizzly bears and salmon. This served to strengthen his resolve to get the Home Depot to change its policy regarding its sources of lumber.

Afterward, he became a real thorn in the huge retailer's side, when he went into one of their stores, found a microphone and made an announcement that went something like this: "Attention shoppers. Did you know that the lumber you're buying was ripped from a pristine area of old-growth timber?" and so forth. When a store employee objected, he put down the mike and wandered around until he found another one, where he repeated his performance. When a member of the store management challenged him, he said he had tried to convince them to change their ways but they wouldn't listen to him, so he was just taking his case to their customers. The Home Depot eventually changed its policy.

His second trip, to the rain forests near the Amazon River, was a real eye-opener. So blatant is one major oil company's foray into the jungles that there is a village named "Shell." The oil company's plan was to clear a swath of jungle to build a road and lay a pipeline, and to "punch many holes in the earth." He found the indigenous people to be quite savvy; they even have the Internet. At a town meeting, he heard one say, "You people should stop using oil like it was water."

His third and most recent trip was to Louisiana, to survey the big BP oil disaster there. He told us the oil on the water looks "as orange as the Golden Gate Bridge." From his vantage point, he could see hundreds of little islands. Some had booms around them, but "we could see that some of them had been blown up onto the shore."

He inspired all of us to rededicate ourselves to the task of continuing as guardians of our planet. I wish to thank the ExCom for bestowing awards upon Grace Marvin, Louise Casey and me, but the best prize of all was to get to see and hear Michael Brune.

YAH! Newsletter E-mailed to You

By Louise Casey, YAH! Newsletter Co-Editor

Each newsletter, printing and mailing, costs the Yahi group about \$800. We can reduce this cost if a substantial number of Yahi members would be willing to receive their newsletters through an e-mail link and forgo the printed version altogether. All of the money that we save will be available for the important conservation work of the Yahi group in our area.

Because it does not need to go through the printing and mailing processes, the online version will be available about two weeks before the printed version would reach you in the mail.

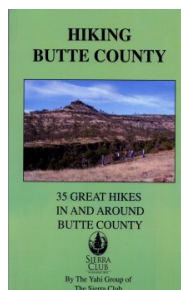
If you are interested in joining the increasing number of Yahi members who receive the newsletter this way, please send a note to yahinews@comcast. State that you would like to sign up for the online newsletter and include your NAME, ADDRESS and ZIP CODE. (Zip codes are very important in sorting our mailing list into e-mail and postal recipients.)

Printed newsletters will still be available at various places, including the libraries, Mountain Sports, Paradise Health Clubs, Chico Creek Nature Center, Butte Community College and Chico State, as well as local farmers markets and environmental events. Also, you can change your mind and go back to the printed version any time if you find you prefer it. There will always be a link at the bottom of each e-mail note with the online link that you can use to "unsubscribe".

We would really value your support. Please sign up for an online subscription today! Send your name and address, including zip code, to yahinews@comcast.net.

Yahi Group Trail Guide

By Alan Mendoza



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

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

Gerda Lydon Retiring as YAH! Program Chair

We wish to offer special recognition and thanks to Gerda Lydon, a long-time member and tireless worker for the Yahi Group.

Gerda has brought a wealth of wonderful programs to the YAH! group over the years. With the completion of the Spring Programs, Gerda retired from this responsibility. The YAH! Group wishes to express our heartfelt appreciation for the work she has done to find and arrange so many inspiring speakers and programs over the years.

Gerda continues to serve the Group as membership chair, hosts the newsletter mailing preparation meetings for each publication, and actively supports the work of the Yahi Group in ways too many to list here.

Thank you, Gerda, for your hard work and dedication.

YAH! Needs You!!! Future depends on Volunteers

By Betty Volker

Do you enjoy having a Sierra Club group in our area?

Do you participate in programs or hikes, and/or do you belong to Yahi to support the natural assets of our area? We need volunteers to keep our local organization going. At this time we need two or three new board members to start a two-year term in January 2011. If you would be willing to serve on the Board, please call Betty Volker 345-7205. Requirements for board members are: be a Sierra Club member in good standing and have internet access.

Many thanks to Gerda Lydon for all the years she has provided programs and summer picnics. Yahi group had its last program in June. If we want to continue program meetings, we urgently need someone to take Gerda's place as Program Chair. Please consider volunteering for the position. Call Betty at 345-7205 or any of the current board members.

A Note of Appreciation

By Gerda Lydon

I wish to thank Joan Palmer for her assistance helping me set up refreshments for the Program meetings. I couldn't have done it without you, Joan. Gerda

Join the YAH! Blog

<http://yahinews.blogspot.com>

Conservation News

YAH! Conservation Notes

By Grace Marvin, Yahi Conservation Chair

1- *The city of Orland* did not agree to the terms of the Settlement Agreement (a process required by CEQA), meaning that the *Crystal Geyser* lawsuit brought by Orland's Save Our Water Resources (SOWR) group will continue. What is needed is a complete Environmental Impact Statement that considers the impacts on Orland and surrounding areas of the proposed Crystal Geyser Water Bottling plant. Of course, water transfer issues are of immediate interest to SOWR. But pollution from truckers under contract with Crystal Geyser may be the deciding factor for the courts. Therefore, please show your support for **Assembly Bill 32** (affecting CO2 emissions) this summer -- as there are mighty political forces fighting both it and **CEQA** (California Environmental Quality Act).

2- Population pressure has been a hot potato for the Sierra Club. Local interest in handling that "elephant in the (environmental) room" is spreading! Volunteer training for those who want to share the Sierra Club's message about this issue is scheduled for San Francisco. (Related recommended reading: *Mother Jones*, May/June 2010.)

3- **Michael Brune, the new Executive Director of the Sierra Club**, impressed many of us attending the annual Awards meeting of the Mother Lode Chapter in April. His passion for protecting the environment was quite evident with statements he has made about the **oil industry** as a result of the BP "spill" in the Gulf of Mexico. (He rightly pointed out that children make spills, while the gulf damage is horrendous.) He has flown over the Gulf to see the disaster, has met with leaders in Washington, D.C., and is promoting his strong Sierra Club message -- evident in numerous media outlets. Other Sierra Club leaders/activists, also, are doing much of the groundwork. Locally, Dave Garcia, is stepping up to the plate, e.g., addressing the need to "drive 55," and asking us to not make purchases at Valero gas stations. Valero (from Texas) reportedly spent one million dollars lobbying California leaders to fight AB 32. Others include Tesoro and Beacon gas stations.

4- We share the disappointment of many environmentalists with the Chico City Council's response in April to questions about short and long disc golf courses; we are particularly concerned about **disc golf activities and policies at the environmentally magnificent Bidwell Park** course site near Highway 32. Chico needs much more sympathetic members on City Council. At least three members who presented themselves, formerly, as being on the side of protecting the park, seem more concerned now about getting re-elected - thereby allowing disc golfers to further erode soils, bushes, trees, etc. As Conservation Chair and earlier as Yahi Chair, I have complemented the extraordinary efforts of Friends of Bidwell Park with numerous written

and oral statements to the City Council and to the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC).

5- Denice Britton (Chico's urban forester) proposed a Chico **tree planting project** at a subcommittee meeting of the Bidwell Park and Playground Commission (BPPC): Denice will make a formal proposal at a BPPC subcommittee meeting about a possible demonstration project. The idea is to help Chico residents plant and care for trees on their property. Already there is a list of hundreds of residents who have expressed interest. **Jan Hildenbrand and Annette Carey** (Yahi Executive Committee members) may well tap other **club members as tree planting trainers (please contact them!)**, so that we could have a big impact. Denice would organize a tree planting and care training workshop. Interest has also been raised regarding planting trees in parking lots. (If you live elsewhere in Yahi region, would you want to start a similar program?)

6- Patricia Puterbaugh continues to work on **Lassen National Forest issues**, while Stephen Sayre often has submitted detailed written comments - especially about **OHV trail issues** throughout the area. Cross-county skier and Yahi outings leader Larry Crisman often works on **clearing brush** on ski trails.

7- **Dyer Mountain:** The law firm (*Shute, Mihayli, and Weinberger*), Mountain Meadows Conservancy, Sierra Watch, and Sierra Club (G. Marvin) are preparing for the required Settlement Conference for a June court meeting in Susanville. We continue in our efforts not to allow an environmentally challenged ski development and four-season resort to be built there

8- Draft **Butte County and Chico General Plans**. A Butte County Citizens Action Committee and the general public have raised many issues in these plans, including 1- **the location and extent of proposed developments**, such as housing clusters being next to each other (**cluster sprawl**); 2- the need for **incentives**, and *not* just regulations, to **ensure Sustainability**, and 3- **the expectation should exist for planners to evaluate the impacts of all projects** that are in line for development (and not just selected ones). Former CSUC Provost and Sustainability Coordinator Scott McNall expressed strong concern about the need to **address the Habitat Conservation Plan BEFORE specifying where development should take place**. Robin Huffman, new Advocacy Coordinator of Butte Environmental Council (BEC) sought more **setback buffers and scenic corridors**. She will be writing letters concerning **numerous problems with the Butte Co. General Plan** during the public comment period. Carol Perkins (BEC water analyst and new Sierra

Club member) will also be responding by calling for changes affecting water issues. The City of Chico and Butte County have June deadlines for written comments. Chico will have public discussions on June 22, July 24, August 28, and September 28. (When can you discuss your area's General Plan?)

Butte Environmental Council remains the lead organization fighting water transfers from the Tuscan Aquifer. Giving BEC your support would be most valuable to them and to the region..

9- **Chico City Manager's regularly Environmental Meeting:** At these meetings, representatives from roughly a half-dozen environmental groups and City staff discuss many issues in City Manager Dave Burkland's office. Recently, these included:

A - The current budget crisis entails cutbacks, such as, in meetings and staff time. I asked: How can local conservation organizations help the city during the current budget crisis? Answers included 1- **Urban tree projects** discussed above); 2- **Getting more grant information** for the staff. Former CSUC Provost and Sustainability Coordinator Scott McNall pointed out that many energy grants are available, and it was suggested that future meetings should be devoted to these and other grant possibilities. 3- **Environmental groups could work with city staff** on some projects. We would not want to replace staff, however.

B - **Bidwell Ranch** (vacant land near middle Bidwell Park): Environmentalists at the meeting expressed concern that there is no comprehensive approach in handling tours, signs, etc. This is land for which we have very often sought protection over the years. We have been successful thus far, but must remain vigilant.

10. **Tabling report:** Yahi Executive Committee Member, Annette Carey, and Nelson Parmeter volunteered to do the legwork and **Earth Day** tabling at the Thursday night Farmer's Market. Julian Zener, member of the Yahi Group & **Chico City's Sustainability Committee**, tabled at **Enloe Hospital**; the committee is now seeking to educate/ reach out to the community. Special focus: **wood-burning stoves and air quality**. Noteworthy: Chico has some of the very worst air in the state, especially on certain days during winter months, but the county's Air Quality District seems quite unsympathetic!

Annette, Nelson, Julian, Alan Mendoza, and Grace Marvin volunteered to help at the very popular **Endangered Species Faire** on May 1.

We are very sad to report that John Shower (a Yahi Point Person living in Plumas Co.) lost his wife, Marty, in a car accident with a big rig in April. John was seriously injured. Our deepest sympathies go to John.

Outings and Events: Summer/Fall 2010

Yahi Summer/Fall 2010 Outings (follow link below to current listings)

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

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza



Art Quilts of Northern California

By Annette Carey



If you would like to win a beautiful art quilt of a scene from our local environment, please come visit us at the Chico Saturday Farmer's Market on July 17 or at the Paradise Farmer's Market on June 22. There are four quilts and two pillows to choose from, and you may buy all your tickets for one quilt or if you prefer, spread your chances around.

These quilts were created by Betty Volker, Jan Hildenbrand, Goodie Sweatt, Phyllis Dempsey and Annette Carey. They depict scenes such as Honeyrun Bridge, Mt. Lassen, local wildlife and

flowers. Each is a one-of-a-kind depiction of our local beauty.

Raffle tickets will be available at different venues until the drawing in December at our annual Xmas dinner. You need not be present to win. Tickets may be purchased at one for \$1, seven for \$5, 15 for \$10 and 40 for \$20. This is the main fundraiser for our local Yahi group and is therefore a donation to our non-profit organization. You can contact Jan Hildenbrand at 894-0438 to find out where else these beautiful quilts will be displayed.



Clair Tappaan Lodge Fund Raiser

By Olivia Diaz, Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee

Clair Tappaan Lodge Announces Dates for August Fund Raiser August 13-15

Located at 7000 feet elevation off the Soda springs offramp of Highway 80, Clair Tappaan Lodge provides a respite from the summer heat. At last year's fund raiser, we had to move the Sunday breakfast indoors because we were concerned the milk would freeze. Freeze in August?

Yes, our August fund raiser, scheduled this year for August 13-15, offers sunny days, exciting and invigorating hikes and crisp nights.

Ernie Malamud, chair of the event, announced that the 6th Annual August Fund Raiser will once again offer a multitude of guided hikes on Saturday and Sunday. Many of the hikes will have a theme. In addition there will be hikes to an alpine lake for lunch and swimming, a few vigorous hikes and others for people who prefer an easier, shorter foray into the Tahoe National Forest. A choice of other Saturday activities will include lunch at the historic Warming Hut, watercolor techniques, etc.

The final arrangements are being made and the speakers, events and hike leaders will be announced as they develop on the Clair Tappaan Lodge website. Watch for prices and details at ctl.sierraclub.org

Consider making a reservation and joining the fun and great camaraderie with fellow lodge enthusiasts. Proceeds will benefit the Lodge and the Clair Tappaan Lodge Environmental Education fund in the Sierra Club.

If you can't join us for the August event, but want to contribute to the Environmental Education Fund, feel free to write a tax deductible check to the CTL Environmental Education Fund and send it to Peter Lehmkuhl, General Manager of Clair Tappaan Lodge, PO Box 36, Norden, 95724.

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The Conservation Forum

Plumas County Continues with General Plan Update

By John Shower, Executive Director of Moonlight Valley Alliance[1]

This is the second in a series of updates regarding Plumas County's General Plan Update (GPU) process. Plumas County is knee deep into a two-year process of meeting State requirements and bringing itself out of the dark ages. It is trying to make its General Plan more user friendly, legally defensible, and in line with local goals and values.

As those of you involved in Butte County's General Plan revision process know, it's a complicated and circuitous journey. The Plumas County GPU involves five groups working in concert with a consultant team. These include the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Planning Department and five "working groups" representing the five county districts.

So far, the working groups have met twice to discuss a variety of topics. Design Workshop, the consulting firm, coordinates and runs the working group meetings as part of their contractual responsibilities. All meetings are open to the public for comment and participation.

The baseline data and background studies will collect information from a variety of groups and studies: identified stakeholders (in which Sierra Club and Trout Unlimited are included), the 2007 written opinion survey public "visionary meetings," and working group summary. This information will be collected, synthesized and incorporated into the Draft General Plan (DGP). Public workshops will then be held to review and refine the GPU. When this process is complete, the product will be forwarded to the Board of Supervisors for discussion, modification and, finally, adoption. This technical review process is scheduled to take about two years.

According to State law, the GPU is required to address seven elements that relate to the county's development and/or infrastructure necessary to support that development. These include: land use, circulation/ transportation, housing, conservation, open space, noise and safety. The Plumas County GPU will also include three additional elements: water, agriculture/ timber/ forest products, and economics.

As a member of the District 2 working group, I will concentrate on environmental and conservation issues and try to help implement language that will both protect the environment and provide for a sustainable economy (the key word here is *sustainable*).

I have written a letter that I intend to present to the Planning Commission and the District 2 working group (included below). Hopefully it will present convincing arguments to achieve this end. Considering that Butte County is also undergoing a GPU, and that some of you

may be involved in the process, your input would be much appreciated. Please contact me at 284-6856 or theshowers@frontier.net with any suggestions or comments (or a fishing update).

Plumas County General Plan Revision:

Environment and the Economy

By John Shower, Executive Director of Moonlight Valley Alliance[1]

On the first Working Group meeting (5 Jan. 2010), all district groups emphasized the importance of water, open space, natural beauty and wildlife (as expressed in their photos) as things they liked most about Plumas County. There were other items mentioned as well (different items for different groups), but preserving these four aspects of the county were universally listed as important things and were the reasons why they came/ stayed here. Other related expressions and photos emphasized: sustainability of the environment and agriculture, maintaining good forest management/ healthy forests, clean atmosphere (i.e., clean air and water) and maintenance of habitat as desirable goals for our county.

In October of 2006, a written opinion survey of county residents was taken; and later, in 2007, a number of "Vision" sessions were held to poll opinions about the upcoming General Plan Update (GPU). The survey and the sessions revealed that Plumas County in general and Indian Valley specifically wanted to maintain its open space/ agricultural/ rural orientation, abundance of clean water, air and wildlife, as well as the quiet enjoyment of our surroundings. The written opinion survey had an excellent return percentage, and the sessions were well attended by a diverse group of people representing the breadth of our valley's interests.

The Planning Commission's Draft Goals for the General Plan Update (3 Sept. 2009) expressed similar goals. Thus, our GPU should reflect these universally expressed and important community goals. They further stated that economic development should be "fiscally sustainable" and "in harmony with surroundings," and that we should maintain our "premier recreation" status, "promote safe and livable housing," and promote policies that are "consistent with public health and safety using the best management practices."

For the above-mentioned reasons the improvement/ development of Plumas County's economy should emphasize our expressed strengths and values. The revised General Plan should enable and encourage commercial and industrial activity to work in concert with these attributes. Correcting past errors with well-thought-out directive policies, regulations and zoning could be used to ensure that commercial and industrial

activities are sustainable.[2] Some of the areas of concern include protecting our long term: air and water quality, forest health, wildlife populations, and quiet enjoyment of surroundings. This is not to say that the environment has to be "versus" the economy. For example, Plumas County can have both healthy forests and a healthy timber industry, patterned after the Collins Pine model and implementing the Quincy Library Group (QLG) standards. The Plumas County GPU can encourage the best forest practices by using language that states our forest health objectives and working with the U.S. Forest Service, the California Board of Forestry and private landowners to achieve the desired goals.

One way of enhancing our "premier recreation" would be for the GPU to promote opportunities to work with PG&E, Caltrans and the railroad to improve tributary access (i.e., by eliminating all physical barriers to fish migration up the tributaries of the Feather River they create in developing roads, track and water diversions). Fishing is one of our main recreational activities, and we need to enhance spawning for recruitment to the streams. Also, the Forest Service has what is called "4(e) authority" (from section 4(e) of the Federal Power Act) to condition PG&E's FERC licenses. By articulating a policy in the General Plan regarding the importance of tributary access, the Forest Service is required by statutory mandate to "coordinate" their forest plan with the County's General Plan. The removal of these physical barriers will eliminate a major obstacle to having a healthy river system that in turn will contribute to our economy.

Another example would include the Moonlight area, which sustained an intense fire over much of its approximately 100 square miles. This area needs time to heal with no large-scale commercial or industrial activity permitted by the county until the native vegetation has reestablished itself to the point that it is again considered to be a mature forest (and proven healthy enough for said activities). The Moonlight area has been determined to be a sensitive area, highly prone to further environmental degradation. North Arm specifically, and the main body of Indian Valley to a somewhat lesser degree, are also potential areas for environmental, economic, agricultural and community degradation from large-scale commercial and industrial development (e.g., a global-sized acid heap leach copper mine project). Therefore, the Moonlight area should have a special land use designation excluding it from any large-scale development. The Genesee Arm of Indian Valley has a "sensitive" designation on the current General Plan. Thus, there is precedent for this designation for areas in need of special consideration. AB32 and SMARA regulations language might be used in the GPU to help protect the North Arm of Indian Valley.

(continued next page)

The Conservation Forum

Plumas Plan (con't)

Our county has an abundance of special qualities, and future economic development should emphasize and reflect these strengths. It would not be in our best interest to function like a Third World country, constantly degrading our resources for short-term gain. We've been down the "boom and bust" road before; the GPU should steer us toward sustainability, thus preserving our strengths. It is always better to grow your principal, not spend it.

References:

- [1] <http://www.moonlightvalleyalliance.org>
 [2] Examples of past errors concerning improper or poor resource practices include:
- (1) individual tree selection of larger diameter trees, leaving small-diameter trees, thus creating dense stands prone to intense fire;
 - (2) short rotations;
 - (3) even-aged forest management over large swaths of land;
 - (4) large clear cuts (1-4 refer to timber operations);
 - (5) inadequate bond requirements and reclamation followup;
 - (6) inattention to or lax monitoring of environmental damage from operations; and
 - (7) lax permitting process, enabling companies to proceed without proper oversight (5-7 relate to mining operations).

Build It and They Will Come

By Rex Burress

Much like the movie "Field of Dreams," in which a baseball lover builds a ball field in a cornfield and famous of the players past ghostly emerge, building a habitat can encourage wildlife to come.

Down at River Bend Park in Oroville, soccer field grading had left a pile of dirt and woody debris, and some ground squirrels found it and made it their cozy home. Plants sprouted from the soil, and birds plied the sprigs and brush. It was an accidental refuge, but life had found an island of security.

Even though wood and brush are fuel for fire, some is necessary to provide cover and food for wild animals. Fallen trees and volunteer shrubs become random refuges for a variety of creatures. I was in Bidwell Park – build it (parks) and they will come – and found an ancient oak that had fallen and, much to the park management's credit, its shattered remnants had been left to slowly disintegrate, creating a habitat for mushrooms, mosses and insects, with the horizontal trunk for wild rompers and wood mice.

I spent some time among the tangles of branches, musing about those aerial avenues now on the ground and

Coming Clean Breaking America's Addiction to Oil and Coal

Book by Michael Brune

Americans are awakening to just how costly and destructive our fossil-fuel habit has become -- to the environment, our national security and stature, our health, and especially our pocketbooks. We want to take action, to move our country down the path to clean energy, but we're not sure how.

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This book is available through the **Books** button in the Sierra Club online store. You can reach the store through the Sierra Club web site or the Sierra Club Store link on the YAH! Group web site at <http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/>

The Flowers Will Thank You



The April Yahi Program meeting's speaker, Albin Bills, is working on a new color edition of *Wildflowers of Table Mountain*. It will be an informative field guide based on photographs that will help you to identify and enjoy over 70 different wildflower species that grow on this remarkable mesa. The book will also explain how Table Mountain was formed, why it has so many flowers, what its rare species are, and how they are being protected.

Many people have donated funds for the printing of this new book, but we are still a bit short. If you or someone you know, perhaps a club or other organization, would like to contribute, we would be most grateful. This will be a not for profit publication of The Herbarium at California State University, Chico. Albin can be reached at albinbills@yahoo.com or 877-2433.

embracing Mother Earth like a magnet. I was able to photograph limbs close up that had previously been out of reach, and the decomposing process would go on for years, offering new photogenic possibilities. "Nothing in nature is wasted."

Years ago in Missouri, a field had been cleared of shrubs and small trees, bulldozed into a great heap at the field's edge. An animal hideaway had been created, and rabbits quickly occupied the new safety zone – at least they thought they were safe – until a mink also found the bonanza. Then two human hunters added a peril, and I saw the mink before it slipped silently out of sight. A refuge can also include predators.

Clearing fields also involved building fences, and the Missouri Department of Conservation provided shrubs for farmers to plant along fence rows, creating important cover and food for a variety of wildlife, a thoughtful bit of land management conducive to wildlife populations.

Setting aside key habitats for wildlife refuges has been of great importance to wildlife, a trend that President Theodore Roosevelt initiated in 1903 by declaring Pelican Island in Florida a protected Federal

Bird Reservation. He established 51 such sanctuaries during his term, and although natural is desirable, some management improves habitation. California State's Gray Lodge Refuge is a highly managed 9,000 acres with canals and rice/milo plantings, but build it and they will come, as the thousands of waterfowl come each winter.

Lake Merritt Wildlife Refuge – established in 1870, first in America – is ultra-managed with man-made islands, an excavated freshwater duck pond, and a control dam in the saltwater estuary, but after the alterations, they continued to come: thousands of migrant ducks, and nesting egrets, herons and cormorants – right in the middle of a city! Build it, and they will come.

Of course, conservation always seems to involve managing natural resources, and it is probably naive to think that we can just leave things alone. ... Even though a management approach is the way the refuge system is defined, I still like to think that we might be able to set aside land, leave it alone, and let the species thrive without our intervention. – Mary A. Hood, author of "River Time"

The Conservation Forum

News From Clair Tappaan Lodge

By Olivia Diaz, Clair Tappaan Lodge Committee

The Donner Summit area of the Sierra Nevada mountain range (7,000 feet elevation) received plenty of snow this winter so Clair Tappaan Lodge enjoyed a busy season. In addition to recreationists who came for downhill and cross country skiing, snowshoeing and sledding with their families, over twenty youth organizations also came. Several were school groups who came specifically for environmental education.

Four of the youth groups brought 124 participants and used \$3,600 from the Clair Tappaan Lodge Environmental Education fund in the Sierra Club Foundation to help pay for their overnight stays.

Substantial funds remain in the Environmental Education Account. If you know a school or other youth group that would like to come to Clair Tappaan Lodge or Hutchinson Lodge for overnight programs in environmental education, tell them about the Environmental Education Fund. For information on grant opportunities, please contact committee Chair Diane Boyer at dianeboyer@directv.net or 707-963-9052.

The Clair Tappaan Lodge (CTL) Committee is working with Donner Summit Historical Society to participate in a 20-Mile Living Museum on historic

Highway 40 with scenic bypass signs. Clair Tappaan and Hutchinson Lodge will each have a sign on the Donner Pass Road to let people driving by read a brief history of these historic buildings, a good story and things to do there. The signs will be unveiled in June after the snow has melted.

Committee member Rich Johns, helped by volunteers, professionals, and staff, completed extensive remodeling of the Men's Bathroom near the Men's Dorm in the Lodge. They replaced plumbing, updated electricity and installed new tiles, fixtures, walls and ceilings. Working as a volunteer, Rich planned the work and supervised the workers, performing much of the renovation himself.

Marketing of the lodge and the available environmental education programs continued at several Bay Area Resource Fairs where personal conversations and colorful brochures promoted interest. These fairs are attended by educators and families looking for outdoor experiences. Many of these initial contacts result in subsequent reservations for schools and individuals.

If you would like to help advertise the Lodge by tabling at a resource fair, or summer event in your town, please let Diane Boyer know. The CTL Committee can provide photos for download and brochures to give away.

Volunteers Needed To Plant Trees

By David Garcia



Volunteer and be part of the solution, improve our air quality, protect our water, save energy, and improve our community's economic sustainability. It's as easy as planting a tree, which remains one of the cheapest, most effective means of drawing excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. If every American family planted just one tree, the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would be reduced by one billion pounds annually. This is almost 5% of the amount that human activity pumps into the atmosphere each year.

Over a 50-year lifetime, it is estimated by the USDA Forest Service that one tree generates \$31,250 worth of oxygen, provides \$62,000 worth of air pollution control, recycles \$37,500 worth of water, and controls \$31,250 worth of soil erosion. This is why the Yahi Group is partnering with the City of Chico to provide **free trees** to its residents.

We are looking for volunteers to plant trees or be trained and lead tree-planting workshops one to three times per year. The tree-planting workshops would be required in order to obtain a tree planting permit and a **free 15-gallon size tree**. The program is scheduled to start this fall, so please call Annette at 872-3557 and get on our volunteer list.

A Squirrel on the Trail

By Rex Burress

On a March day when "every clod was feeling a stir of might," and tall grasses that bordered the trail in Blue Oak Meadow worked frantically to complete their seed-work before the surface moisture dried out, I saw a gray squirrel also on the path.

I stood still as the squirrel slowly loped along toward me, stopping to sniff the ground every few hops. I wondered why it had left the budding trees for an exploratory journey down where the fox and the hawk are on the watch for off-guard animals. Most acorns that had fallen in the fall had been ravished, except the few that had reached paydirt with their sprouts.

To my surprise, the squirrel continued toward me as if unaware of the obstacle in the trail...or was it accepting me as a friend! The Biblical passage about the lamb lying down with the lion came to mind, but this is the wilderness of Earth where things eat things. Wild is wild, which equates into extreme wariness in the name of survival. "However it is in some other world, I know this is the way in ours" (Frost).

However, that lovely, plume-tailed rodent continued toward me, close enough

to sniff my pant leg! My human word of greeting was not understood, and quick as a flash the squirrel bounded away through the grasses to the safety of an oak. The wall of communication is still a barrier no matter how many offerings of friendship you make. There is distrust, because some people of the past have thrown rocks or bullets!

John Muir was patient enough with a chipmunk to get it on his knee, and I have seen ground squirrels, tempted by peanuts, settle on a knee along the Monterey shoreline park. Food is the great pacifier, and feeder Rob at Lakeside Park in Oakland used to have fox squirrels on his shoulders eating nuts.

With patience and kindness – and food – some animals can become relatively tame. Food may be the great pacifier, but don't count on perfect placidity. One false move and you may have a defensive tooth in your hand. Even dogs and cats have been known to revert to a moment of fierce wildness.

You have to admire people's love of beautiful animals, but wild animals belong in the wild. Even though raccoons, squirrels, chipmunks and even ocelots can seem docile like some dogs and cats, their home is in the habitat to which they have adapted long ago. Take them out of that environment, and there is

a latent longing to be free. Keeping a tiger or chimpanzee or squirrel as a pet in the house is an invitation to the possibility of getting ripped in a moment of reversion to primitive instincts.

I once worked with a nature zoo as part of a naturalist program, and a nature center is a target for untold "rescued" or problem animals dumped onto the staff. Baby animals thought to be abandoned are best left in the wild. I was bitten a few times until I learned to be "animal-wise," and my co-worker was nicked on the thumb by a rattlesnake and nearly lost her thumb.

A naturalist was showing a class a harmless red racer, and it struck him on the forehead, sending streamers of blood coursing down his face. Everything has some kind of teeth. At the Oakland Zoo, keeper Loren was not bitten – but sat upon by his pet elephant! Needless to say, it was a flattening event, like the flattened animals you see smashed on the road.

Those who wish to pet baby animals "love" them. But those who respect their natures and wish to let them live normal lives, love them more. – Edwin Way Teale, 1941

The Last Word



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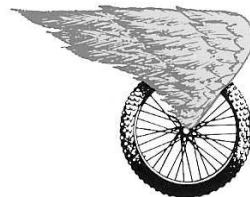
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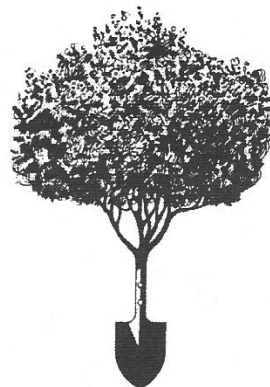
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