

Yahi Group—Sierra Club
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Winter 2009/2010

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Yahi Group



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

California Water and Climate Change

By Grace Marvin, Conservation Chair, Yahi Group

Climate change may well be the most pressing issue facing our planet. It is the leading concern of the Sierra Club.

Climate change involves not only the air we breathe but also the temperatures and supplies of our water — with much of the world viewing water as much more vital than fuel to human survival. Sierra Club – California (a political/lobbying arm of the club) and Friends of the River have strongly criticized the governor's \$11 billion Delta Water package -- which the legislature has now passed. Problems include \$700 million in debt service for our already economically depressed state, along with provisions for (a) environmentally problematic dams, (b) a Delta Council where Governor Schwarzenegger, in favor of a peripheral canal, will make appointments, (c) no

comprehensive groundwater or water user monitoring, with mandates only for conservation by urban users -- not by agriculture. Agriculture, however, consumes more than 3/4 of water used in California. Yet, farmers could conserve enough to eliminate the need for dams. (See the related 2009 Pacific Institute study produced last summer.) We must inform our fellow citizens to vote against the bill, despite the support given to it by NRDC, the Nature Conservancy, and Environmental Defense.

Please see the website www.sierraclubcalifornia.org to learn more about efforts we need to understand to confront climate change, water issues, and a range of other issues -- including parks, forests, toxics, recycling, mountain top removal (for coal), and air quality.

A regional environmental organization, the Sierra Nevada Alliance, has an annual conference bringing together statewide environmental leaders and regional activists. This year's conference included excellent speakers raising carefully examined alarms about climate change. At their website www.sierranevadaalliance.org you can learn about their conservation programs, 86 member organizations, and more ideas about activism that may interest you. The Mother Lode Chapter and the Yahi Group are members of the SNA.

Perhaps, you might even energize the Sierra Club members living near you? If you want to work together with them, please free to contact me at g-marvin@sbcglobal.net about how to get in touch with nearby Yahi Group members.

YAH! Club News

Conservation Notes:

By Grace Marvin, Yahi Conservation Chair

Our volunteers and friends reside in five counties: Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas, and Tehama. We live in very diverse terrain and can get involved in many environmental issues including: containing urban sprawl; fighting mining operations; preserving forests, meadows, parks, waterways and wild lands; promoting clean air and sustainability policies in our cities and counties; gaining respect for land deemed sacred by Native Americans. While many of you certainly engage in conservation efforts, here are some examples where your Conservation Chair and our club's official forestry contacts have been active lately:

Bidwell Park: As of November 1, 2009, no Chico Council or staff person has responded to my letter to the city regarding the following: who has liability when someone is injured in Bidwell Park in Chico? The wife of a Sierra Club member wrote me that her husband (who has two artificial hips) was injured by a flying disc; he was walking in the vicinity of where disc golfers play without seeing any nearby disc golfers.

Injuries from the sport had been reported earlier, e.g., a few years ago someone was killed going over a cliff in order to retrieve a flying disc. My husband, a physician, raised the issue of liability last winter at a City Council

meeting. No one responded to his inquiry. Furthermore, last winter the city sanctioned the use of a once unofficial disc golf site in Bidwell Park: Council gave the players of the "short course" five years to find an alternative site, rather than requiring that players use one or more of the alternatives sites that had been recommended to them. Let us hope that we will get a response and that dangers and liability have been fully addressed, before any more people get hurt.

In the meantime, no work is being done to stop the deterioration of the soil where the disc golfers play. Moreover, the Park Director indicated that nothing will be done for this entire winter season. If you care about this park, your attention to such park issues is needed – as described in the previous edition of this newsletter.

Crystal Geyser Bottled Water plant: Many of us breathed a sigh of relief when Nestle abandoned its efforts to build a plant in McCloud. But, now, Nestle is trying to move to Sacramento, and another company is lusting after free water in our Yahi region. Crystal Geyser is moving aggressively to build a plant in Orland, a small Glenn County town surrounded by orchards. I have been representing the club by working alongside the non-profit Butte Environmental Council, i.e., the main outside organization trying to help Orland's very active and concerned *Save Our Water Resources* (SOWR) group. By the time you read this, we will have found out if Orland's planning commission, i.e., the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), has approved Crystal Geyser's plans.

Because SOWR and BEC representatives and I attended a prior TAC meeting -- where committee members raised few and largely uncritical questions to Crystal Geyser's representatives-- we have every reason to believe that TAC will decide to take the next step: asking Orland City Council to give final approval to building the plant. As you may know, the Sierra Club has a strong position against bottled water; and we need your help in the fight against Crystal Geyser. After all, Sierra Club members in the Yahi Group should consider this plant as an issue that is important to our region, since many of us share the same underground water. Your letters to the Orland City Council and Glenn County about this plant can only help.

SOWR and its supporters are demanding that the city mandate an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). TAC has not expressed any willingness to do an EIR and has had little to say about potentially damaging environmental impacts. TAC and a majority of the Council seem to believe that Crystal

(continued on p. 6)

Sierra Club Yahi Group Contacts

General Contact

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

Executive Committee Officers

Chair: Dave Garcia
530-533-2357 or rangerdave@mynvw.com
Vice Chair: Goodie Sweatt
894-3988 or gsweattsclub@sbcglobal.net
Secretary: Annette Carey
872-3557 or annetecare@sbcglobal.net
Fifth Member: Jan Hildenbrand
894-0438 or janmh2@sbcglobal.net

Point Persons

Westwood, Chester, Lake Almanor, Susanville and Greenville: Fred Binswanger
530-256-3197 or sbins@citlink.net
Portola, Greenville, Quincy: John A. Shower
530-284-6856 or theshowers@frontiernet.net

Committee Chairs and Other Contacts

Chapter Rep. To Motherlode: Grace Marvin
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julianzener@sbcglobal.net
Rep. to Butte County General Plan meetings - Mary Watters: marywatters@sbcglobal.net
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Newsletter Information

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 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.

YAH! Club News

Let's Talk about Money

By Olivia Diaz and Ernie Malamud
Sierra Nevada Group of the Mother Lodge Chapter
Reprinted from *The Uplift*

The following applies to all groups and chapters in the Sierra Club.

Do you know about the big changes happening in the Sierra Club? The Sierra Club has a membership of nearly a million across the nation, about a third in California where the Club's roots go back to John Muir. It seems to us that the Club's history, its volunteerism and its dynamic grassroots organization are the Club's strength and what distinguishes the Sierra Club from other environmental organizations.

Because of the economy, reduced membership and reduced revenues from donors and investments, the Sierra Club is facing severe financial problems and is considering various ways to deal with this crisis. Some of the measures under discussion would have a serious impact on the chapters and on the groups within the chapters.

There are three levels in the Club: National, Chapters, and Groups. The Sierra Nevada Group (SNG) is one of 10 groups in the Mother Lode Chapter (MLC).

National allots a portion of its revenues to the chapters. The chapter leadership then apportions funds, called a subvention, to each of its groups. Last year SNG received a subvention of \$2,000 from MLC, or the equivalent of \$1.32 per member. If you paid the basic membership of \$25/year, then ~5% of your dues returned to our local group. If the funds to the chapters are reduced, it will be difficult for SNG to get a large enough subvention to meet its needs.

SNG's expenses are modest. The largest cost is printing and mailing our newsletter, *The Uplift* and now a \$1,000 annual scholarship. In addition, there is the rental of Seaman Hall for our monthly membership meetings, the Briarpatch Community Room for management team meetings, miscellaneous supplies, copies, and a Post Office box. The popular *Run Though the Colors* walk/run, has been our regular fundraiser for the past 18 years and fills out our needs. Income from that event fluctuates depending on weather and, increasingly, on other runs that compete with ours.

The MLC is expecting lowered revenue from national in 2010 and is struggling with its ramifications. We are concerned that if the 2010 subvention to SNG is less than in 2009, it will not be sufficient to meet our needs.

We believe that many of our members are attracted to join the Sierra Club and maintain their membership, some for decades, because of local events and local environmental issues. If anything, we believe the local groups should get more funds, not less, to continue their work at the local level. Reducing the portion of dues returned to the groups seems to us the wrong direction.

What do you think?

YAH! Holiday Dinner

By Jan Hildenbrand

Come join your fellow Sierra Club members at our annual Yahi Group Holiday dinner on December 13 at The Gooney Bird Bar & Grill, 3312 Esplanade in Chico. There will be a social hour (no host bar) from 5:00 to 6:00 with a buffet style dinner at 6:00. Tickets are \$22 per person. Please call Dave Garcia at 533-2357 to reserve your dinner tickets by December 6th.

Additionally, if you have any gently used, small, hiking, cycling, or camping items, or wine, books, etc, please consider donating them for our fundraiser/silent auction. Call Jan Hildenbrand at 894-0438 for drop off information, also by December 6th. Can't wait to see you there.

Join the YAH! Blog
<http://yahinews.blogspot.com>

YAH! ExCom Elections

Each December Yahi members can vote for people to represent them on the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the local Yahi chapter. This year we have two candidates: Carla Moreno and David McKinney.

Please take a few minutes to participate in this important process. Read the Candidates' Statements, and show your support by clipping and submitting your ballot.

Carla Moreno –

In 1968 while engaged in some local environmental projects on the Coastside south of San Francisco where I lived, I realized that I did not belong to any national group representing me, and I joined the Sierra Club. Later I became involved in the Sierra Club Singleaires in the South Bay area, leading outings and becoming Chair.

I've also led local outings when I lived in Eugene, OR, and now in Chico. In 1988 I started cooking for National Sierra Club Service Trips. By taking people to areas of environmental concern I believe, as John Muir did, that people will learn and become involved in issues concerning them.

David McKinney -

I am from Merced, California, and grew up hiking and camping in Yosemite. I am a life long outdoorsman and avid flyfisher. I am a graduate of Cal and attended Medical School at USC. I am currently a practicing physician. As my kids are now (mostly) grown, I have some time to devote to other non-work activities, and conservation and preservation are major issues for me. I also participate as a conservation chair for the local flyfishing club as well.

I completed the Sierra Club Outdoor Activities Training Program at Clair Tappan this last June and hope to become involved in leading local hikes.

Sierra Club Calendars

By Joanne Gerson

The engagement books and calendars are available again this year. They will be offered at the Farmers Market after Thanksgiving, also at the annual Holiday Dinner. All are priced at \$12. Also have a few note cards and Holiday cards at the same price. All have the wonderful Sierra Club pictures.

Call 893 2154 to get yours soon.

YAH! Group Positions Open

By Gerda Lydon

Hospitality Chair for the monthly program meetings. The job requires setting up for refreshments (coffee, tea, etc). Members are asked to provide cookies, fruit.

Program Chair. The chair has to make arrangements for speaker(s) for the months of September through June and secure the venue (library) to hold the meetings and set-up.

For further information call Gerda at 343-9277



Yahi Group Executive Committee Ballot

Procedure: This year there are two candidates for the Executive Committee. Each Yahi Sierra Club member may approve the candidates or vote for a write in of their choice. The second vote check box is for dual member households. Please clip and mail prior to December 31, 2009 to:

Yahi Group of the Sierra Club,
Post Office Box 2012
Chico, CA 95927

Carla Moreno

David McKinney

[write in]

YAH! Outings and Events: Winter 2009/2010

YAH! Programs: January and February 2010

By Gerda Lydon, Yahi Group Program Chair

Wednesday, January 13

Retired Fish and Game biologist Jim Snowden will be our presenter. He will talk and present a slide show about his work on Adak Island and the eastern Aleutians in 2001.

Wednesday, February 10

Retired educator and author Neil Wiegman will present a slide show of the Santiago de Campostela road and environs in northern Spain.

Meetings are held at the Chico Public Library Conference Room on East First Avenue and Sherman Way at 7:00 P.M. The meetings are open to the public, and refreshments will be served. For further information, call 343-9277.

Winter 2009/2010 Outings

Coordinated by Alan Mendoza

Yahi Group Cross Country Ski List. Join our more than 75 cross-country ski enthusiasts as we explore the backcountry of Colby Meadows and Lassen Park and enjoy the groomed trails of Mt. Shasta, Royal Gorge and Tahoe-Donner. If you'd like to be added to (or updated on) our list, please contact Yahi Group Leaders: Ken, 693-2134 or Larry, 342-7998. All ability levels welcome.

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: \$4 per night. For those at the intermediate level with some volleyball experience. For more information, call Karen, 899-8305 or Betty, 345-7205.

Volunteer Trail Work in Bidwell Park Volunteers are needed to work on trails or remove invasive plants. Various projects are scheduled almost every week. For more information, call Park volunteer coordinator Lise at 896-7831. Wear sturdy, closed-toed shoes and weather-appropriate clothing.

Saturday, December 5 – Cross Country Ski (grade 2, class A). We'll go where the snow is good. This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Saturday, December 6 – Llano Seco & Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge (grade 1, class A). We'll take an incredible drive through the heartland of the Sacramento Valley's wintering waterfowl, stopping several times to observe the thousands of birds who

feed and rest in the freshwater marshes. We'll also do two easy walks at Llano Seco and the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. Bring binoculars, field guide, camera, lunch and water. An 80-mile round trip drive. Bring \$3 for entrance fee and \$\$ for carpool. Heavy rain cancels. Call leader to sign-up and get meeting info. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

Saturday, December 12 – Cross Country Ski Lessons This is for beginners and intermediates who

want to improve their ski technique and fitness. Call for info on ski rentals, clothing and to make reservations. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134

Sunday, December 13 – Yahi Group Holiday Dinner Come join your fellow Sierra Club members at our annual Yahi Group Holiday dinner at The Gooney Bird Bar & Grill, 3312 Esplanade. There will be a social hour (no host bar) from 5PM to 6PM with a buffet style dinner at 6PM. Tickets are \$22 per person. Please call Dave Garcia at 533-2357 to reserve your dinner tickets by December 6th. Additionally, if you have any gently used, small, hiking, cycling, or camping items, or wine, books, etc, please consider donating them for our fundraiser/silent auction. Call Jan Hildenbrand at 894-0438 for drop off information, also by December 6th. Can't wait to see you there.

Sunday, December 27 – Cross Country Ski (grade 1, class A). An easy, early season ski tour for all levels. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$ for drivers. Call leaders for meeting time and location. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Wednesday, December 30 – Cross Country Ski (grade 1, class A). An easy, early season ski tour for all levels. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$ for drivers. Call leaders for meeting time and location. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Sunday, January 3 – Cross Country Ski (grade 1, class A). An easy, early season ski tour for all levels. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$ for drivers. Call leaders for meeting time and location. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Saturday, January 9 – Cross Country Ski Lessons This is for beginners and intermediates who want to improve their ski technique and fitness. Call for info on ski rentals, clothing and to make reservations. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Sunday, January 10 – Lower Bidwell Park Hike (grade 1, class A). Come join us for a complete loop of Lower Park to enjoy the sights and sounds of winter. About a 5-6 mile hike. Meet at 8AM at One Mile. Rain cancels. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

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: All Yahi Group Outings involving a single overnight stay will require a \$10 per participant fee payable in advance or \$20 if the trip is for multiple nights. This fee will cover the expense of training new outings leaders, first aid training, replenishing first aid supplies and publishing the outings in the newsletter.

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 provide 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.

YAH! Outings and Events: Winter 2009/2010

Wednesday, January 13 - Yahi Program: Retired Fish and Game biologist Jim Snowden will be our presenter. He will talk and present a slide show about his work on Adak Island and the eastern Aleutians in 2001. Conference Room of the Chico Public Library, at 7:00PM. For further information call 343-9277.

Sunday, January 17 - Cross Country Ski (grade 2, class B). We'll go where the snow is good. This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$\$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Saturday, January 23 - Verbena Fields Walk (grade 1, class A). Explore and learn the history of one of Chico's newest recreation areas, an oasis in an urban setting. Our 2-hour walk around the former gravel mine and dump with Mechoopda Indian involvement will include Susan Mason who knows the area's background. Meet at 10AM at the Verbena Fields marker on E 1st Avenue between Verbena Avenue and Spanish Oak Circle. Rain cancels. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Sunday, January 24 - Cross Country Ski (grade 2, class B). We'll go where the snow is good. This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$\$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Wednesday, February 10 - Yahi Program: Retired educator and author Neil Wiegman will present a slide show of the Santiago de Campostela road and environs in northern Spain. Conference Room of the Chico Public Library, at 7:00PM. For further information call 343-9277.

Saturday, February 13 - Cross Country Ski Lessons This is for beginners and intermediates who want to improve their ski technique and fitness. Call for info on ski rentals, clothing and to make reservations. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Sunday, February 14 - Tree Improvement Center Hike (grade 1, class A). Dogs are welcome as we walk 4-5 miles along both of the outer loops of the old Mendocino Tree Improvement Center. Meet at the Center parking lot at the end of Cramer Lane in southeast Chico at 8AM. Rain cancels. Leader: Alan, 891-8789.

Saturday, February 20 - Cross Country Ski (grade 2, class B). We'll go where the snow is good. This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$\$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Saturday, February 20 - Almond Blossom Bike Ride (grade 2, class A). A flat, leisurely 15 mile ride through orchards and pastures on quiet country roads to Durham Park for lunch and return on the Durham Bike Path. We'll stop often to admire spring flowers and smell fantastic tree blossoms. On return we may check out murals on bike path along the Midway. Meet at 10AM at the Glen Oaks Memorial Park Cemetery Office, Hegan Lane and the Midway. Helmets required. Bring water and lunch (or buy one at the Durham Market). Rain cancels. Leader: Gene, 873-1552. Asst. Leader: Carla, 891-6977.

Thursday, February 25: 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.

Sunday, February 28 - Upper Bidwell Park Hike (grade 2, class A) Hike from 5-Mile into Upper Park and then join the beautiful Yahi Trail along Big Chico Creek. Bring lunch, water and shoes with good tread. Round-trip distance of about 5-7 miles. Meet at 5-Mile parking area at 9AM. Rain cancels. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

Sunday, February 28 - Cross Country Ski (grade 2, class B). We'll go where the snow is good. This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$\$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Saturday, March 6 - Cross Country Ski (grade 2, class B). We'll go where the snow is good. This is for people who own ski equipment. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$\$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998; Asst. Leader: Ken, 693-2134.

Saturday & Sunday, March 13-14 - Antelope Creek Backpack (grade 2, class A). We'll hike the

2-mile beautiful wildflower-strewn trail from High Trestle (east of Payne's Creek) down to the old settler's camp near McClure Place and Antelope Creek. We'll camp by the beautiful creek to enjoy the solitude and return by the same route the next day. Individual commissary for backpack. Beginner's welcome, leader has extra backpacks, tents, sleeping

bags, stoves and pads to share. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9 AM (for a 120-mile round-trip drive), Hog Lake parking lot at 10AM (off Hwy 36 east of Red Bluff) or at Paynes Creek store about 10:30AM. Rain cancels. Call leader in advance to sign-up. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net

Noodles

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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	Elevation Gain Rating
Grade 1: up to 6 miles	Class A: up to 1000 feet
Grade 2: 6-10 miles	Class B: 1000-2000 feet
Grade 3: 10-15 miles	Class C: 2000-3000 feet
Grade 4: 15-20 miles	Class D: over 3000 feet
Grade 5: over 20 miles	

The Conservation Forum

Conservation Notes

(continued from p. 2)

Geysers will bring jobs and tax money to the town – despite the poor record of bottling companies elsewhere, e.g., Calistoga. They are also inattentive to citizens' concerns about (a) losing valuable water to exports during a time (right now!) when water availability is uncertain; (b) other kinds of environmental damage, e.g., contamination by a nearby polluted drycleaner flume, deterioration of roads by frequent truck trips, noisy plant machinery and trucks in Orland's very quiet rural area; and (c) Crystal Geysers being an *international corporation* -- with French and Japanese controlling interests -- according to *Food and Water Watch*. The rights of an international company typically overshadow a city or county's rights.

Forests: Marily Woodhouse is the Mother Lode Chapter's coordinator for forest issues. Many of the forests with which she is concerned are in our Yahi region, where massive clearcutting by Sierra Pacific Industries continues to take place. She needs volunteers to write letters, table, and participate in demonstrations that help explain why companies that desecrate our forests don't deserve our business. She has noted that healthy forests provide 60% of our state's WATER supply, and they SEQUESTER CARBON -- which helps to combat global warming. If you are interested, please contact her at marily.woodhouse@mlc.sierraclub.org or at 530-474-5803. To find out more about the forest campaigns with which we are involved, e.g., *Forest Ethics* and *Save the Sierra*, please go to the website: www.savethesierra.org. You also may contact Patricia Puterbaugh, listed on page 2 of this newsletter, who is our very dedicated *Yahi contact* regarding forest issues.

Mountain Meadows Conservancy: As often reported in this column, the Sierra Club together with Sierra Watch has been supporting the efforts of the Mountain Meadows Conservancy to fight the development of a massive, very poorly planned four-season resort by Dyer Mountain Associates (DMA). It would be located in an absolutely beautiful meadow near Westwood and Lake Almanor in Lassen County, i.e., the location of numerous sites important in Native American history. Our lawyers (from the very prominent environmental firm Shute, Mihayli, and Weinberger) have challenged the county on its approvals. DMA has had a poor financial history and is now bankrupt, but the legal fight continues. It seems that we cannot go forward with our efforts to keep the site from being developed by potential other purchasers, so long as the Development Agreement is frozen in place. Our lawyers are now asking the court to release that Development Agreement from Dyer Holdings (on the Cayman Islands). Then, we can proceed with our goal to preserve this beautiful land with legal protections. I recommend going to those meadows for yourself or at least seeing its website at mountainmeadows.org. EXPLORE, ENJOY, and PROTECT – our Sierra Club slogan!

Water Come and Water Go

By Rex Burress

What do Guppy Creek in Oroville, California, and African creek beds have in common? Water comes and water goes! Or, in some places, waterways recede in summer and rise when the rains arrive.

I passed the roadside overflow ditch along Boynton Avenue that my son affectionately named "Guppy Creek" when he at one time caught some of the mosquito fish put there by Mosquito Abatement. The mid-August hot weather had shrunk the water into merely a damp channel with no sign of fish or frog.

Like dwindling water holes in Africa, plants were sopping up as much moisture as they could in the roadside streamlet before the desert closed in. The hope of the water-loving watercress was fading fast, while cattail and weeds struggled to maintain a ribbon of green. Guppies were out of luck – and liquid – as the green heron cleaned up. Already the banks and fields had fried dry into a motley montage of brown stems and leaves that attested to their earlier turn at springtime moisture and growth. A few tough shrubs, tarweed, and turkey mullein graced the dry summer grasslands with a little green life.

Early in the morning, I was surprised to see a small flow that had risen with the water table during the cool night, but it soon receded in the heat of day. "Water come and water go!"

California's water inadequacies have come to the attention of the Department of the Interior as an item of national priority. On top of three years of drought (or less rainfall than desired), there is concern about supplying the Delta ecosystem and furnishing water for the 36 million

people in the most populated state in the nation. Depending on an "El Nino" to refurbish the aquifers is like Midwest farmers waiting for a summer rain to nourish their non-irrigated crops. The basic problem is too many people and too much agriculture and too many wells that are draining the Great Valley water supply. Water is wasted, too, not only in farm rice and orchard operations, but landscaping in the cities takes a great toll. How often over-watered lawns overflow down the gutter, or water is excessively flushed down the drain.

Lake Oroville still has water in mid-August, but it sinks low as the inflow streams shrink, although the Feather River still receives its daily allotment from the lake, and the current flows steady as it runs through Oroville.

I wonder what it was like before there were dams on the river, and winter floods would rage, while the summer shutdown must have dropped the level to almost a standstill. A certain number of springs add to the runoff, but an overrun of well drilling is jeopardizing the underground storage. The Federal Central Valley Project paid for 90 new wells to get at the aquifer water. The Sacramento/San Joaquin valleys have lost almost all their natural habitats in the relentless quest for farmland and housing developments. At one time, vast wetlands created a buffer zone, but most of the marshes were drained, and valley oak groves were removed for crop land. History tells us that when a Spanish expedition marched from the Sacramento River to Chico in 1820 they were in the shade of oak trees all the way. When anything goes too far and things get out of balance, chaos and extinction are often the result.

What would the world be, once bereft/Of wet and wilderness?/Let them be left,/O let them be left, wilderness and wet;/Long live the weeds and the wilderness yet. – Gerald Hopkins (1844-1889)



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The Conservation Forum

Fur and Feather Fads

By Rex Burress

I am informed that trapping fur-bearing animals with steel traps has made a revival in some places. The taking of bobcats has become the number one target as bobcat fur-coat fashions have surged, primarily in Russia and China, putting a price of over \$200 on the cat's skins.

This is a familiar story. Some earthen commodity becomes a popular fad until there is a frenzy to acquire and possess, especially something rare, until the resource grows thin and scarcity or extinction looms. "The harvest of the surplus is good conservation," but often the harvest knows greed and disregard for future availability.

Bobcats are seldom seen in the wild, being nocturnal and very wary, hence their total population is unknown. In 2006, the demand sent trappers afield (in the mode of pioneer mountain men trapping beaver in the 1800s), and 49,700 beautiful spotted bobcats were caught and exported for women's fur coats. (I thought industry could imitate and synthesize anything.) There must be some allurements in knowing that a living real thing has been killed for you!

In 2007, the number of exported skins fell to 31,680, an indication of a lowered population, especially in Nevada where most of the cats are killed. The Nevada Trappers Association said most trappers are struggling to make \$2,000 a season from bobcats.

In a parallel, I am sickened to say that in the late 1800s, bird feathers became the rage for outlandish ladies' hats, especially the white plumes of egrets. They were slaughtered by the thousands, and soon egrets were approaching extinction. The roots of the Audubon Society grew from an effort to save the egrets, and finally protective laws were enacted. Some of those hats even had bird nests perched on the top! Since the long dresses of the period exposed little flesh, perhaps flamboyant and feather hats were used to gain attention.

When I was a farm boy in Missouri during the 1940s, trapping fur-bearers was a seasonal event, not only exciting but part of my meager income. I had no idea of the final destination of the muskrat, skunk, coon, possum and fox pelts other than for fur coats, I presumed. I would use my woods lore to trap those animals and take the prepared skins to Mr. Keen in town, who would dole out \$2 for a muskrat, \$1.50 for skunk, and as little as 50 cents for a fox. My \$20 take didn't make a dent in the populations.

Synthetic coats rather de-glamorized the animal fur trade – until this bobcat thing came along. If fashion fads had their way, there would be no tigers or leopards left on Earth.

The beaver quest that penetrated the wildlands of the west was the greatest fur episode, a relentless pursuit in lawless days that nearly drove the giant rodent into extinction – all to make men's fur hats in Europe.

The lawless gold rush days also decimated wild habitats and left the streams in shambles.

The Future of Taxidermy

By Rex Burress

My son sent me some pictures of the interior of the Rotary Nature Center in Oakland, CA, where I worked on the Naturalist Staff starting in 1961. Still displayed was the mounted head of a handsome deer looking as if it had burst through the wall with its body on the other side.

I was rather pleased to see that regal head still in place, a sample of the skills of a taxidermist in bygone days. The upper wall-cases also display a couple dozen prepared waterfowl species that frequent Lake Merritt – the oldest wildlife refuge in the country. Say what you will about a dead bird displayed in an exhibit case like a body in a casket, or a deer head on the wall, there is a certain educational value in seeing those elusive creatures with their body features preserved for close-up viewing, since most city folks, especially, seldom have the opportunity to explore wildlands. Even nature watchers in the field have to observe the wary ones from afar with binoculars.

Rotary Nature Center underwent a time of intense scrutiny and criticism of what dissenters called the "barbaric display" of mounted animal heads on the wall. The activists contended that the "trophy" days were over, and even wild animals in cages should be released. Presently, at the Feather River Nature Center in Oroville, a number of mounted animals and skins are displayed and generally enjoyed, just as Chico Creek Nature Center in Chico has a place for taxidermy.

Undoubtedly trophy hunting and taxidermy are not as prevalent as in earlier times before high-tech cameras and elaborate videos challenged the picture-hunters to produce some extraordinary views of wildlife in their natural habitat. Even our "Conservation President," Theodore Roosevelt, was a passionate hunter as well as a lover of wildlife, a trait that propelled him to secure a vast number of parks and wildlife refuges for the preservation of special

Other natural formations have suffered, too, and only through John Muir's urging was Arizona's Petrified Forest given protection. Tourists still try to smuggle pieces of the colorful gem-wood out of the park – an estimated 10 tons a year – even though Rangers inspect cars when they leave, and they post signs stating that a bad-luck curse will befall petrified wood thieves. Hundreds of pieces are returned by mail each year by visitors who had bad luck!

When you watch for feather or fur, do not stir, do not stir. Feather or fur come crawling, creeping. Some come peeping, some by night and some by day. Most come gently, all come softly. Do not scare a friend away...

habitats. He had no qualms about "the hunting-harvest of the surplus," which, to him, equated to good conservation and wildlife management.

Most early naturalists placed a high value on taxidermy and the preparation of study skins for research and exhibition. Taxidermy became an exacting skill that was even taught in the Northwestern School of Taxidermy, enticing many boys to take the correspondence course. Even bird artist John James Audubon collected bird skins, using some mounted specimens on wires to guide his artwork.

One of the first municipal naturalists, Oakland's Paul Covel, prepared a lot of bird skins, as did pioneer naturalist "Bugs" Cain, filling the storage cabinets of the Center with specimens actively used in environmental education. There's nothing like a living animal for study, but a mounted "bird in hand" or furry mammal skin, even if minus life, was/is a more graphic teaching tool than words, drawings, or distant views. Some of those preserved animals dated back into the 1800s, kept free of parasites by the use of arsenic (no longer used) in the original preparation and annual fumigation. Paul's son Jim Covel became a proficient taxidermist, as did some of the Center's other Young Naturalist volunteers.

A professional taxidermist, Tom Stellar, was hired to upgrade the Center's collection and teach the staff how to mount birds. I spent untold hours learning the system of skinning, scraping fat, stretching the skin over an excelsior framework, positioning with wires, and sewing it together. I mounted a pretty good snow goose and night heron, birds found dead at the refuge, but I didn't make a career of taxidermy. Tom went on to work at the Oakland Museum, where they had a freeze-dry machine which dried the specimen intact.

My cousin, Al Tolle, retired to Florida and practiced fish taxidermy. When I visited him and the Everglades, he gave me a mounted bass that hangs unchanged on my wall, skillfully shaped in its original glory and suggesting the wild swamps from which it came.

There is no doubt that mankind has a love of beautiful things and a desire to collect nature's beauty, whether in the form of trophies, paintings, photographs, gems, shells, flowers, or the wondrous feathered birds preserved in a lifelike mount. That love for feathered ladies' hats nearly led to the extinction of egrets until the trend was stopped by law. May it never happen again.

Taxidermy has been an aid for nature interpretation and a method to cherish achievements and beauty. Is there a future for taxidermy in the wake of audio-visual advancements, improved zoos, elaborate aquariums, and streamlined interpretive programs with skilled guides?

The Last Word



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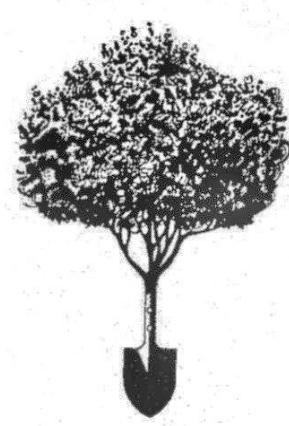
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