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Group



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

### Table of Contents:

Call to Activism	1-2
Yahi Club News	3-4
Upper Bidwell Park Road Report	5
The River Watcher	6
Yahi Contacts	7
Newsletter Sponsors	8

## Yahi Winter 2017 / 2018 Outings and Events

*Coordinated by Alan Mendoza*

[www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/outings](http://www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/outings)

## Call to Activism

*By Grace Marvin, Yahi Conservation Chair*

As you know, we are assaulted almost daily with threats to the well-being of our planet and to personal health and well-being; these include cutbacks on National Monuments and other areas we need to protect, storms exacerbated by policies that promote climate-change, and attacks on the safety and availability of water, *e.g.*, fracking, dam failures, excessive pesticides, and other sources of pollution. But it is increasingly dawning on many of us that we must not just “resist” the many bad policy changes coming from our government. For our own morale and to be most effective, we must argue FOR good policies and people -- even while we *resist* policies that are tearing our planet down.

The Yahi Group needs more good folks to stand up to fight **for** what we believe – whether by:

1. speaking or writing to government and private organizations about protecting land, air, water, and humans lives,
2. writing to newspapers,
3. promoting pro-environmental candidates running for office,
4. rallying for our causes, or just by
5. becoming informed about issues -- as a possible first step to action.

We know that many people volunteer to do such activism on their own, and we applaud such efforts. If you would like to help our Yahi Group promote Sierra Club–endorsed candidates or policies, please let the Yahi Executive Committee or myself, Conservation Chair (530-893-1994), know if you are able and willing to assist us – with as much or as little time as you can afford.


## Local and Statewide Sierra Club Activism

In the meantime, the local Yahi Club had a hike in Upper Bidwell Park where several of us viewed beautiful flora and fauna as well as huge ruts in the road. We did this in preparation for city government discussions about what should be done to protect nature while preserving human access to the park. Moreover, several members of the Club, including the Executive Committee, the political chair, our Lassen Forest volunteer, and I have made other efforts to fight for what we believe, including promotion of clean air, water, energy, and the protection of our forests and communities from over-development.

As your representative to the Mother Lode Chapter and as Delegate to the statewide Sierra Club Meetings at the end of this past October, I was able to join in on the vote for three resolutions: one states that the Club believes *everyone should have access to "safe, clean, affordable, and accessible water adequate for human consumption, cooking, and sanitary purposes."* This resolution calls on state agencies to address issues that impact water in California, especially in locations where people only have access to groundwater that is harmed by nitrates and by other disease producing pollutants. Now that this clean water resolution was unanimously approved, the Club will advocate for *implementing* legislation -- necessary since the 2012 State Water Code did not include any measures on how to achieve its clean water goals.

We also passed, unanimously, a call for the national Sierra Club to support the legally binding instrument of the United Nations, *The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons*, so as to lead to their total elimination.

A third resolution was one on which I was able to work, as I volunteered to be on Club's statewide water committee. The *'No New Dams'* resolution calls for using our limited resources on fixing existing dams instead of building new ones (while retiring dams in some cases), extending levee setbacks, restoring mountain meadows, creating new flood bypasses, extending and restoring wetlands, flooding agricultural fields in off-season, and other methods of storing water in the ground to replenish our depleted aquifers. Since this resolution also passed unanimously, other work is ahead of us: our statewide Water Committee plans to start a campaign in California: one of our main tasks will be to see to it that each Chapter of the Sierra Club in this state reviews safety issues, proposes repairs, and advocates for groundwater storage projects in their local groundwater basins. Then, we will create an on-line repository (website) for statewide dam safety information – maintained by each chapter and accessible to the public.

Personal comment: It is wonderful to be involved with the Sierra Club when we can help facilitate positive changes in how we deal with water and weapons. I am also very pleased to report that activists at the same statewide meetings discussed whether to form an **Environmental and Social Justice Committee**. The answer seems to be "Let's Do it!" This is another call for action, but one that some discussants said must first involve addressing our own personal biases and relative positions of privilege before taking on other societal change efforts. Let the music begin (and may you want to dance to it)! 

## Yahi Group Holiday Party

By Suzette Welch, Yahi ExCom Chair



Friday, December 15, 2017 is the date for our annual Holiday Potluck. Once again it is to be held at Valley Oaks Village 1950 Wild Oak Lane, Chico, Ca. Party starts at 5:30 PM. Limited parking so please carpool. Bring your own beer and wine. There will be a \$5 for room rental and cleanup.

After dinner we are going to have a talk given by Marcia Moore. She took a hiking trip last winter to New Zealand offered by Road Scholar. She also did some side trips while she was there. She had a wonderful time and is pleased to be able to show you her pictures and share her trip with you.

The annual Holiday Party is a good time to visit with old friends and meet some new people. So bring your favorite dish, and plan to have a pleasant evening.

For more information contact Suzette Welch, [booksontape@rocketmail.com](mailto:booksontape@rocketmail.com) or 342-9214.

## Yahi Group ExCom Election And Change to Bylaws

By Suzette Welch, Yahi ExCom Chair

It is time to vote for people to represent you on the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the local Yahi Group of the Sierra Club. This year we have three candidates: Annette Carey, Laurel Heath and Wendy Le Master.

**Yahi members will receive a link to their ballot in an e-mail from the Yahi Group.** Read the Candidates' Statements and the proposed bylaws change below, and show your support by printing the ballot and voting.

### Candidates' Statements:

#### Annette Carey

I would like to serve a second term on the current Yahi Ex-Com. For the past year, I have acted as Secretary for the group and in this capacity, I have typed and distributed the minutes for each of the monthly meetings. I was also Secretary on a prior Yahi ExCom for 3 years. I volunteer annually for a week at the Sierra Club-Yosemite Conservation Heritage Center and greet visitors and tell them about the Sierra Club's programs and initiatives. I enjoy supporting the Sierra Club's environmental concerns and feel they are of the utmost importance at this time.

## **Laurel Heath**

In the past, I have been on the ExCom for six years and have served as secretary and co-chair. During my time on the ExCom I coordinated the Sierra Club booth each year at the Endangered Species Fair and worked on the initiative to ban fracking in Butte County. After a year's hiatus, I am running to be on the ExCom again. I would be honored to serve another term on the ExCom.

## **Wendy Le Master**

Living in the lower foothills of Paradise with her two young boys and caring for her mom, Wendy is a community volunteer, activist and an after school STEM program coordinator for the Girl Scouts of Northern California. She served as the Yahli Group Outreach Chair for the last year and an outings leader for the group and encouraged environmental education and conservation through those efforts. In addition Wendy is one of the most recent ExCom members of the Yahli group and has very much enjoyed her work within the organization and looks forward to representing the Yahli group on the ExCom for a following year.

## **Change to Bylaws:**

Along with voting for ExCom members this year we also need to vote for or against a change in the Yahli Group bylaws. Below, the proposed change is underlined, the old wording is in brackets. (Yahli Group bylaws can be found on the Yahli web site under *ABOUT US - Yahli mission and bylaws.*)

3.1 ...the management of the affairs and activities of the Group shall be in the hands of an ExCom of 7 members (change from five members) elected by the Group membership for terms of two years.

In any election, up to 4 members (change from three members) may be elected for full terms, as long as the size of the ExCom does not increase as a result and no fewer than two terms will expire in any future year.

When you get the email with the link to the online ballot, please take a few minutes and participate in this important process.

## Upper Bidwell Park

By Suzette Welch, Yahi ExCom Chair



*End of Road beyond the locked gate upper Bidwell Park*

A group made up of ExCom members, group chairs and other members went for a hike to view the Upper Park Road “beyond the locked gate” on Oct. 24. That day was in the 90s which made the return trip along the Yahi Trail from the end of the road to the diversion dam a hot and exposed hike in the early afternoon. It was a little easier for me since I chose to take a swim in Big Chico Creek during the lunch break. The water was cold but felt good after the hike along the road from the locked gate at the diversion dam at parking lot L to the end of the road which was

the route we chose for the first part of the hike. After lunch the views along the trail over Big Chico Creek and the south part of the park were stunning especially at this time of the year.

We went on the hike since many of the ExCom members and Chairs had never been beyond the locked gate at the Diversion Dam. I felt it was appropriate to hike this section of the park since the Yahi Group has taken an official stand about the “LOCKED GATE”.

The Yahi Group position is: that the City of Chico leave the part of the road from the locked gate at the Diversion Dam to the end of the road permanently closed to motorized vehicles except for emergency vehicles. We feel there needs to be an area of the park that is available for bikers and hikers to enjoy nature without the intrusion of motorized vehicles.

Right now the discussion about Upper Park Road closure and how much work can be afforded by the City of Chico to keep dirt and other runoff from going into Big Chico Creek and affecting fish. This discussion is still taking place within the Chico City Park and Playground Commission.

## Volunteers Needed

By Suzette Welch, Yahi ExCom Chair

Yahi Group is still looking for a volunteer who would like to be in charge of planning and organizing a series of educational or recreational program meetings.

A volunteer is also needed to take on duties of keeping membership current and if need-ed updated. We are still losing members often simply due to people not remembering to update their membership.

## Upper Bidwell Park Road Report

By Scott Murphy

The Upper Bidwell Park road report by Pacific Watershed Associates (PWA) is very good. The report is available for viewing on the City's web site under minutes and agendas for the 9/25 BPPC meeting.\

Section 4.6.2 'Road Surface Treatments' is one of the key sections to read. 4.40 miles of road was assessed for sediment delivery (into BCC) sources, and a prioritized treatment plan. Some of the recommended treatments are outsloping, insloping, berm removal, and installing rolling dips and ditch relief culverts to discharge runoff more frequently. The primary recommended road surface treatments include:

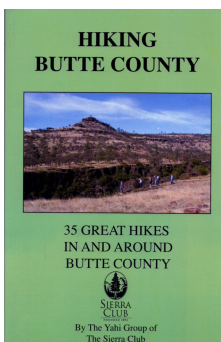
1. outsloping 8,870 feet of road by removing the inboard ditch and out sloping 550 feet of road while retaining the inboard ditch along that section of road;
2. Installing 77 rolling dips along the road;
3. Removing the outside road berm along 12,160 feet of the road.

"For Upper Park Road outsloped roads with rolling dips and no ditch or berms along the outside edge of the road are considered the best, most preferred road shape and drainage configuration for most circumstances." "Over 9,000 feet of Upper Park Road is suitable and is recommended for road outsloping." The appendixes describe and illustrate the various treatment recommendations.

Other recommendations include full and partial decommissioning of sections of the road including vegetation restoration, as well as conversion from road to trail. A combination of partial and full decommissioning of the road would be conversion from road to trail beyond Salmon Hole parking area to the end of the road. These treatments could be done so as to allow access of emergency vehicles to the end of the current road.

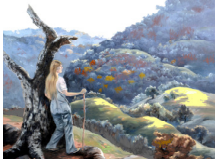
PWA also supports the Bidwell Park Master Management Plan recommendation to keep the gate permanently closed to private motor vehicles at parking lot L (diversion dam).

## Hiking Butte County



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

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



**River Watcher:**

## **Little Things in a Big World**

*By Rex Burress*

What's the latest thing in the Oroville world? Something small has been floating in the air around my backyard by the dozens! At least they were before the present early November rain.

After the first October rain, fluffy-looking white particles were drifting in the cool morning like some kind of feather dust. Wind-borne seeds seemed unlikely, and then I noticed yellow-rump warblers were dashing about to snatch them. I grabbed one of the slow drifters and could barely see that it was winged and had a blue-black body. The dust was alive!

I retrieved my 10X hand lens to check out this oddity. The two wings were clear and veined, attached to the dark body, and evidently when fluttering, gave the diminutive organism the fuzzy white appearance in flight. From references, I deduced it to be a root gnat of the family Sciaridae, although there are over 200 species of such gnats in California that look similar.

I also found the gnats down by the Feather River Nature Center and in the Centennial Garden. The first light rain and warm spell must have activated the hatch all over town. Oak stem galls and leaf galls will also be releasing small gall flies as the season progresses, and mushrooms will have fungus gnats as the woodland becomes watered.

There are more than 90,000 species of two-winged flies in the insect order Diptera, that includes house flies, gnats and midges, crane flies, horse flies, hoverflies, fruitflies, mosquitoes, and dungflies. All told, there are over one million species of insects...and counting. In the Coleoptera beetle family there are over 400,000 species—the largest insect group! Maybe you would like to be an Entomologist, and spend a lifetime studying insects to enrich our understanding of little things on Earth!

All the colossal entities of this planet are made up of little things. Molecules and atoms are among the invisible foundations of life that mold water, soil, animals into the basic things we see, all subject to change by heat and pressure, as we know from a summer of wildfires that melted a lot of metal. Thus tangible material things on Earth are temporal, subject to storms, heat, and erosion. Even diamonds will falter in the face of fire--the dormant force that merely needs a spark of intense heat to emerge from its hiding place and crumble empires. We watch from our abodes and hope, along with the root gnats if the little things could hope, that the consuming monster remains asleep to allow our use of natural resources while we live...or manage, since flame can be useful in smaller controlled amounts.

Do you know any little things? Some little animals are annoying, such as fleas, ticks, biting flies, and some need to be watched and respected like spiders, centipedes, and bees. The word 'little,' like the word 'small,' is rather vague in referring to a definite size, and exact size doesn't become definite until your gnat is measured. So the measurement for the root gnat is proof 'little' is 'small!' The root gnat is about 2mm in body length - 25mm equals one inch!

How large is a grain of sand? Larger than a mustard seed, but smaller than a pea! The root gnat was smaller than a grain of sand. However, you never see a sand-grain with wings!

*“Little drops of water, little grains of sand,/Make the mighty ocean, make the mighty land./  
And the little moments, humble though they be,/Make all the ages of all eternity.”*

*“Nature is most wonderful in the smallest things.” --Carolus Linneaus*

*“Great things are done by a series of small things brought together.” --Vincent Van Gogh*

*“A store of small strengths makes one strong.”--Chinese*

# Yahi Group Information

## Executive Committee

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## Newsletter Information

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

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



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