



Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

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Yahi Winter 2018/2019 Outings and Events
Coordinated by Alan Mendoza

www.sierraclub.org/mother-lode/yahi/outings

**Forestry Issues in Dealing with Wildfire:
 Gov. Brown's wildfire plan will only make things worse**
By Chad Hanson and Char Miller. LA Times Op-Ed, May 25, 2018

Most of the devastating impacts to communities from recent California wildland fires have occurred in grasslands, chaparral and oak woodlands — not in forests. The science is clear that the most effective way to protect homes from wildfire is to make homes themselves more fire-safe, using fire-resistant roofing and siding, installing ember-proof vents and exterior sprinklers, and maintaining "defensible space" within 60 to 100 feet of individual homes by reducing grasses, shrubs and small trees immediately adjacent to houses. Vegetation management beyond 100 feet from homes provides no additional protection. Subsidizing logging in remote forests won't protect us; we need to live with fire, the way we do with earthquakes.

Cutting down millions of dead trees, or "snags," in backcountry forests to make wood chips that would be burned for kilowatts in "biomass" energy plants is just substituting wood for coal in power generation.

One suggestion is to thin the forest

Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter <https://www.sierraclub.org/texas/what-needs-be-done>

Thinning actually increases the risk of high intensity fires because fire resistant trees are often removed in the thinning process and protective canopy cover is lost.

Using goats to clear brush and create firebreaks

Sierra National magazine of Sierra Club <https://www.sierraclub.org/sierra/demand-for-grazing-goats-growing-wildfire>. (type goats in search window for magazine)

Across California and the West, goats are being dispatched to overgrown patches of land to chomp down vegetation and help create firebreaks to prevent fires from jumping from wildlands to homes and businesses.

Thanks to their voracious appetites—goats can eat up to 10 pounds of vegetation per day—and ability to navigate difficult terrain, the ravenous ruminants are on the front lines of fire prevention.

Clearcutting is a real problem for suppression of wildfires

Sierra Club California <https://www.sierraclub.org/california/letter-sacramento-sierra-loggers-lets-be-clear-about-clear-cutting>

Clearcutting creates a checkerboard of bald spots across the forested mountains. It eliminates breeding and living space for most animals, makes cool places hotter, and reduces the essential water-storing services of the bare land left behind. Most logging companies in California are moving away from this practice and are using selective harvests.

Wildfire management vs. fire suppression

Reposted from [UC Berkeley News](https://ucanr.edu/sites/cff/?blogasset=51192&blogtag=Scott%20Stephens) <https://ucanr.edu/sites/cff/?blogasset=51192&blogtag=Scott%20Stephens>

“When fire is not suppressed, you get all these benefits: increased stream flow, increased downstream water availability, increased soil moisture, which improves habitat for the plants within the watershed. It increases the drought resistance of the remaining trees and also increases the fire resilience because you have created natural firebreaks,” said Gabrielle Boisramé, a graduate student in UC Berkeley's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering and first author of the study.

Homes and homeowners need to adopt fire prevention strategies

Can California prevent wildfires <https://ucanr.edu/sites/cff/?blogasset=51192&blogtag=Scott%20Stephens>

Scott Stephens, a professor of environmental science, policy, and management at Cal, also believes city officials are often unable or unwilling to enforce strict fire ordinance options. The incentive for city council members and county supervisors is to encourage development and expand tax bases. As a result, homes are often built in wild land “interface” areas with extreme fire risk, such as the scorched Fountain grove complex in Santa Rosa.

Along with mushrooming development, ongoing climate change is resulting in hotter, drier, and longer fire seasons, affecting wildfire behavior in unexpected and catastrophic ways. 🍃



Yahi Club News



FRIDAY DECEMBER 14, 2018 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 donation for room rental and clean up.

This years after dinner program will feature two presenters Lorraine Smith and Lorna Cunkle.

Lorraine Smith: Hiking/Trekking Poles

Did you know that using hiking/trekking poles correctly can reduce the stress on your knees by 40 percent? Lorraine will demonstrate "best practice" use of poles, as well as share a few tips that can potentially make hiking

safer and a bit easier for us "mature" hikers. After a career in higher education leadership at CSU-Chico, Lorraine moved to Tennessee where she co-guided hikes and backpack trips in numerous locations, including the Great Smokey Mountains, the Adirondacks, Glacier National Park, the Florida Everglades, and the Sawtooth Mountains. Now retired and back in Chico, Lorraine co-leads hikes for CSU-Chico's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Lorna Cunkle: Sissy Backpacking

Still love backpacking but hate to carry all that stuff? Lorna will share information and photographs of several options she's found for getting far into the back-country wilderness for days at a time -- without carrying a 40-pound pack. The daughter of a Sierra Club member, and a life-long Sierra Club member herself, Lorna is retired after a dual career in education and publishing. She has explored most of the Sierra, with a pack on her back when she was younger and now as an avid fan of sissy backpacking. She recently served two years on the Yahi Group ExCom and currently co-leads hikes for CSU-Chico's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

The annual Holiday Party is a good time for visiting with old friends and meeting new people. So bring your favorite dish and plan to have a pleasant evening.

YAH! Group ExCom Elections

It is time to vote for people to represent them on the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the local Yahi group of the Sierra Club. This year we have three candidates: Jane Coleman, Betty Volker , and Suzette Welch. There is also a question for all members on reviving the practice of sending the paper form of the newsletter to ALL members. You can find a detailed discussion of the costs and benefits in the online version of this newsletter on page 5 of this newsletter.

Please take a few minutes to participate in this important process. If you receive the online newsletter, you will get a link to the ballot in a separate email. Read the Candidates' Statements, and show your support by folding, taping and mailing your ballot by December 31, 2018.

A Conservation Letter to You—Post Elections

From Grace Marvin, Conservation Chair

Dear Yahi members,

What has the election meant for you and the planet? I am writing this note before the November election and hoping for the best! Nonetheless, be prepared: it is likely that some unfortunate decisions will be made by political leaders -- whether or not they are more conservation-minded than their opponents. They and their appointees to various boards and commissions may be (or feel) constrained by policies, political pressures, or personal attitudes that seem quite unreasonable to us.

Here are a few conservation matters that certainly could be affected by past and future elections:

1- How have efforts to address climate change been affected by national, state, or local elections? What can we do to help further efforts to reduce carbon emissions - so damaging to our planet? As we know too well by now, warming temperatures help cause droughts, wild fires, killing of wildlife, and the endangerment and destruction of coastal communities. Global warming is also diminishing our planet's water quality, such that the well-being of humans and animals is already affected.

Can we bring pressure on our leaders to (a) affirm international agreements on climate change, and (b) initiate and promote national, statewide and county agreements opposed to fracking and other carbon-producing practices? What else can we do to reduce fossil fuel consumption among our friends and neighbors and ourselves?

One example where locals might apply pressure is a housing project planned for southern Chico (Stonegate). It is likely to increase greenhouse gas emissions excessively --while also destroying vernal pools. Should we (a) urge our leaders to prohibit that development or (b) only consider how to reduce its carbon emissions and its effects on vernal pools? Are there other proposed or already existing developments that should matter to us? What about educating people to get out of cars altogether or, at least, promoting hybrid, or preferably, electric cars and mass transportation?

2- How have the elections affected the homeless, the disabled, or other low-income folks who live in our communities? Are their living conditions sustainable? Or do politicians need prodding to increase the availability of affordable or subsidized housing in areas where the needy can thrive? Can we make sure (a) that we do not make NIMBY (Not In My BackYard) proposals that result in “urban removal” and (b) that we permit low-income housing only in socially and environmentally suitable locations, *e.g.*, not in polluted areas such as near Chico Scrap Metal? How, in turn, can we encourage people and institutions to take better care of our communities' natural environment? After all, society and the natural environment affect each other: we can make our environment sustainable for humans and other creatures, and nature can be protected – giving us us healthy air and water – among other benefits..

3- Have propositions and politicians been chosen that will promote needed improvement in the sustainability of our diminishing water ? What else can we do to promote healthy flows in our rivers, streams, and other waterways, and not allow diversion of water to unsustainably managed dams, canals, farms, golf courses, and other developments?

4- Are the political winners of the November elections going to promote recycling? If not, what can we do, *beyond* being good examples ourselves, to protect our land, air, forests, and water? Should we consider buying fewer items, so we have less to trash?

Wishing us all healthy returns, while we continue to campaign for our planet!

Yours Truly, Grace



Discussion of whether to go back to sending paper copies of Yahi Newsletters to all current group members

At the Oct. ExCom meeting we discussed mailing paper copies of the Yahi Newsletter to all current members to see if we could get more of the membership involved with activities of the Group. We have placed an item on this year's ballot to enable the members to have a voice in this decision. Below are the numbers to help make an informed decision on on this issue.

For the last several years we have mailed out about 725 Newsletters to people without email addresses and print about 1100 paper Newsletters. 330 of those paper Newsletters are distributed by volunteers to libraries, local stores, univ. and outreach. Current cost for each of 4 Newsletters is \$527. Our annual cost for mailing is \$480 and printing \$1628.00 for a total of \$2108.00.

If we mailed Newsletters to all current members we would have to print 1400 for mailing plus 330 for distribution to libraries, local stores, univ. and outreach. Total number to be printed would be 1730 at a cost \$482.00. We would need to mail out 1400 Newsletters which would cost \$250. So our annual cost of sending printed Newsletter to all current members would be - for printing \$1928 and cost of mailing \$1000 for a total annual cost of \$2928.

So the annual extra cost of mailing paper Newsletters to all current members would be \$820. All of these extra paper Newsletters mean more trees have to be cut.

If you feel that receiving a printed copy of the Yahi Newsletter is worth the annual extra cost of \$820 to the Yahi Group and the use of more paper then vote for **Y** paper copies for all current members.

If it is just as easy for you to read the Online copy, then vote **N**.

. Be aware that the online copy gets additions and corrections so the most up to date information is found in the Online Newsletter.

Sprawling to Paradise

By Betty Volker

For anyone who uses Bruce Road from Hwy 32 to the Skyway (Paradise people who use the Skyway should pay attention). Big changes are in the works: The Meriam Park development, at the corner of Bruce and 20th Streets, is being built on now and ground will soon be broken for up to 1200 housing units. The Stonegate development on Bruce between 20th Street and Skyway has been approved for 469 single family units and 233 multi-family units.

Up the hill, on the Skyway, there is a plan in the works called- Valley Edge. Valley Edge is proposed to have over 2000 units. There will also be commercial included in these developments. You can imagine what traffic and the environment will look like at build out. Stonegate and Valley Edge can still be stopped, changed, or redesigned.

There can be better urban planning. Inside the urban center, we can change blight into beautiful housing. You can help by contacting Butte Environmental Council with a gift of time and energy or a gift of money to legally protect the environs of Chico and Paradise.

Paradise Tree Alert

By Betty Volker

Paradise: This fall the Paradise Planning Commission granted a conditional use and tree-felling permit to the Black Olive Village (the new Safeway site on the Skyway). According to the October 11, Chico News and Review over 180 trees will be removed. With the tree removal, 42 conditions must be met. What is the good, the bad, and the ugly? The Yahi group would like a person to follow this project and keep us informed. Can you do that? Contact a Yahi board member.

Clair Tappaan Environmental Education Program for Youth

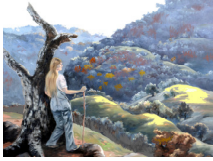
By Jane Coleman

Progress has been made on getting local youth (ages 12 through 18) to participate in the Environmental Educational Program based at the Clair Tappaan Lodge (the Sierra Club Lodge near Donner Summit). On November 7th, staff from Gateway Mountain Center will be meeting with a few teachers, a Principal and a youth leaders to further their understanding of the program and help them find a way to make it happen. If you are interested in this program, please contact Jane through email volecole@juno.com.

Funds Donated to Charitable Groups in 2018

This year the Yahi Group donated \$500 as startup money to help Chat Simplicity Village become a reality. The ExCom felt that we need to do something to get the homeless housed so that they don't continue to trash our parks and waterways.

\$500 was also donated to Bidwell Park for upkeep and improvement of hiking trails. We specified that we would like funds to go to signs and maintenance of the Yahi Trail.



River Watcher: The Nature of Names

By Rex Burress, The River Watcher

As any senior knows, names in the old work force, or names of newcomers in the family, or the names in the nature community, are in a constant state of flux, and active participant-lists have a wholly new change of names from previous times!

I am reminded of the grand parade of personalities in life every time I receive the “BayNature” magazine and its list of members and contributors. I subscribe to keep up on current wildlife affairs in the Oakland, CA vicinity, but of the hundreds of new people names, I may only know a few. Presumably, hopefully, the new names represent individuals with an equal interest in nature-beauty and nature interpretation as their predecessors and will keep the nature-cause alive.

During my naturalist job-days in the Bay Area, during the 1960-70-80 era, I was a front-runner in the natural history world of Oakland, giving nature slide shows/lectures/nature hikes and generally knowing the names of most people in parks, museums, bird clubs, camera clubs, and the like. But 25 years after retiring to Oroville, CA, it's a brand new list of environmental people than what I was connected with in the Bay Area. Most of my nature buddies of yesteryear have retired or died, and certainly are less active, but the spirit of love for nature mostly remains intact, often expressed in lower key, but still valuable contributions can be made to the understanding of nature.

Name and position changes loomed vividly when I studied the bio agenda for this year's 19th annual Snow Goose Festival. I led Feather River bird walks for the event, gave slide shows and designed the first festival poster for the first festival that started in 1999, and continued my contributions for 13 years. But the number of field trips and workshops has about tripled, and an impressive list of highly qualified young folks has stepped in, and I'm glad to see the interest in life's more worthy pursuits continued. I'm sure the old pioneers of nature advocacy, like John Muir, Theodore Roosevelt, Borland, Peterson, Carson, Audubon, and other scientific giants would be delighted, and welcome the “new names.”

The first Snow Goose field trip that I led convened at the Feather River Nature Center in Oroville—in dense fog! [The FRNC site was unavailable this year because the flood-damaged road hasn't been fixed.] It's go rain or shine on the field trips, and fog rather stymies the important use of binoculars, but like magic on that day, a pair of bald eagles landed in a tree over the parking lot as people were parking, and everyone got good looks before the magnificent birds moved on! I was handed a list of 22 names, all new to me, and made some new friends. Field trips bring nature and people, and sometimes eagles, together!

Sometimes you wonder where all these named people come from! I glance at the M-R newspaper obituaries every day, and I am astounded at the number of quaint names I had not even heard of before! A random sampling: 1-24-18, Trovao, Hixson, Bunman, Viverito, Balliet, Jeuken. Some might think that “Burress” is rather odd. But the naming of these last names is shrouded in antiquity and mystery. First names are a lot easier to savor. How many billions of

names have thus been contrived? Did Neanderthal people have a personal name? In what language was “Adam and Eve?” “The beginning of understanding starts with a name,” say the Chinese. However, hear what Rachael Carson has to say about names:

“It is not half so important to know as to feel. If facts and names are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow.”

“It is possible to compile extensive lists of creatures seen and identified without ever once having caught a breathtaking glimpse of the wonder of life.”

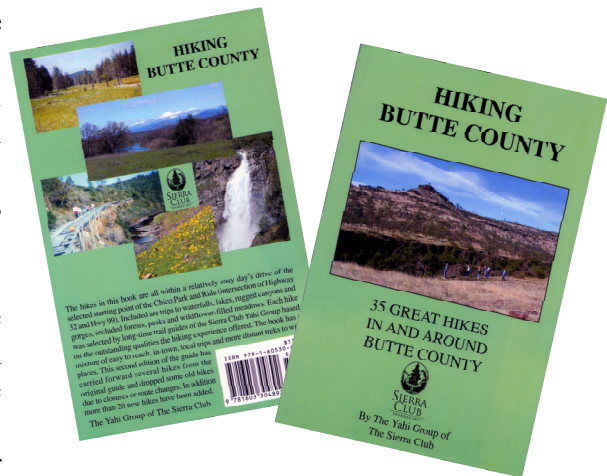
“Those who dwell, as scientists or students, among the beauties and mysteries of the earth are never alone or weary of life. Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts.” --Rachael Carson



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.

You can purchase it for \$11.95 at Trailside Adventures in Paradise and in Chico at Mountain Sports and Lyons Books. Or you can order one directly from Alan for \$10 plus shipping. Contact Alan Mendoza, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.



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Yahi Group Information

Executive Committee

Chair: Suzette Welch, 530 570-3240, booksontape@rocketmail.com
Secretary: Annette Carey annettecare@sbcglobal.net
Board Member: Jane Coleman volecole@juno.com
Board Member: Laurel Heath laurel3290@gmail.com
Board Member: Wendy Le Master lemasterwendy@live.com

Committee Chairs and Other Contacts

Rep. To Motherlode: Grace Marvin g-marvin@comcast.net
Conservation Chair: Grace Marvin g-marvin@comcast.net
Lassen Forest Preservation Group: Patricia Puterbaugh pmputerbaugh@yahoo.com
Membership: Position Open
Newsletter: Louise Casey YAHInews@comcast.net
Newsletter mailing: Suzette Welch booksontape@rocketmail.com
Newsletter Distribution: Steve Miller 530-345-0806 and Dave Nopel 530-342-4118
Newsletter Advertising: Position Open
Outings Chair: Alan Mendoza ajmendoza777@comcast.net
Outreach Chair: Wendy Le Master lemasterwendy@live.com
Political Chair: Ed Schilling edschilling65@gmail.com
Program Chair: Position Open
Publicity: Skip Augur 530-519-4724
Treasurer: Paul Krause or paul@paulkrause.com
Yahi Website : Louise Casey or YAHInews@comcast.net
Youth Activities: Ernesto Rodriguez azreal24@gmail.com

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For submissions, comments, or inquiries, contact Louise Casey, 872-9159, 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.

The Last Word

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John D. Burge, CPA
Certified Public Accountant

17 Williamsburg Lane
Chico, CA 95926

530 342-3680
Fax 530 342-3721
johnburgecpa@sbcglobal.net

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