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Yahi
Group



Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Lassen, Plumas & Tehama Counties

News Articles Programs Hikes and Outings Meetings Events

Measure D: Letting Mother Nature Be

By Scott Wolf

Guest Column

Scott Wolf, chairman of Citizens for a GE-free Butte, is an amateur naturalist who studies aboriginal living skills. He has an M.A. in history, specializing in neo-colonialism. He has learned about the issue of genetic engineering from a variety of sources, including farmers, scientists, peer-reviewed studies, books on the subject, and personal research.

Citizens for a GE-Free Butte was founded in March of 2004 in response to the risks genetically engineered organisms pose to the economy, public health, and environment of Butte County. The regulatory vacuum at the federal and state levels that permits profit-driven, rather than health-driven, technology to be released into the environment and food supply without having been proven safe, in addition to the inability to recall a genetic experiment, has led GE-Free Butte to address this issue at the local level.

Yahi Group voters in Butte County have come to the proverbial fork in the road, and what's at stake is the very stuff of life. On November 2, they will be asked to decide whether or not they want to invite genetic engineering into county agriculture.

Genetic engineering is an imprecise science generally involving taking a gene from one organism and shooting it into the DNA of another totally unrelated organism. A tomato can wind up with fish genes, and rice can have human genes. (These are not hypothetical examples; industry has already created these.) Genetic engineering should not be confused with hybridization, which is when two very closely related species, or varieties of the same species, breed and create offspring. In contrast, genetic engineering could never happen naturally and is impossible without scientists and a laboratory. Once a genetically engineered (GE) plant or animal is released into the environment, however, it can breed with its natural counterpart and/or weedy relatives, transmitting its engineered DNA. The environment is never the same afterward, as the new DNA replicates and spreads on the wind in the water and via the birds and the bees.

An unintended consequence of this lack of control over GE crops has been the creation of "superweeds." In Canada, a weedy canola relative has acquired resistance to the three most common herbicides on the market making control in fields and forests a nightmarish proposition. Recent studies have shown that in the US wild sunflowers and wild

squashes grow more vigorously after picking up engineered DNA. The US Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management have recently broken ranks with the biotech industry to protest the possible introduction of an herbicide-resistant GE variety of creeping bentgrass into golf courses, which they fear will crossbreed that trait into weedy grasses, compounding the difficulty of managing wild areas.

As another unforeseen outcome, GE crops have not only killed the insect pests they are engineered to kill, they have also killed the beneficial insects that prey upon those pests. Green lacewings which ate corn borers that had eaten GE corn had higher death rates and delayed development compared with control groups fed corn borers that had eaten conventional corn. To be very explicit about the importance of this, the plant kills not only what eats it, but also what eats what eats it. And what about what eats what eats what eats it? Where does this problem end? No studies have yet examined this unforeseen consequence. In 2000, a Cornell University study showed that monarch butterfly caterpillars, which feed on milkweed and do not prey on corn or on anything that preys on corn, died when feeding on milkweeds that had been exposed to GE corn pollen.

Finally, contrary to the claims of the biotech companies, GE crops do not reduce herbicide use and are not therefore "eco-friendly". Dr. Charles Benbrook, former Executive Director of the US National Academy of Sciences Board on Agriculture, has used the USDA's own statistics to comprehensively examine the first 8 years of GE crop use (1996-2003) and concluded that there was a drop in herbicide use during the first three years, but overall usage increased by more than 50 million pounds during the full period. He found this to be due to the spread of herbicide-resistant weeds and a buildup of resistance in other weeds. Increased herbicide use, of course, means more chemicals in our water and in our food. The damage is not only environmental but also economic. Hundreds of family farmers have discovered their crops have been contaminated with unwanted genetic material, making their produce worthless in the

many overseas markets that limit or prohibit GE crops. To add insult to injury, Monsanto and other biotech companies have often sued these farmers for patent infringement, as the companies' technology fees had not been paid for the "use" of the patented gene.

Furthermore, pollution of our food crops by GE crops engineered to produce insecticides, vaccines, and medicines, may have detrimental health consequences, particularly to still-developing children. Shockingly, the effects of ingesting either food crops contaminated with these toxin-producing genes, or GE food products themselves, have hardly been studied at all even though these crops have already been unleashed elsewhere in the country

At this time, the only known GE crop being grown in Butte County is some corn at the university farms. Consequently, now is the time to pass Measure D, before GE crops enter the county in any quantity. The Executive Committee of the Yahi Group has endorsed Measure D, and I encourage you to be individually proactive in choosing the NATURAL fork in the road by voting YES on Measure D. Thank you.

Measure D: County Ordinance Prohibiting Growing of Genetically Engineered Organisms:

The ordinance prohibits growing genetically engineered organisms in Butte County. Exemptions include: (1) scientific research or education using genetically engineered organisms conducted by an accredited college or university, under secure laboratory conditions, and (2) diagnosis, care or treatment provided for patients by licensed health care practitioners.

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Chat and Chew Oct. 3

Our second Chat and Chew will be held from 1:00-4:00 PM on Sunday, October 3 at One Mile, Lower Bidwell Park. A.S. (Associated Students) Recycling (Barbara Kopicki), and A.S. Environmental Affairs Council (Annie Sherman), are cosponsoring the event with the Sierra Club.

We are especially reaching out to college-aged people and other young adults this time, while encouraging ALL to participate -- if you are interested in learning about local environmental action. What are the concerns of the different environmental groups? How can we help them address their conservation goals? What viewpoints do we want to share with these groups?

Ask questions, take notes, and have fun chatting and chewing with us at One Mile! (Food and beverage details still to be decided, and help is always needed. Please call Grace Marvin at

About This Newsletter

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

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

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

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

For advertising in the Newsletter, please call John Wood (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.

News Bites

Chat and Chew #2. We had such great responses to the Chat and Chew held last May that we're in the process of planning another one for this October 3rd. Our goal is to add more college students and other young people to the event, with all ages very welcome! Please call me about your ideas or willingness to help! 893-1994.

Register to vote! Marvey Mueller, the Yahi conservation chair, and Joanne Gerson, Yahi Treasurer, are trying to help register fellow Sierra Club members to vote. Please see Marvey's call for help in this paper.

First Aid classes for Outings leaders. Hikes and other Outings Galore!

The Yahi group will be providing funding for Yahi Outings leaders to get First Aid & Wilderness First Aid classes! Alan Mendoza has organized a terrific list of Outings for this Fall. Please contact Alan Mendoza about being an Outings leader if you're at all interested.

Dave Nopel said he would lead a special hike for the Bidwell Park Centennial celebration in the spring!

Yahi Programs for 2005? Gerda Lydon who has organized so many wonderful monthly programs for Yahi will be retiring from that activity after this Fall. That means we need people, now, to help organize programs starting in 2005. Please let me know about your willingness to help and your ideas for really interesting programs!

Fortunately, Gerda will continue as Membership chair and in helping get the newsletter out that Susan Sears and Louise Casey so wonderfully put together. Thank you, Gerda & Susan and Louise! Thanks, also, to Dave Nopel, Steve Miller, Jon Hilbert and others who help with the newsletter and distribution.

Conservation bulletins. Louise Casey has also helped organize the website, so that we can easily send and read about local environmental actions and meetings. Please check out <http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/>. The Yahi web site also has links listed for other environmental organizations!

Feel free to send me your news (GMRADM@aol.com), so that we can seriously consider adding your news to the Yahi website information.

Helpers needed. The old refrain, I know. But please contact me (Grace Marvin, 893-1994) if you might be interested in helping us lead the Yahi organization as an officer, a committee person, or as a one-time volunteer! Let's discuss it over coffee.

Yahi Group of the Sierra Club

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Trish Puterbaugh

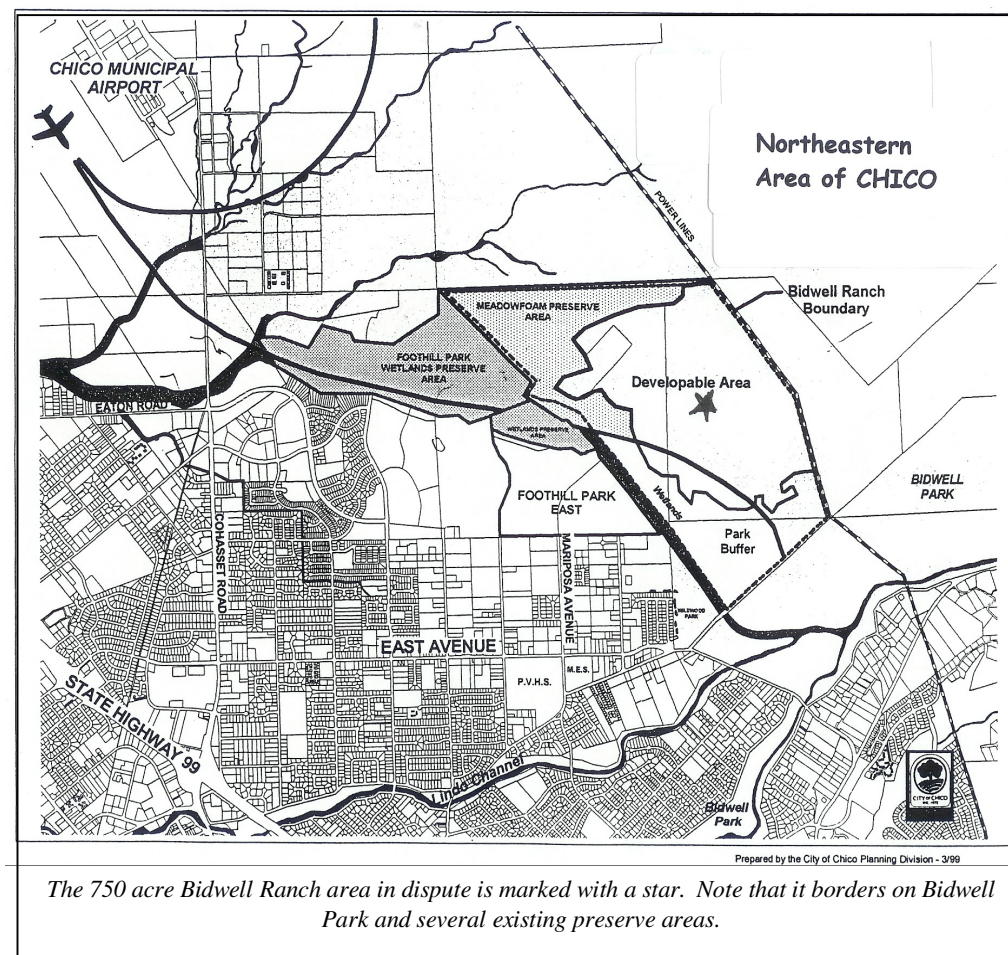
Cohasset@shocking.com

Membership

Gerda Lydon: 530-343-9277

Bidwell Ranch: The Fight for Open Space in Chico

by Marvey Mueller



at Pleasant Valley High School?

We cannot stop the City of Chico from growing but we can try to control its growth's effects on our community. Another 1500 homes must be accounted for in our city's inventory. A suitable replacement parcel has been identified in the Bell/Muir Road area. A parcel that allows more access in all directions and is still within the urban, not agricultural zone.

Besides the need for valuable open space in our fast shrinking natural setting, the City knows the other pluses of holding this important parcel. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CDF) uses this property as a clear departure area when they fly their full air tankers out of the Chico Airport. Without a development free area to launch their fire-fighting aircraft the CDF would probably move their base from Chico, leaving our hillsides less protected from the devastating wildfires that often erupt in the dry season.

While the quest for additional funds for park development is commendable, we ask – at what cost? And no one has yet to determine where monies for a \$2-3 million bridge over Lindo Channel and a costly EIR will come from. No developer will touch the land before this is done. Maybe in a time of stiff city cutbacks, this is really not an appropriate time for a wish list. All cities, counties and state governments are making do on much less. It is a time to conserve. To sacrifice an irreplaceable resource like Bidwell Ranch just because it is "worth something" is inexcusable. What legacy can we leave our future generations if not a place they can go just to be with nature? As Aldo Leopold wisely said "When we stay away from nature we become hard." And if we give nature away, we can never get it back.

This whole issue could be neatly resolved by the Chico City Council. A simple vote to change the zoning to open space, as the people declared by their vote, would do it. But the lure of money is seductive and with a current council that seems to find itself often in a dead tie, that vote seems unlikely. This means that the newly elected council member in November will hold a most powerful vote. We urge you to choose your Council member

wisely. There will likely be a City Council vote on the rezoning of Bidwell Ranch in September. You can help:

1. (Hu)man the table at the Saturday Farmer's Market. Call Hilary at 893-5624 or e-mail me at marveychap@earthlink.net to volunteer for this fun activity.

2. Flyer neighborhoods near the property. Call Betty at 345-7205 or e-mail her at betty5@juno.com.

3. Write, call or e-mail City Planning Commission members. E-mail Councilors at dpression@ci.chico.ca.us and Planning Commissioners at gredeker@ci.chico.ca.us or write

Certificates of Appreciation, 25-year Awards Presented

The following have been awarded Certificates of Appreciation: Rex Burress for his wonderful talks at our programs as well as his many conservation activities and articles in this newsletter and in the area; Carla Moreno for her willingness to readily volunteer, lead outings, check for availability of newsletters in the Paradise Library and -- last but not least -- cook for National Sierra Club outings; and Dave Nopel for his many years of mailing the newsletter, helping with the "quarterly mailing" at my house (I wouldn't know what to do without him), and his recent efforts for the Chat and Chew -- all much appreciated!

We are pleased to honor and thank the following Yahi Group members for their 25 years of membership in the Sierra Club: Dorothy Dornish, Chico; Richard Hubacek, Berry Creek; Walter and Kathy Mazen, Chico; and Adrienne

Guest Columnists

If you represent an environmental organization other than the Sierra Club, Yahi Group, and you have something you would like to say, please consider writing for our newly approved Guest Column. The Yahi Executive Committee encourages such environmental collaboration, just as we demonstrated in our May Chat and Chew.

We have so much to learn from one another, and we know that joining forces can help us to DO even more to help preserve healthy biodiversity and nature's loveliness. To submit an article for publication in the Yahi newsletter, see *About This Newsletter, Submission Guidelines*, p. 2 of this issue.

The red tail hawks that soar majestically above the parched foothills of Bidwell Ranch are probably the only ones in the neighborhood blissfully unaware of the raging controversy that goes on about the land just beneath them. But then perhaps they've heard this story before and are content to let their human brothers fight among themselves.

To develop or leave as open space, that is the question. Anyone who has lived in Chico since 1988 probably thought the question was put to rest when the citizenry voted overwhelmingly that year against any development in this 750 acre parcel of unspoiled land that borders the Upper Park. In fact the City of Chico purchased the parcel from private interests in 1997 to keep it in the Open Space inventory to prevent any further attempts at development.

But memories are short, and the loud NO of the referendum has lost its echo as a new campaign to develop again is on the march. A group of citizens seeking funds for future park developments are spearheading the current movement. They would like to see the City of Chico sell off this pristine open space to make way for 1500 houses, 4000 people and 10,500 car trips per day. Déjà vu! Will it take another referendum, more needless money and effort to reaffirm what has already been stated?

Just ask the City Traffic Department their opinion of the traffic impact of 10,500 car trips per day in an area that will have only one route in and out of the development. East Avenue, Manzanita/Bruce Road, East 8th Street, and Vallombrosa will be seriously impacted. Have we so soon forgotten the traffic mess

Getting Involved

Sierra Conservancy Update

We simply cannot afford four more years of the man-made disaster known as a Republican presidency. Now, more than perhaps at any other time in our history, the very future of our planet hangs in the balance.

The Sierra Club has officially endorsed John Kerry, and we offer here some ways in which all of us can help to secure his victory in November. These came to us from Joan Willey, the SCPC Presidential Committee Chair and provide some helpful guidance.

The Kerry campaign website is www.JohnKerry.com. The volunteer sign-up page will give you a menu of several possible ways to help the campaign. At a minimum, you should sign up for the Kerry campaign e-mail list. Additional choices include:

- Volunteering at your local Kerry campaign headquarters.
- Hosting an organizing meeting at your home.
- Participating in events in your area organized by others.
- Organizing a voter outreach event in your area.
- Voter contact door-to-door.
- Organizing online.
- Phone banking.

The Kerry campaign is also organizing "MeetUps" on the fourth Thursday of each month. MeetUps will let you connect with other Kerry Supporters in your area to discuss the issues, plan local actions, and build local networks of Kerry supporters. You can register at the JohnKerry.com website to receive information and updates about Kerry MeetUps in your area.

You should feel free to wear Sierra Club buttons and other Club insignia at all campaign activities. You should also feel free to contact Club members in your area and invite them to participate in Kerry campaign activities. You may also use your personal e-mail account to send Kerry campaign messages to your friends and personal contacts, and you may use a Sierra Club e-mail account or listserv to send Kerry campaign messages to Club members.

There are only a few things to watch out for:

- You should not use a "Sierra Club" e-mail account or listserv to forward Kerry campaign messages to lists that extend beyond the Club's membership.
- You should not use your "work" e-mail account to forward messages from the Kerry campaign, or messages from the Sierra Club about the Kerry campaign. This action could get you into trouble with your employer, and it could also cause your employer to violate the prohibition on corporate contributions to federal election campaigns.
- You should not give any lists of Club members to the Kerry campaign.
- If you are involved with the Club's Environmental Voter Education Campaign (EVEC) program, you should follow the special EVEC guidelines about the extent to which you

In our last newsletter we explained that two bills had been brought to the State Legislature that would create a new agency, the Sierra Conservancy, to protect the resources of the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Since then Assemblyman Leslie has dropped his bill and was asked to work with Assemblyman Laird to reach a bipartisan compromise in AB2600. This bill was much more extensive than Leslie's bill and included the watershed of the Sierra/Cascade area in our district.

We gave our input to the Sierra Club representative in Sacramento asking that the final bill retain this northerly area in the Conservancy.

In May AB2600 was passed by the Assembly and went to the Senate Natural Resources Panel. Through the work of Laird and Leslie a revised bill was considered and approved by the Natural Resources Panel by a vote of 5 – 2 on July 29.

This bipartisan bill gives local governments much more involvement in project approval, the main area of concern by Assemblyman Leslie. It is scheduled to be heard by the Senate Appropriations Committee in August.

Hopefully, AB2600 will be law by the time you read this. If you are interested in the current status of

Help Needed for Victory in November

Our local Yahi group is seeking volunteers to help get out the vote.

In addition to work here, we will also coordinate our efforts with the Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club in Carson City/Reno. This may involve a trip to Nevada, a key swing state in November's election.

Please contact Marvey Mueller if you are interested and able to help in this important effort. You can volunteer by e-mail: marveychap@earthlink.net or telephone (530)345-2785.

Let's do whatever we can to take back our

Weed Worker's Handbook Available

The California Invasive Plant Council is offering their new *Weed Worker's Handbook* (publication is free, \$3 for shipping). If you're trying to remove invasive plants from your yard or wildland areas, this handbook is full of useful information about invasives, tools, control techniques, as well as specific strategies for 35 weeds.

Although the focus is on Bay Area plants, we have most of the same species here.

To order the handbook or to view an online

Volunteers Needed

Help Clean Bidwell Park

Butte Environmental Council's annual fall park and creeks cleanup will be held on Saturday, September 18th from 9 am to 1 pm. Meet at Horseshoe Lake for the Bidwell Park cleanup and at Foster Freeze (9th and Broadway) for the creeks cleanup. BEC also needs volunteers to walk each of the creeks and Lindo Channel before the cleanup date to identify the areas that need the most help. Hundreds of volunteers are needed to do an adequate job, but only about 20 people showed up to help with the spring park cleanup.

This is Chico's most crucial environmental volunteer project. For more information, call 891-6424 or email staff@becnet.org.

More Bidwell Activities

As part of the CSUC's annual community beautification activity, *Scour and Devour*, several hundred Chico State volunteers are available to work in Bidwell Park on October 2nd from 9 am to noon. Friends of Bidwell Park is organizing some projects for this event and needs group leaders to direct activities at various sites between CSUC and Five Mile. The more leaders they have, the more student volunteers they'll be able to accommodate. Leverage your volunteer time by offering to lead a group. For more information, call 892-1666 or email info@FriendsofBidwellPark.org.

Friends of Bidwell Park and the Chico Creek Nature Center are planning a year of weekly environmental activities in honor of the upcoming Bidwell Park 2005 Centennial celebration. These will include volunteer service days, nature walks, and field trips in the park focusing on its geology, soils, plants, wildlife, fire ecology and history. If you have an idea for an outing or would like to lead one of these park adventures, please contact Susan Mason at 892-1666 or info@FriendsofBidwellPark.org. We're looking for lots of diverse experiences so no idea is too focused, fuzzy, or unusual to be considered.

Help Annie's Glen

Friends of Bidwell Park volunteers are working in Annie's Glen every Sunday from 9 am to noon, picking up trash and removing invasive plants. So much trash is dumped there every week that they're spending most of their time on the cleanup. With more help, they could devote more time to removing ivy, Himalayan blackberries, pokeweed, star thistle, and the many other invasives that are overtaking the native vegetation. For more information, call 892-1666 or email info@FriendsofBidwellPark.org.

Make a Difference Day

Help to improve your community by participating in National Make a Difference Day on October 23rd. Call your favorite non-profit to

Yahi Fall Programs

For my final effort as Program Chair, I am pleased to announce the following programs for this fall:

September 9: La Verne England, Wilderness Study Chair, Mother Lode Chapter, "**Proposed and Existing Wilderness Areas in the North State.**"

October 14: "**10 Best Slides.**" Bring your favorite 10 slides from a recent or long-ago trip you would like to share. Bring your PC for PowerPoint presentation, or a regular slide projector will be available.

November 11: Marvey Mueller will present a talk and slide show on "**A Conservationist's View of New Zealand.**"

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 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. A customary amount is 6 cents per mile per passenger depending on the vehicle, the number of passengers, and the road conditions. 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 web site.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2004 Yahi Group

On-Going: Tuesday Power Walks. (grade 2, class A). Meet at Chico Park & Ride each Tuesday evening at 6:30PM for a 1½ hour brisk walk along the creek. Wear tennies/walking shoes and bring water and a flashlight. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980, Asst. Leader: John, 872-8258.

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. Free lessons included. For more information call Karen, 899-8305 or Betty, 345-7205.

Cross-Country/Downhill Ski List: Join our more than 60 cross-country ski enthusiasts this winter as we explore the backcountry of Butte Meadows and Lassen Park and enjoy the groomed trails of the Mt. Shasta and Royal Gorge. Downhill skiing also available. All ability levels welcome. If you'd like to be added to (or updated to) our cross-country ski list, please contact Jeanne, 899-9980.

September 2004

Wednesday, September 1 – Conditioning Walk in Paradise (grade 2, class A). Join us for a mid-week conditioning walk up the walk/bike path through the center of Paradise. The walk will be approximately 7 miles. We will walk uphill about 3½ miles and then back down. The walk will be at a brisk pace. Meet at 6PM at the corner of Skyway and Neal Road (southeast corner) in Paradise. For more info call Leader: Lynn, 877-1671; Asst. Leader: Jan, 877-9471.

Saturday, September 4 – Brokeoff Mountain Day Hike (grade 2, class C). Celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Wilderness Act with a special hike to Lassen's best kept secret, the strenuous and scenic 7-mile trail up to Brokeoff Mountain. There'll be plenty of photo opportunities as we cross little creeks and pass through meadows up to a great view of Mt. Lassen. Bring lunch, water, carpool \$ and entrance fees. Round trip about 135 miles. Carpool will be

approximately \$8. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Return time around 5-6PM. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491 or michelle95963@yahoo.com; Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.

Saturday, September 4 – Help Maintain Trails in Upper Bidwell Park. Suitable for all ages and a good way to learn more about the trails in the Park. Gloves, tools, training and beverages are provided by the Parks Department. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. For more information, contact Steve Hogue at the Parks Department, 895-4758 or shogue@ci.chico.ca.us

Monday, September 6 - Dog and Dog Lovers Hike & Swim (grade 1, class A). Beat the heat with an early morning hike and swim in Upper Bidwell Park. Bring leash, water, treats, and proof of rabies vaccination for dog; water, snacks, swimwear and towel for you. Meet at Horseshoe Lake parking lot in Upper Bidwell at 8AM. Space limited to 6 obedient, people-friendly and dog-friendly dogs. If hiking with a dog, call leader for reservations. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843.

Tuesday, September 7, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, September 9, 7:30PM - "Proposed and Existing Wilderness Areas in the North State." La Verne England, Wilderness Study Chair, Mother Lode Chapter. Conference Room of the Chico Branch of the Butte Co. Library on East 1st and Sherman Avenues. Call 343-9277 for information.

Saturday, September 11 – Mt. Tamalpais Hike (grade 2, class B). A beautiful and strenuous loop takes us past a scenic waterfall, beside a fresh marsh, through areas of chaparral, cypress, Douglas fir, along rugged canyons and ridges and above Alpine Lake on the north side of Mt. Tamalpais. Call leader to sign up and for more info. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843.

Tuesday, September 14, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Wednesday, September 15 – Conditioning Walk in Paradise (grade 2, class A). Join us for a mid-week conditioning walk up the walk/bike path through the center of Paradise. The walk will be approximately 7 miles. We will walk uphill about 3 ½ miles and then back down. The walk will be at a brisk pace. Meet at 6PM at the corner of Skyway and Neal Road (southeast corner) in Paradise. For more info, call Leader: Lynn, 877-1671; Asst. Leader: Jan, 877-9471.

Friday, Sept. 17 - Concert in the Park. A great night of music featuring traditional bluegrass with MOSSY CREEK. Meet at 6:30PM at Chico Paper Company corner of 4th & Broadway. Bring finger food snacks

to share. Lawn chairs recommended. Possible trip for yogurt or ice cream afterwards. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Tuesday, September 21, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Friday, Sept 24 - Concert in the Park. Rockin' country music featuring LEON & THE MUSTANGS. Meet at 6:30PM at Chico Paper Company corner of 4th & Broadway. Bring finger food snacks to share. Lawn chairs recommended. Possible trip for yogurt or ice cream afterwards. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Saturday, September 25 – Caribou Wilderness Hike (grade 2, class A). Pass by over 10 lakes and several meadows in 7-8 miles of hiking through the relatively flat, forested terrain of the beautiful Caribou Wilderness east of Lassen Park. Bring hiking boots, water, lunch and \$ for drivers. About a 165 mile round-trip drive. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net; Asst. Leader: Julian, 893-1994.

Tuesday, September 28, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

October 2004

Saturday, Oct. 2 - Singles River Walk and Dinner (grade 1, class A). Come join us for an enjoyable 4-5 mile walk along the peaceful, serene Feather River in Oroville. We will see salmon spawning and possibly other wildlife. After we are done soaking in the beautiful river environment, we will enjoy a pleasant dinner. Bring good walking shoes, water, and money for drivers and dinner. Meet at Chico Park and Ride at 3:00PM or at Albertsons in Paradise at 3:30PM. Call on or before Wednesday September 29 to reserve a spot and receive details about dinner. For more information or to reserve a spot call Leader: Lynn, 877-1671 or Asst. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

Saturday, October 2 – Help Maintain Trails in Upper Bidwell Park. Suitable for all ages and a good way to learn more about the trails in the Park. Gloves, tools, training and beverages are provided by the Parks Department. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. For more information, contact Steve Hogue at the Parks Department, 895-4758 or shogue@ci.chico.ca.us

Sunday, October 3 – Bike Ride (grade 1, class A). Start at One Mile Bidwell Park, to Little Chico Creek Bike Path all the way to Bruce Road and back. See how the creek area has been rejuvenated. Meet at Caper Acres Parking Lot at 10AM. Bring water. Rain cancels. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst.

Leader: Gene.

Sunday, October 3 — Our Second Chat and Chew will be held from 1:00-4:00PM on at One Mile, Lower Bidwell Park. A.S. (Associated Students) Recycling (Barbara Kopicki), and A.S. Environmental Affairs Council (Annie Sherman), are cosponsoring the event with the Sierra Club. For information, call Grace Marvin, 893-1994.

Tuesday, October 5, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Wednesday, October 6 – Conditioning Walk in Paradise (grade 2, class A). Join us for a mid-week conditioning walk up the walk/bike path through the center of Paradise. The walk will be approximately 7 miles. We will walk uphill about 3½ miles and then back down. The walk will be at a brisk pace. Meet at 6PM at the corner of Skyway and Neal Road (southeast corner) in Paradise. For more info, call Leader: Lynn, 877-1671; Asst. Leader: Jan, 877-9471.

Saturday, October 9 – Butt Mountain/Carter Meadow Hike (grade 2, class B). A round-trip hike of 9 miles mostly on the PCT to reach the 7900' summit of Butt Mountain. Along the way we'll have tremendous views to the west and south of Lake Almanor. At the top we'll get a 360 degree view, including Lassen Peak. Bring sunscreen, lunch, plenty of water and \$ for gas. About a 90-100 mile round-trip drive. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Tuesday, October 12, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, October 14, 7:30PM - "10 Best Slides." Bring your favorite 10 slides from a recent or long-ago trip you would like to share. Bring your PC for PowerPoint presentation, or a regular slide projector will be available. Conference Room of the Chico Branch of the Butte Co. Library on East 1st and Sherman Avenues. Call 343-9277 for information.

Sunday, October 17 – Outings Leader Training (Level One) Come join us to learn all the skills required to lead Sierra Club outings and to receive certification to become a Sierra Club outings leader. Current members can also attend to get recertification. The one day seminar will cover all the basics of leading an outing, emergency management, using a first aid kit and planning an outing. No cost to Yahi Group, Sierra Club members, \$5 for non-members or non-Yahi Group Sierra Club members. Call leader to reserve space and get more details. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Tuesday, October 19, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Wednesday, October 20 – Conditioning Walk in

Outings and Events

Paradise (grade 2, class A). Join us for a mid-week conditioning walk up the walk/bike path through the center of Paradise. The walk will be approximately 7 miles. We will walk uphill about 3½ miles and then back down. The walk will be at a brisk pace. Meet at 6PM at the corner of Skyway and Neal Road (southeast corner) in Paradise. For more info, call Leader: Lynn, 877-1671; Asst. Leader: Jan, 877-9471.

Saturday, October 23 – Cross Country Ski Trail Maintenance (educational). Free cross country ski lessons for those who work on the McGowan cross country ski area. We get to put in a new cross country ski trail in the Christy Hill, Church Camp Trail area in the McGowan cross country ski trail system. Bring work clothes, gloves, lunch and \$ for drivers. Meet at 8:30AM at the Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

Saturday, October 23 – Thomes Gorge Day Hike (grade 3, class B). *A 10-11 mile hike in the foothills of the Mendocino National Forest. The historic Nomlaki Trail features extensive views of the Sacramento Valley, vernal pools and spectacular geological formations. We will hike through chaparral and foothill pines, then descend 1100' to the deep sparkling pools of Thomes Creek. Bring boots, water, lunch and \$ for drivers. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or in Orland at the Burger King restaurant at 8:30AM. Return to Chico around 6PM. Driving distance about 120 miles round-trip. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491 or michelle95963@yahoo.com; Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.*

Sunday, October 24 – Downtown Chico Historic Walk & Talk (Grade 1, Class A). *Come here about the evolution of the downtown area of Chico from John Bidwell's ranch property to today's modern downtown, Chico State University and the Big Chico Creek greenbelt. Our guide will be long time Chico resident and local historian Dave Nopel. Meet at 9AM at the Children's Playground area near First and Broadway. The walk will last about 3 hours. Leader: Alan, 891-8789; Asst. Leader: Dave, 342-4118.*

Sunday, October 24 – Winter Outings Planning Meeting & Potluck. Everyone welcome to an open meeting of all Yahi Group members to plan our winter outings covering the period from December 3 to March 4. Bring a pot-luck dish to share. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Tuesday, October 26, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Wednesday, October 27 – Lunar Eclipse Hike (grade 1, class A). Join us for an evening hike in

upper Bidwell Park along the North Rim to view the full moon as it goes from partial to total eclipse. Following the hike, we'll stop by the observatory to view the eclipsed moon through the telescopes. Bring jacket, water, supper or snacks, flashlight and binoculars. Meet at Horseshoe Lake. Call leader for time. Rain cancels. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843; Asst. Leaders: Jeanne, 899-9980 and Alan, 891-8789.

November 2004

Tuesday, November 2, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Saturday, November 6 -Deer Creek Day Hike (grade 2, class A). Take an 8-10-mile walk through the reds, yellows and greens of fall as we follow the rush of Deer Creek. We'll begin at the trail just off of Highway 32. Bring water, lunch and carpool \$. Rain cancels. Return at approximately 4 PM; about an 80-mile round-trip drive. Meet at Chico Park and Ride at 9 AM. Leader: Michelle 865-9491 or michelle95963@yahoo.com; Asst. Leader: Lynn, 877-1671.

Saturday, November 6 – Help Maintain Trails in Upper Bidwell Park. Suitable for all ages and a good way to learn more about the trails in the Park. Gloves, tools, training and beverages are provided by the Parks Department. Wear sturdy shoes or boots. For more information, contact Steve Hogue at the Parks Department, 895-4758 or shogue@ci.chico.ca.us

Sunday, November 7 - Autumn in the Orchards Bike Ride. A flat leisurely 15 mile ride through orchards and pastures on quiet country roads to Durham Park for lunch, then return to Chico on the Durham Bike Path. Meet at the Glen Oaks Memorial Park Cemetery office, Hegen Lane and the Midway. Bring water and a lunch (or buy one at the Durham Market). Helmets required. Rain cancels. Leader: Carla, 891-6977; Asst. Leader: Gene, 873-1552.

Tuesday, November 9, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, November 11, 7:30PM - "A Conservationist's View of New Zealand." Marvey Mueller will present a talk and slide show.

Conference Room of the Chico Branch of the Butte Co. Library on East 1st and Sherman Avenues. Call 343-9277 for information.

Saturday, November 13 - Shuttle Hike from the South Side of Bidwell Park to Five Mile (grade 2, class A). Join us as we start from the Green Gate along Hwy 32 and hike one-way, downhill for 6-7 miles along the south side of Bidwell Park to Five Mile below the golf course. Beautiful

views along the way of the Sacramento Valley, Big Chico Creek and Upper Bidwell Park. A short car shuttle will be required. Bring lunch, water, \$ for drivers and sturdy shoes. Rain cancels. Meet at 9AM at the Chico Park & Ride. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or ajmendoza@prodigy.net.

Tuesday, November 16, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk (see beginning of schedule for details).

Thursday, November 18 – 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, more info.

Sierra Club Hike Classifications

Distance Rating

Grade 1: up to 6 miles

Grade 2: 6-10 miles

Grade 3: 10-15 miles

Grade 4: 15-20 miles

Elevation Gain Rating

Class A: up to 1000 feet

Class B: 1000-2000 feet

Class C: 2000-3000 feet

Conservation

Bush Administration Misses the Train

The Bush administration's transit policies are missing the train, and American workers are paying the price. That's the conclusion of a new Sierra Club report, which details how local economic pressures feed a growing demand for rail and other public transit projects and how the administration's bias against transit is out of touch with America's communities and commuters.

The growing popularity of public transportation underscores an important realization that is taking hold in communities across the country: that public transit spurs revitalization and redevelopment and it fights smog and traffic. It does so without feeding sprawl the way haphazard road building does. Regardless of these facts, the Bush administration is trying to shortchange transit and favor highway building in our communities.

Public Transportation Progress Jeopardized

Among hundreds of public transportation projects that could be significantly stalled due to the Bush administration's transportation proposal, the report highlights a dozen public transportation projects. These include:

Florida – Tampa Bay Regional Rail System

Georgia – Atlanta-Athens Commuter Rail

Indiana – Northeast Indianapolis Corridor Rapid Transit

Louisiana – Jefferson, Orleans, and St. Charles Parishes light rail

Maryland – Bethesda to New Carrollton Purple Line

Michigan – Downtown Detroit to Metro Airport Rail Project

New Hampshire/Massachusetts – Lowell-Nashua Commuter Rail Extension

Ohio – Cincinnati Interstate 75 Corridor Light Rail

Oregon – Portland South Corridor Light Rail

Texas – Houston Light Rail Extension

Virginia – Williamsburg-Newport News-Hampton Light Rail

Wisconsin – Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee Metra Extension

While dozens more projects would likely suffer under the Bush Administration proposal, the projects listed above are a representative sample. Delaying or preventing these from getting built would harm commutes, economic revitalization, better jobs and improving our environment.

Need for Greater Transit Investment

The Sierra Club report documents the benefits of transit and the costs of the Bush administration policies. The report argues that the United States deserves a balanced transportation plan that is sensible for both the environment and the economy.

In recent years, demand for public transportation has increased significantly, and new transit ridership has greatly exceeded projections. Since the last time Congress took up a major transportation funding bill in 1998, public transit ridership has increased 21 percent. New transit lines are greatly exceeding projected ridership in Houston, Dallas, Denver, Salt Lake City and elsewhere. New Starts, the federal program that helps promising transit projects get off the ground, has a record backlog of over 200 projects, reflecting the fact that more and more communities are embracing, and clamoring for, public transportation.

The report lays out the economic issues behind this growing support for public transit in America's communities, looking at employee stress levels, the challenges of low wage commuters, redevelopment linked to transit, and jobs directly in the transit sector.

The benefits of transit seem lost on the Bush administration, which proposed, as part of its six-year transportation plan, a radical change to the ratio for federal matching transit funds. Currently, the federal/state funding match for new transportation projects is 80:20, however, the Bush administration would like to dramatically increase the state share to 50 percent for all new transit projects. In doing so, this administration would put hundreds of transit projects across the country in jeopardy, and with them, the jobs and economic benefits those projects bring locally.

And it's not just the Sierra Club that is criticizing the Bush Administration over public transportation. Paul Weyrich, of the conservative Free Congress Foundation, in a recent commentary called the Bush Administration "THE most anti-rail administration in the history of federal involvement in mass transit" and notes "the Bush folks are not pro-transit."

We Can Do Better

We can enjoy easier commutes, more sensible development, jobs in better locations, and a better environment with a stronger commitment to public transportation. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has chosen to reward its friends in the road lobby rather than promote a balanced

California

Wilderness Bills

Is there still more wilderness out there that is waiting to be classified?

The Boxer-Thompson California wilderness bills include a long list of areas in California, including wild rivers and additions to existing wildernesses. These bills may or may not be passed by the current Congress. If not, they will probably be re-introduced at a later time. However, there are other roadless areas that were not included in these bills and some of them remain to be analyzed and evaluated for wilderness quality. I am trying to collect as much of the needed information this summer and fall as possible, in the event appropriate ones can be written into new legislative proposals.

In northeastern California, these areas in BLM territory are an area adjoining Ahjumawe, adjoining the state park; an area along Hat Creek that BLM calls Lava WSA and has recommended for wilderness status; Tule Mountain, not recommended; Observation Peak; McKesick Peak (partly on FS land); Skedaddle; Snowstorm Mountain; and Tunnison Mountain.

On Forest Service land, in the Lassen NF, there is an area adjoining the Ahjumawe proposal; Burney Mountain; Chips Creek (also in Plumas); Humboldt Summit/Cub Creek; additions to the Thousand Lakes WA; and additions to Lassen VNP

In the Modoc NF, there's Big Rattlesnake; Captain Jack (looks like BLM, but BLM says it's not theirs) near Lava Beds NM; Lost River; Medicine Lake Highlands/Mt. Hoffman; North Warner Mountains; additions to South Warner WA.

In the Shasta-Trinity NF, there's Backbone/Sugarloaf; Beegum; Bonanza King; additions to Castle Crags WA; Devil's Rock; Eagle; Mt. Eddy; additions to Mt. Shasta WA; and Panther.

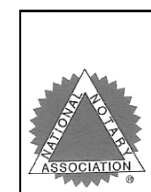
In the Plumas NF there's Adams Peak; part of Chips Creek; additions to Bucks Lake WA; Crystal Peak/Queen Lily; Diamond Mountains; Dixie Mountain; East-West Yuba (Lavezzola Creek drainage); Grizzly Mountain; Horton Ridge; Last Chance; part of McKesick Peak; Mt. Jura; Red Hill; Squaw Peak; Thompson Peak.

Some of these are small; some are less than truly wild. We need to make decisions about our recommendations on these areas.



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Permissible Passports

Is your passport ready? In an age highly concerned with security and people presenting proper credentials at airports, intense scrutiny is placed on passports and passage papers, and permission and legality have become important processes in accessing destinations around the world. Or passage might involve simply permission to cross an adjoining field.

What started this thought was Richard's dog in Blue Oak Meadow. Old-time caretaker Richard lives in the middle of the 80-acre woodland and gives me permission to walk through on the way to the river. He is usually asleep when I wind along the early morning paths, but often his black and white pointer dog is out in front of his hideaway watching me approach. My passport is the dog biscuit in my pocket, and "Blacky," or "Whitey," never barks or leaves its post but wags its tail in expectation, long pink tongue licking the saliva as it intently watches where I toss the offering. A tidbit or a trinket can do wonders in gaining good will!

The permission to walk on private land reminds me of Missouri rural days and the neighboring farmland where the owners were lenient in allowing a boy and his rifle passage up and down No Creek. The farm owners were not so tolerant, however, with city hunters who didn't introduce themselves and broke fences in trespassing, or sometimes shot livestock as if they didn't know a deer from a cow. Such attitudes violate ethical principles to such a degree that a load of bird shot from the old farmer is a possibility. Most farmers were/are considerate of allowing entrance to private land if asked, especially to Sierra Club-type hikers, but some hunters or hikers just don't go to the trouble of introduction thus reducing privileges for everyone. If it says "no trespassing," it's best to find the owner and ask permission. Signs went up on a sector of Table Mountain one time where there was a cave canyon and Indian petroglyphs I wanted to explore, and when I asked the owner he not only granted access but offered me a key to a locked gate where I could get closer. People just like to know.

In my personal-passport boy world 60 years ago in Missouri, I could slip down the ravine from our farm home and enter Floyd's Timber, a dense woodlot preserved from the vast forest once covering the farmlands. I had no real estate claim on that land, yet I could own it for the privileged moments I spent prowling around the oaks and maples, hunting the wily fox squirrels or watching the birds. Over the fence was "Kit's Bottom," land belonging to Kit Collins and leading down to the creek lowlands, but again, I was that local Burress farm boy and was given the passport to go to Fox Den Bluff and look down on the marshes...or I could even go farther afield into the Ellis Forest...or on the Sanders' land belonging to game warden Sid.

On a continent where there was once vast amounts of unattached open space and freedom

where you could travel anywhere without permit or passport, nearly all land is now controlled by someone. Parks-and-BLM-places give the public access, with certain restrictions; in fact, there is a rather lengthy list of rules intended to help preserve the habitat. In former times, when natural resources seemed infinite—a mere 150 years ago!—gold miners could dig, tunnel, and divert water as they pleased, hunters could kill anything they wanted, and the forests were free to cut. Then one dim morning the community wakes up and the hills are stripped of trees, the soil is washed away, the wild animals scarce, and people impoverished. It has happened over and over in many countries including Haiti where the 2004 rainstorms flooded the island largely because ninety percent of the trees had been cut for firewood and there were no forest roots and leaf mulch to retain the water. In many cases, environmental control didn't come soon enough.

We can see a good example of passport privileges in the travels of the 1803-06 Lewis and Clark Expedition across northern America. Part of their passage plan was to offer gifts and trade goods to the Indian tribes [some that had never seen Caucasians] in exchange for good will, food, dogs, roots, and horses. Most of those passport items consisted of beads, fish hooks, needles, mirrors, and cheap trinkets the Indians had never seen before. Out of necessity, on the return trip, an iron kettle was exchanged for four Nez Perce horses, and there were other trades of brass coat buttons for horses. Part of their passport exchange was for medical services, especially with Clark washing sore eyes with a zinc solution.

The passport of Henry Stanley when he was searching for David Livingstone in Africa was largely comprised of beads and red cloth. Crossing different tribal territories required a passage fee, most commonly quantities of cloth, and since a safari was greatly outnumbered by the large native populations, it was vital that the conditions be observed, just as the Lewis and Clark Corps of Discovery, consisting of just 33, was at the mercy of thousands of Indians. It is a commendable trait of the basic goodness of humankind that those initial voyages were successful and not simply destroyed by residents for the tangibles they contained.

There are many examples of "passports of acceptance" in our communities. I remember an enthusiastic photographer in the Bay Area when I worked at Oakland's Rotary Nature Center and the Junior Nature Zoo. Charlie screened our animals for photographic possibilities to extend his status as top nature photographer at camera clubs, and gained access through persistent requests and the passport items he offered. Extra 35mm slides for the Center's collection, candies, trinkets, and jokes were the keys used to gain our cooperation. Perhaps that political strategy is universal.

The passport for hunting and fishing in today's society is the license necessary to legally pursue qualified animals. "To those long in the city pent," the license is the permission to wield a gun or rod and go forth into the wonders of the wild seeking the satisfaction of a successful foray into the out-of-doors as well as the inspiration gained from nature's beauty. Of course, you'll need a driver's license to go any great distance.

In the animal world there is often intense observance of territorial rights, especially in birds that have established a nest base, with few passports accepted. Witness an infuriated blackbird or kingbird who voice their displeasure and swoop upon an intruder however dangerous it might be.

On the other hand, there is great tolerance for non-competitive animals such as waterfowl paying little attention to egrets or kingfishers in their

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

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Where Air?

Although you can debate just about anything, one thing is for sure, life needs air in order to live. At least on planet earth. Without the proper gaseous mixtures, the organisms die.

I thought about the issue of breathing one smoky day in Oroville, which is a town tucked up against the vegetated hills and mountains where the air would seem to be super sufficient. Admittedly, I have become sensitive to some condition that congests my nasal passages, caused by, I suspect, industrial waste and agricultural burning that is whisked eastward across the valley by prevailing winds to the foothill rim.

Pollen excesses, especially from introduced plants, may play a role although I would rather think that the beautiful blossoms displayed by wildflowers and street-side gardens do not contribute to the process of contaminating the nose. Seemingly, pollens, as with the sweet aroma from many flowers, should be more to vitalize us than destroy us, especially to those with an affinity for nature and the out-of-doors.

There is no doubt that the Sacramento Valley has become more and more glazed with noticeable polluted air. Rice field burning is devastating to breathing and visibility although hard-wrought restrictions have finally reduced some of that vicious cycle. It takes years to correct an environmental health issue, as big business is involved, and where you have that condition the wheels of God, indeed, grind very slowly. Look how long it took to stop the hydraulic mining in the 1800's, even though the streams were being endangered and valley farms flooded with debris.

One of the big culprits is alleged to be the exhaust of automobiles, and although steps are being taken to rein runaway car emissions, it is something that probably won't be solved in our lifetimes. Consider that a Southern California city elected to install some severe restrictions on buses and other city vehicles in trying to reduce the awful smog there, only to be blocked by the Supreme Court that said anti-smog rules have to be followed in a carefully calibrated regulatory national scheme and not by individual cities, even though that particular city proposed stricter methods sooner. "Carefully calibrated?" A little city out in the desert ruled the same as L.A.? I wonder if those Supreme Court judges ever visited L.A. when the smog is so thick that your eyes burn? I almost died there in 1957 when I was traveling through. Five hours of horror at the bus stop while I was breathing an

obnoxious something!

That Southern Creep Zone of smog advancement has engulfed San Joaquin Valley, crept out onto the Mojave Desert, slipped into Yosemite Valley, and is spreading up-state into Sacramento Valley. Each city contributes to death-air that has the potential to take our civilization under if it is indeed true the smog is affecting the ozone layer and other delicate balances. Earth needs more visionaries and less strife and war between civilized ideologies.

When I look around my environment and see all the helpless forms of life...the mosses and frogs and squirrels and everything that lives and breathes, I realize that their very existence depends on mankind's management of planet earth—and they can't say a thing or vote on anything.

All the birds will be grounded and all the antelope will be halted when the Last Breath comes, and they can't do a thing about it. The dinosaurs, perhaps, went out in a different scenario of a cataclysmic collision between heavenly bodies that spewed disaster into the atmosphere. Life goes on in a tedious arrangement that can erupt in the flash of an asteroid or fade in the creep of contaminated atmosphere. Either way it should be humbling enough to make us more appreciate of our precious planet and realize we're all in this together.

Our noses were intended not only as a place to take in that vital oxygen, but also to help screen dust and squiggly micro-settlers out to get us, and most pronouncedly, the smell-recorders stand poised to determine if incoming aroma particles are evil-tainted, or filled with good sweet emanations. Indeed, we do it rather poorly compared to a hound, but nevertheless, an odor can open the record door to a million memories of the past, helping one to instantly connect a certain perfume with a long lost love. This smog equation just wasn't in the original script.

A mind-jogger aroma might be from a little homestead along the creek where that dank coolness would whiff away from the bottomlands and diffuse in our midst. You may encounter that certain smell elsewhere, and a similar situation can make you think of some home spot. Maybe it's the cozy scent of sun-warmed pine needles along a mountain stream in the heat of day. The dust of the cornfield. The scent of fresh-caught catfish. The acrid stink of mink or skunk. The musky smell of a heavy coon pelt. Everything has its scent and normally keen noses can detect it. But our senses have been blunted by all those excess pollutants in the air until our capacities have been muted.

Just as it is becoming difficult to find a place on earth free of the sounds of civilization, foul smokes can encompass you even in isolated interior domains where industries set up business to be free of city rules. Some of that smoke drifts into Grand Canyon until you wonder just what clear sky looks like anymore. You can meet a factory in the remote regions of Alaska, far up an isolated river where some outsourcing company reaps profits with little forethought about what the intrusion would mean to native populations or the wildlife. Anything to make a buck and keep the economy going.

Call to Population Activists

Congress is on recess, but our work never stops! Earlier this month, President Bush announced that he would not permit the U.S. to support the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Working in over 140 countries to ensure that families have access to voluntary family planning, economic opportunities and education, UNFPA gives men and women choices about the size and spacing of their families, ultimately easing the strains population growth places on the environment. By yanking the \$34 million for the third consecutive year, President Bush has turned his back on a program that saves the lives of women and children, improves the living conditions of families around the world and ultimately protects the environment.

We need to stand up for family planning! Now is the time for our decision-makers to hear from us about why we support family planning!

Every year, Congress determines the amount of money to be set aside for federally funded programs through what is commonly called the "appropriations process." The amount of money for international family planning is determined during this process. Last year, the amount allocated for family planning was only \$432 million. The United States promised more than double this amount at the 1994 conference on **Population and Development** <http://www.sierraclub.org/population/conference/>. It's time the U.S. increased its support and lived up to its promises!

The FY2005 Appropriations bill currently lies in the hands of the U.S. Senate. During this summer recess, contact your Senator in his or her home office and request an increase in family planning funding. This funding not only improves the lives of women and families around the world, but also helps to ensure a better environmental future.

Take Action! Contact your U.S. Senators.

Barbara Boxer

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Conservation

Caution

Weary from winding down the twisting road in the Feather River Canyon, we stopped at the Belden rest stop for a refresher. A large sign that was attached to a tree overlooking the Yellow Creek tributary advised "Caution!" The New Zealand Mud Snails were on the rampage! The size of a grain of sand to one eighth inch, the brownish invaders can attain a population of one million per square yard, the sign said. One snail can produce 40 million in a year and change habitats. Fishermen are advised to freeze their waders before fishing the next day and inspect all aquatic gear to remove snails.

Trying to control the spread of exotic animals around the world has become a major challenge, since some foreign entities have already produced disasters for native species and the environment, making wildlife managers almost paranoid about the imagined consequences of other introductions. Maybe some things are uncontrollable. Keeping out a sand-sized snail or tiny seeds that can fall along the roadsides is a difficult chore in a time when global travel is easy.

I was thinking of another aquatic dilemma up at the headwaters of the Feather River. The northern pike have established a water-hold on Lake Davis, and fishery specialists are worried that the predaceous fish will infiltrate the river system and play havoc with bass and salmon—to the point that millions of dollars have been spent on eradication. Poison, dynamite, and electrodes have not eliminated what is considered a desirable game fish in Minnesota.

The fear that man-eating piranhas might be introduced into Californian water has been another worry, not to mention snapping turtles, bullfrogs, and alligators. A few years ago, an alligator was reportedly seen in Lafayette Reservoir, and the panic-stricken community conducted a massive search, culminating with "an alligator festival," complete with alligator costumes and the usual commercialism of a festival. What was thought to be a reptilian alligator turned out to be another obnoxious introduction—the eastern America water snake that can become six feet long and eat everything from your string of fish to baby waterfowl!

Most introduced species initially seem to thrive in virgin soil; at least, star thistles went crazy in California, contaminating fields with

prickly stickers no one wants to walk through. Spiny species seem to thrive more abundantly in new locations, such as several types of thistle and foreign grasses that are prone to infest your clothing with clinging seeds. European oats have covered California with textured blankets of brown stems, and roadside foreign weeds compose as much as 50 percent of the flora with tough drought-resistant characteristics.

California Native Plant Societies have been alerted to the aggressive growth habits of a number of exotics, including Canary Island Broom, and "broom parties" have become the norm for the energetic segment of the society, but like Himalayan Blackberry, you can rip it out of the soil, but in a year it is usually on the move again. Sometimes it is just not feasible to employ vast amounts of man-power to a hopeless task unless it makes you feel good or such work is critical to the survival of some rare native species. You could point at the proposed "forest thinning" efforts in the fire control movement as an example of an incredibly overwhelming chore with little gained other than fattening the coffers of the lumbering industry. The underlying brush zone is more flammable and often left behind when trees are removed.

Some introductions have been on purpose, and some have been desirable, such as the importation of cattle and horses for mankind's uses. Formerly only buffalo were the major grazers in the Northwest, but cattle replaced them on the ranges, and the buffalo balance has been up-staged in the wake of excessive livestock. Many plant species have been grazed right out of existence, along with the cutting of the trees, until many American hills have been denuded and native species put on the brink.

The dispersal of foreign plants is more easily achieved since the inactive, innocent-looking seed is easily carried abroad. There is a long list of intermingled species from other lands, some not particularly invasive, although the Tree of Heaven from China has become an eradication obsession for some park departments, including the Feather River Parkway where over a month was spent last year by crews chopping it off the levees. The plant is capable of remaining green all summer

and spreading rapidly, and it is back this year even though the woodcuts were poisoned.

In Missouri, the Zebra clam has invaded the freshwater streams and is on the "caution" list. Multiflora Rose that was introduced as wildlife cover for fence rows flourished and now is frowned upon as an invasive. On the other hand, the Missouri Conservation Department has made great strides in reintroducing deer, turkey, beaver, and otter, animals that had been depleted when I was a boy in the 1940's. They have also established "protected wood lots" in conjunction with farmers as a restorative project, increasing habitat for plants and animals.

The introduction of ring-necked pheasants, chukker partridge, opossums, striped bass, and turkey has been viewed as desirable in California. But Norway rats, English sparrows, starlings, and rock doves are generally on the thumbs-down side. Some things we have to learn to live with, but "caution," indeed, is the word when controllable life forms are introduced. We have the lessons of rabbits in Australia and mongoose in Trinidad to remind us that life is on a delicate balance on a self-contained planet whirling through the Universe.

"...There are those who would prefer to stop all introductions of exotic creatures into the wilds of America. It is far too late for this. Others, mostly those who know little about the problem, favor a completely open-door policy toward exotics, with survival of the fittest..."
Raymond Dasmann

"It is important to recognize that the best plan in the world, the most detailed zoning

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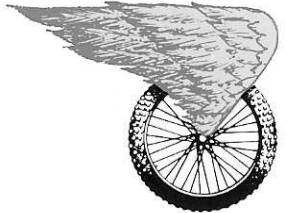
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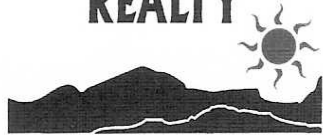
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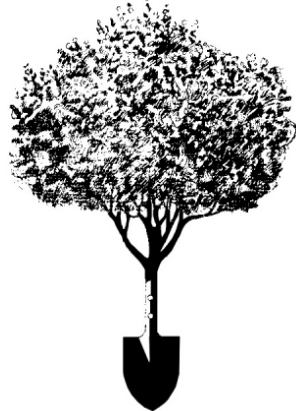
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