



# Yahi Group



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

News  Articles  Programs  Hikes and Outings  Meetings  Events

### Grizzly Creek Ranch and the Sierra Health Foundation

by Joseph A. Abbott

There's a new player in Plumas County land development. The Sierra Health Foundation, a California non-profit corporation, entered the Plumas property acquisition and development game when it purchased land and options along Grizzly Creek canyon in the eastern part of the county. The Foundation's holdings amount to roughly 1,500 acres. It remains to be seen if this is a trend in land use sandwiched somewhere between commercial developers and land trusts. But what exists now, how does it function, and what's going to happen?

Grizzly Creek Ranch is located equidistant between Portola and Beckwourth at the intersection of State Route (SR) 70 and County Road 112. The 470-acre camp, part of the former Ramelli ranch, lies in a high mountain valley surrounded by Plumas National Forest and a State Game Refuge. Lake Davis feeds Grizzly Creek, which passes through the ranch's pasture land and empties into the nearby Feather River. It's typical western-style country right out of the movies.

Originally agricultural grazing lands, Grizzly Creek Ranch consists of two parcels: the 470-acre portion was purchased outright, and 1,000 acres are leased with an option to purchase. In 1999, when the Reno developer Devco Properties, Inc., owned the 470-acre parcel, the property was destined for over 600 structures including pseudo-western style buildings, RV hookups, cabins, and an equestrian center with stables, hay barn, arena, fenced pens and horse grazing. Devco also planned a commercial area with paved roads. It was intensive, in-your-face use of the acreage.

Sierra Health Foundation purchased Devco's property for \$2.2 million and struck out in a less environmentally intrusive direction. It seemed the perfect match for a people-oriented urban organization seeking a pastoral location.

Sierra Health Foundation is Sacramento's largest philanthropy. The Foundation was established in 1984 and is IRS classified as a charitable trust (501 3c). It was formed when the medical insurance company Foundation Health Plan (now HealthNet of California) converted from a non-profit to a for-profit corporation. Under California law, the



*Grizzly Creek Ranch meadow and the Carmichael hills are to the left of*

proceeds from that sale had to benefit the public. That was accomplished by creating the Foundation as a self-sustaining perpetual endowment. The Foundation now holds about \$134 million in securities, cash and land. There is no further interaction between HealthNet and the Foundation.

Initially, the Foundation served only greater Sacramento, but in 1987 it expanded to include northeastern California, reasoning it wanted to concentrate resources in rural counties which had little philanthropic support. Their strategy is based on the idea that the Interstate Highway System, namely I-5 and I-80, funnels development and people to and from a Sacramento core, the Foundation's geographic base. By law, the Foundation must disperse 5% of its assets each year. In 2002, that amounted to \$1.8 million in support of health and health-related activities in Northern California.

From 1995 to the present, the Quincy-based California Partnership for Healthy Children, the Plumas County (Dental) Clinic, the Eastern Plumas District Hospital, and the Plumas County Health Department, among others in Plumas, all received substantial Foundation support. In 2003, the Beckwourth Community Services District received a \$40,000 Foundation grant that enabled purchase of an

upgraded fire truck. The Foundation, in all its permutations, is a major operation, and its presence in Plumas is a huge asset.

According to Len McCandliss, Grizzly Creek Ranch and Sierra Health Foundation CEO, the idea for the Ranch was the outgrowth of Sierra Health Foundation's Board of Directors' desire to "develop hard assets with control over the use of a scenic piece of real estate that allowed flexibility in long-term decision making." This signaled a departure from the Foundation's focus of awarding grants to academics, public health units, and health providers.

In 2001, the property was purchased from Devco. The Foundation also obtained a lease and an agreement for future purchase of the adjoining 1,000 acres to the west, expanding its holdings to nearly 1,500 acres. This mostly highland country, part of the Carmichael ranch, is Agricultural Preserve under Williamson Act contract. The leased land is for exclusive use of the Grizzly Creek Ranch.

Grizzly Creek Ranch was built for "special-needs" children who suffer medical, physical, developmental or behavioral challenges, or who are "at risk" due to social and/or economic reasons. No cost was spared to make the Ranch upscale. The \$11.3 million, architect-designed, ranch-type children's camp was completed in May of 2003. The developed portion lies mostly within the treeline, so Ranch structures are secluded from main roads and its large open meadowland is not impacted. The only unsightly views are of sewage settling ponds along busy SR 70.

The Ranch's structures resemble more an expensive vacation lodge and less an old-fashioned kids' summer camp of tents and

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## The Yahi Group: Who We Are and The Good Things We Do

Financially secure and 1500 members strong, the Yahi Group is a powerful organization in the North State. We provide environmental education and activism, promote respect for and protection of the environment, and offer a wide variety of outings that encourage a healthy lifestyle and love of nature.

Deep gratitude goes to the wonderful work of every past and present Executive Committee member, elected official, outings leader, contributing member and enthusiastic participant who has made the Yahi Group what it is today.

Some of our most influential current members include:

**Kevin Birkes** - outgoing and four years

running Group Chair who kept abreast of local issues and will continue doing that as the Yahi Group's representative at the Motherlode Chapter meetings.

Yahi Group newsletter editors **Susan Sears** and **Louise Casey**, whose informative publication reaches the hands of 3,000 people plus all those who read it online.

Frequent newsletter contributors **Joseph Abbott**, hard-hitting investigative journalist, and **Rex Burress**, with his interesting, informative and thought-provoking articles regarding environmental issues.

**Gerda Lydon** who has, for the past seven years, provided entertaining and educational monthly programs which are open to the public.

**Susan Mason** and **Steve Green** with their tireless efforts to preserve the health and welfare of Chico's beloved Bidwell Park.

**Betty Volker**, champion fundraiser, who has been instrumental in keeping the club financially healthy (along with longtime treasurer **Joanne Gerson**) and for her continued efforts to save Bidwell Ranch from development and get it annexed to Bidwell Park.

**Jim Brobeck** and national award-winning **Trish Puterbaugh**, the driving force behind the Lassen Forest Preservation Group which monitors logging in our area.

**Alan Mendoza**, long-time active member and very knowledgeable outings chair who, along with his dedicated outings leaders, offers the public a wide range of activities designed to promote a healthy lifestyle and love for the environment.

Outings leaders and conservationists **Stephen Sayre** and **John Hollister**, who have dedicated themselves to preserving the old growth forests and who are working to increase public awareness of proposed wilderness areas.

Outings leader **Charles Hooks** who has, for the past year, offered outings designed for young adults. Getting more young people involved in the Sierra Club is a priority for the Yahi Group.

If you would like to learn more about the Yahi Group, have ideas to improve the club or

### 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) or Goodie Sweatt (530-894-3988). 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.

## Yahi Group of the Sierra Club

### Elected Officials

#### Co-Chair

Grace Marvin: 530-893-1994

GMRADM@aol.com

#### Co-Chair

John Hollister: 530-879-9196

sierralives@aol.com

#### Secretary

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#### Treasurer

Joanne Gerson: 530-893-2154

joanne.gerson@att.net

#### Fifth Member

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#### Newsletter Publication Editor

# The Yahi Group Needs You

The Yahi Group needs all good members, with a little time on their hands, to help us meet the club's purposes! Please consider helping your club out in at least one area described below. Then, let us know of your interest by contacting your new Co-Chair by e-mail or phone: [GMRADM@aol.com](mailto:GMRADM@aol.com) or (503) 893-1994. Most importantly,

**1-We need people for the CONSERVATION and for the NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEES.** I will provide some detail about the Conservation Committee, below, since conservation action is what the Executive Committee believes needs to be more strongly emphasized. We would like to see at least as much effort made in conservation as is made in our excellent outings program.

**2- We also need someone who will HELP UPDATE OUR WEB PAGE** and explain to committee members how they, too, can help. That person would need to seek out information from the various committees, and consider how information from Sierra Club and other environmental websites could help us polish our website. Writing brief statements about upcoming programs and actions Sierra Club members could take to pursue current conservation issues, locally, would be especially valuable.

**3- Similarly, we would like someone to help WRITE ARTICLES FOR OUR NEWSLETTER** about burning conservation issues, controversies of interest to our members, and ordinary news as well!

**4- It would be invaluable to find someone who will ASSIST THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIR BY PROVIDING PERSONAL FOLLOW-UP** to the expressed interest of new members. For example, there are new members who have said that they want to help out or else just know about leading outings. The club needs to be sure that the relevant committee chairs contact these individuals.

**5-We always welcome people on OTHER COMMITTEES,** too, and that includes new outings leaders. We certainly would welcome someone who could help Gerda Lydon with Program activities. In particular, we would like someone to help find exciting speakers, appealing to young and old, and to warmly greet newcomers to our meetings, letting them know about Sierra Club activities.

**6-In addition, we need people who would like to serve on Chapter Committees.** We need people who have the time and interest to be liaisons to the Mother Lode Chapter and can attend meetings in Sacramento a few times each year.

## More About the Conservation Committee

The Yahi Group Executive Committee has decided to become more active with regard to local conservation issues, even while we continue to treasure the Club's terrific efforts with outings. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have outings leaders give little talks, or at least handouts, about conservation issues relevant to their hikes, bike-rides, walks, camping trips, etc.? The outings are the major form of outreach undertaken by the

Yahi group. This, therefore, is one reason to have a Conservation Committee, i.e., to compile information relevant to each specific outing, complemented with statements about the purposes of the Sierra Club and what our local club is doing for fun and for conservation! But we have other tasks in mind as well.

The following points about conservation chairs from the Sierra Club's Clubhouse website helps to explain what else we hope Conservation Committee members would be willing to do:

- Identify conservation issues needing attention and worthy of chapter consideration.
- Challenge and encourage members to use their talents and skills to the maximum.
- Train and assign volunteers to carry out conservation activities. - Follow up assignments to be sure they are carried out.
- Thank volunteers and provide other rewards (social activities, public recognition) to ensure repeat performances.
- Prevent duplication of work by linking key individuals with one another.

Specifics about Sierra Club conservation policies can be located at <http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/>. Please note that local policies must be consistent with national policies of the Sierra Club.

As a new Co-Chair of the Yahi Group, I have learned about how active some members have been on forest issues, and the Ex.Comm members applaud their efforts. But I have also learned that the Yahi Group needs to be responsive to a variety of conservation concerns, sometimes on very short notice. Some local examples include Bidwell Ranch, the Humboldt Burn Dump, the Big Box Ordinance and plans for development in vernal pool areas. While the new Conservation Chair and Committee may choose to focus on only a few projects each year, we must make the Sierra Club's presence known concerning a variety of housing and business developments, air and water pollution problems, and many different kinds of urban and rural ecological concerns. Of course, the amount of coverage depends on the degree of involvement of the members.

If we get enough volunteers for this committee, we might even consider forming an Environmental Education Committee.

It would be wonderful to have a Conservation Committee who could help explain policies to Sierra Club members who want to know policies but do not have access to the Internet. Moreover, people who live distant from Chico may want to consider becoming active committee members. They could join the Chico committee at least via the web or a phone call! There are many conservation issues far from Chico or Butte County, where the Club needs local people to become active and to share with the Yahi Group what they are doing.

## Yahi Group Garden Tour: May 15, 2004

On Saturday, May 15, from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., the second annual garden tour will present several local gardens for viewing to raise money for the Yahi Group. Tickets will be \$8, available from members and at local nurseries.

Last year's tour raised \$1300, which is the approximate amount needed for printing two issues of this newsletter. The Executive Committee has considered suspending publication of the newsletter if funds are not available, so this is very important.

How can you help? There are a number of jobs, many not requiring you to leave your home.

Does anyone have "Print Shop" or another sign/banner making program?

We will need cookie bakers, someone to buy cups, plants and napkins, servers of refreshments, loan of tables and chairs, someone to design the booklet (which will double as a ticket) describing the gardens, hosts/hostesses for each garden, plants and craft items such as painted rocks for sale, media person, photographer, errand runner.

If we all do a little bit, it will be a tremendous success. Tell your friends and neighbors what fun it is. Invite them to join you in spending a nice warm spring day seeing

## Chat & Chew:

### May 16, 12: 30-3 PM

Do you want to learn about local environmental projects? Come Chat and Chew in Joanne Gerson's lovely backyard at 977 Palmetto Avenue, Chico.

The Yahi Group would like you and your friends interested in environmental issues to come break bread together on Sunday, May 16, 2004. We are planning to invite leaders from such groups as the Sacramento Preservation Trust, the California Wild Heritage Campaign, Butte Environmental Council, Friends of Bidwell Park, the Sierra Club's own forestry and Bidwell Ranch projects, and the Audubon Society. Each of us can choose a table representing one group's pet projects, chew and chat with others at the table who can inform us about the goals and activities associated with each project, and note a few points about that project, so we can share what we learned with others.

The Yahi Group will provide bread, salad, fruit, nuts, and beverages. Please feel free to bring your own brown bag lunch, if you like!

Please call or e-mail me if you plan to attend, so that I can get a stomach and chair count! Thanks, Grace Marvin (893-1994; [GMRADM@aol.com](mailto:GMRADM@aol.com)).

# Getting Involved

## Lower Bidwell Park Weed Walk

*What is a weed? What does it mean to be "native"? Can a native species ever be a weed? Are all weeds plants? Are native plants "good" and weeds "bad"? How do weed and native species both depend on us? And finally, what are those enthusiastic people doing in the shrubbery so early on weekend mornings?*

*Let's walk together and try to answer these questions. We will be sure to learn something more about our native flora, our dynamic weed assemblages and our relationships with both. This walk will take place in Lower Bidwell Park, where one of California's most rare and diverse biological communities interfaces with the wonderfully landscaped gardens of our urban oasis.*

*Here, we will see examples of how weedy and native species relate to their habitat and how species and habitats define biological communities. Of course, we will become more familiar with some of the specific weeds, their "strategies" and the native elements that they threaten. We will also talk about, and hopefully meet, one or several of our local heroes: actual Weed-Warriors who've devoted their time to particular Bidwell Park battles, including campaigns against Spanish Broom, English Ivy, Himalayan Blackberry, Periwinkle, Bladder Senna,*

## Volunteer Opportunities at the Feather River Ranger District of

U.S. Forest Service wildlife biologists in Oroville are asking for volunteer assistance for surveys and monitoring for species such as songbirds, raptors and amphibians. Some of the volunteer positions available are described below:

**Breeding Bird Survey Route - a team of two volunteers is needed.** One volunteer must be able to identify Sierra birds by song and call, and the other volunteer will record data. This volunteer position requires a two-day commitment of time in the latter part of June (one day to scout the route and one day to conduct the survey). This scenic route is located in the beautiful Bucks Lake/Meadow Valley area. The route encompasses 25 miles and there are stops every 1/2 mile.

**Willow Flycatcher Survey - volunteers may work alone or in teams of two.** Surveys are conducted in June and July following a formal protocol developed for this species. Willow flycatcher vocalization tape, tape-player, and megaphone will be provided. Strenuous hiking in wet and/or steep areas with uneven footing may be required.

**Monitoring of Bald Eagle Territories - volunteers may work alone or in teams.** Volunteers are needed to observe and record breeding behavior of bald eagles at four sites. This monitoring work is done once a month for two to four hours from February through July.

**Monitoring of Peregrine Falcon Territory - volunteers may work alone or in a team of two.** A volunteer or team is desired to observe and record breeding behavior of a peregrine falcon pair at an eyrie within the Middle Fork Feather River area. Monitoring is conducted in June and July. (The volunteer should **not** be afraid of heights.)

**Conduct Surveys and Update Bird Checklists - volunteers may work alone or in teams.** Four seasonal checks (spring, summer, fall, and winter) of the following areas: Feather Falls Trail, Little Grass Valley Reservoir Recreation Area, Bucks Lake (Mt. Hough District), and Gold Lakes Basin (Beckworth District) are needed in order to update existing bird (wildlife) checklists.

**Aspen-songbird Species Associations - volunteers may work alone or in teams.** At least one person on each team must be able to identify Sierra birds by song and call to participate in this study of songbird use of aspen stands. Strenuous hiking in wet and/or steep areas with uneven footing may be required.

**Amphibian Survey - volunteers may work alone or in teams of two.** Surveys are conducted in April through July following a formal protocol developed for these species. Strenuous hiking in wet and/or steep areas with uneven footing may be required.

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

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Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.



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# YAH! Group Spring 2004 Outings and Events

## Spring 2004 Program Meetings

By Gerda Lydon

The Yahi Group of the Sierra Club will present the following programs in March, April, and May.

- **March 11, 7:30 PM** - Dr. Mark Stemen, Dept. of Geography & Planning, CSUC will talk about "Environmental Literacy and the Making of a new University" (building 'green' on campus)
- **April 8, 7:30 PM** - Ron Sanford, famous local wildlife photographer, will present a slideshow of "Whales, Bears, Eagles, & Icebergs in Alaska."
- **May 13, 6:30 PM** - Rex Burress, retired Naturalist, Photographer, and Artist will present a slideshow titled "Exploring the Feather River Canyon"

Program meetings are held the 2nd Thursday of the month in the Conference Room of the Chico

## Sierra Club Hike Classifications

### Distance Rating

Grade 1: up to 6 miles

Grade 2: 6-10 miles

Grade 3: 10-15 miles

### Elevation Gain Rating

Class A: up to 1000 feet

Class B: 1000-2000 feet

## 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.

**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/](http://www.motherlode.sierraclub.org/yahi/) or call Skip Augur at 894-1366 to obtain a correction.

**Suggestions and Comments welcome:** Any comments on the outings or suggestions for future ones are always welcome. Mail to Alan Mendoza; 6 Patches Drive, Chico, CA 95928 or e-mail [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net).

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# Spring 2004

## Yahi Group Outings

**On-Going Monday Power Walks** (grade 2, class A). Meet at Chico Park & Ride each Monday evening at 6:30PM for a 1 ½ hour power walk along the creek. Wear tennies/walking shoes and bring water and a flashlight. Leader: John, 879-9196.

**On-Going Tuesday Power Walks** (grade 2, class A). Meet at Chico Park & Ride each Tuesday evening at 6:30PM for a 1 ½ hour brisk, creekside walk just one minute from the parking lot! Wear power tennis/walking shoes and carry water and a flashlight. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

### February 2004

**Saturday, February 28 – Cross-Country Ski Lessons.** This is for beginners and intermediates who want to improve their overall ski techniques and fitness. There is a fee of \$10 per lesson, this is a fund-raiser for general Yahi Group expenses. Bring ski gear, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting place, time and more information. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

### March 2004

**Monday, March 1, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

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

**Saturday, March 6 – Cross Country Ski** (grade 2, class B). We'll go skiing where the snow is good. This is for people who have their own equipment. Bring skis, boots, gloves, lunch, water, appropriate clothing and \$ for drivers. Call leader for meeting time and place. Leader: Larry, 342-7998.

**Saturday, March 6 – Hog Lake Hike** (grade 2, class A). A pretty, early spring walk on BLM land just east of Red Bluff in the proposed Sacramento River Wilderness Conservation Area. We'll hike a total of 5-6 miles from the lake to the Sacramento River and back, stroll through a wide variety of wildflowers, see the mouth of Paynes Creek and enjoy beautiful views of the surrounding tablelands and mountains. Meet at 9AM at the Chico Park & Ride. About a 100-mile round-trip drive. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net).

**Saturday, March 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](mailto:shogue@ci.chico.ca.us)

**Monday, March 8, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

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

**Thursday, March 11, 7:30 PM - Environmental Literacy and the Making of a New University** presented by Dr. Mark Stemen, Dept. of Geography & Planning, CSUC. Conference Room of the Chico Branch of the Butte Co. Library on East 1st and Sherman Avenues. Call 343-9277 for information.

**Saturday, March 13 – Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve Hike** (grade 2, class A). Come see the new Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve. A guided tour of 5-6 miles featuring a walk along the creek, canyon terrain and spring wildflowers. Bring lunch, water, binoculars and camera and sturdy footwear. Space limited. Call leader to sign up and get meeting place and time. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

**Saturday, March 13 – Day Paddle.** Join us for a leisurely Class 1, flat-water paddle on the north forebay in Oroville. Beaver, osprey, white-tailed kite and kingfishers are some of the exciting wildlife we'll see. A 6-mile paddle with a stop for lunch. Bring kayak/canoe, PFD's, water, lunch, hat, sunscreen, binoculars, bird book and \$2 for entrance fee. Limited to 20 paddlers. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Call to sign-up and get more information. Leader: Dave: 533-2357.

**Monday, March 15, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

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

**Saturday, March 20 – Dye Creek Preserve Hike** (grade 2, class B). Enjoy a moderately strenuous day hike into the spectacular Dye Creek Preserve Canyon managed by the Nature Conservancy. Dye Creek is a large acreage foothill terrain featuring a variety of wildlife, precipitous cliffs, a Native American village site, cave and Dye Creek itself. Bring boots, lunch and water. Rain does not cancel. Cost: \$2 per person, plus carpool \$. Approx. 80-mile round-trip drive. Meet at 8 AM at Chico Park & Ride. Leader: John, 879-9196.

**Saturday, March 20 – Class 1 Day Paddle** The diversion pool below Lake Oroville's spillway is a secluded and leisurely flat water paddle. It's a 7-mile paddle with a stop for lunch. Bring kayak/canoe, PFD's, water, lunch, hat, sunscreen, binoculars and bird book. Limited to 16 paddlers. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8:30AM. Call to sign-up and get more information. Leader: Dave: 533-2357.

**Monday, March 22, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Tuesday, March 23, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Thursday, March 25, - Environmental Banquet** Sponsored by Butte Environmental Council. Cosponsored by the Sierra Club and other environmental organizations. Sierra

Nevada Brewery from 6- 9:30PM. Tickets bought in advance at BEC (116 W. 2nd St., #3; Phone: 891-6424) are \$25. Speaker: Bill Jennings, Head of Delta Keeper, speaking about WATER QUALITY IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

**Friday, March 26 – Dinner & Walk** (grade 1, class A). Come enjoy good food and good company. We will take a walk then dine at a local restaurant. Call leader for meeting time, place and more information. Leader: Carol: 343-9241.

**Saturday March 27 – Table Mountain Wildflower Walk** (grade 2, class A). Come see the beautiful spring wildflowers and waterfalls on this 6-mile hike that just may take you to places you haven't seen on Table Mountain. Bring binoculars for bird watching, plant guide, lunch, water and sturdy footwear. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Return time around 5PM. Leader: Charles, 895-3045: Asst. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980.

**Sunday, March 28 – Peace Valley, Sutter Buttes Dayhike** (grade 2, class A). Come explore California's newly acquired Peace Valley, remotely sequestered behind the hilly ramparts of the north side of the Sutter Buttes. We should see some nice wildflowers, Indian artifacts and the remains of pioneer settlements more than 100 years old. An approximately 6-mile hike with uneven ground that may be wet, so wear sturdy boots. Dress in layers and bring binoculars, field guides, camera, lunch, water and carpool \$. Entrance fee: \$2 per person. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Limited to 20 participants. Return time around 4:30PM. Call leader to reserve space. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843.

**Sunday, March 28 – Almond Blossom Bike Ride** (grade 2, class A). A flat, leisurely 15-mile ride through orchards and pastures on quiet country roads to Durham Park for lunch and return on the Durham Bike Path. We'll stop often to admire spring flowers and smell fantastic tree blossoms. Meet at 10:00AM at the Glen Oaks Memorial Park Cemetery Office, Hegan Lane and the Midway. Bring water and a lunch (or buy one at the Durham Market). Rain cancels. Leader: Carla, 891-6977, Asst. Leader: Gene.

**Monday, March 29, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

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

### April 2004

**Saturday, April 3, 1PM – Bidwell Ranch Wildflower Hike** (grade 1, class A). Tidy tips, meadowfoam and blue dicks should all be out to

# Outings and Events

greet those who wish to experience the natural beauty of the open field next to Upper Bidwell Park (AKA Bidwell Ranch). A docent-led flower walk on this vernal pool and grassland will start at 1PM. Meet at the east end of the Wildwood parking lot, next to the diversion channel. Wear sturdy boots as the grassland is usually wet. The walk is a joint effort of the Butte Environmental Council, Stop Bidwell Ranch and the Yahi Group Sierra Club. Leader: Betty, 345-7205.

**Saturday & Sunday, April 3-4 – Antelope Creek Backpack** (grade 1, class A). We'll hike the beautiful wildflower-strewn trail from High Trestle down to the old settler's camp near McClure Place and Antelope Creek and find a dry place to camp, and return by the same route the next day. This is an easy backpack of about 4 miles round-trip in part of the Wilderness Study Area proposed addition to the Ishi Wilderness. Individual commissary. Heavy rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9 AM (for a 120-mile round-trip drive), or at Paynes Creek store about 10:30AM. Rain cancels. Call leader in advance to sign-up. Leader: Alan, 891-8789 or [ajmendoza@prodigy.net](mailto:ajmendoza@prodigy.net).

**Saturday, April 3 – 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](mailto:shogue@ci.chico.ca.us)

**Sunday, April 4 – Upper Bidwell Dog & Dog Lovers Hike** (grade 1, class A). Bring your dog along for a hike in Upper Bidwell Park. Exact route to be determined by trail conditions and stamina of the participating dogs. Bring leash, water for yourself and your dog, snacks and dog treats. Space limited to 6 obedient, people-friendly and dog-friendly dogs. Dogs must be up to date with immunizations. Dog-lovers without dogs are also welcome to join in the fun. Meet at Horseshoe Lake parking lot in Upper Bidwell Park at 1:30PM. Rain cancels. If hiking with a dog, call leader for reservations. Leader: Peggy, 343-9843. Asst. Leader: Bill, 527-8203.

**Monday, April 5, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

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

**Thursday, April 8, 7:30 PM - Whales, Bears, Eagles, & Icebergs in Alaska,** talk and slideshow presented by Ron Sanford, famous local wildlife photographer. Conference Room of the Chico Branch of the Butte Co. Library on East 1st and Sherman Avenues. Call 343-9277 for information.

**Saturday, April 10 – Table Mountain Wildflower Hike** (grade 1, class A). Lazily wander among the lupine, poppies and goldfields. This trip is more about looking down than doing miles. There will be more than enough flowers for each of us. We may be able to go on a privately-owned parcel, all by ourselves. The ground is uneven so boots are recommended. Rain cancels. Meet at

Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Return time about 3-4PM. Leader: John, 879-9196.

**Monday, April 12, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Tuesday, April 13, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Saturday, April 17 – Youngbloods Table Mountain Hike** (ages 18-35, grade 2, class A). Explore the many hidden niches of Table Mountain and enjoy the on-going wildflower show. Bring binoculars for watching birds, lunch, water and sturdy boots. Rain cancels. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 9AM. Return time around 4-5PM. Leader: Charlie, 895-3045.

**Saturday, April 17 – Feather Falls Hike** (grade 2, class B). Come enjoy the 6<sup>th</sup> highest waterfall in the U.S. and the beautifully flowered and shaded, 8-9 mile round trip trail to it. We'll take the lower trail to the overlook, then go above the falls for lunch by the creek and return via the upper trail. Please wear boots or sturdy hiking shoes and bring lunch, water and carpool \$\$\$. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM or at the NW corner of the Oroville Wal-Mart parking lot at 8:35AM. Leader: John, 879-9196.

**Saturday-Sunday, April 17-18 – Lake Paddle & Camping** (grade 1, class A). Lake Oroville boat-in campsites are a treat for paddling, fishing, swimming and exploring. Join us on a 2-mile paddle to Goat Ranch campsites on the North Fork of the Feather River. Enjoy two days of exploring, hiking, boating, crystal hunting and star gazing. There will be a motorized shuttle for camping gear. Bring canoe/kayak, PFD's, tent, sleeping bag, water, food, hat and sunscreen. Individual commissary. Limited to 16 paddlers. Call for reservations and more information. Leader: Dave, 533-2357.

**Monday, April 19, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Tuesday, April 20, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Saturday, April 24 – Independence Trail, Nevada City Dayhike.** (grade 2, class A). Look up at the beautiful canopy, see the sun's rays filtering through the lush, green boughs. Take a moment to examine a fragile, little fern. Listen to a song bird, the thundering roar of a spectacular waterfall, the peaceful sound of a bubbling stream. This is the Independence Trail in spring. A 9-mile fairly flat, lovely hike over what used to be flumes. Dress in layers, and wear tennis shoes or boots. Bring lunch, water, carpool \$ (175-mile round trip drive). Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Rain cancels. Optional: dinner in historic Nevada City. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Charlie, 895-3045.

**Monday, April 26, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Tuesday, April 27, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Saturday, May 1 - Hike the Dan Beebe Trail in Oroville** (Grade 2, Class A). We will see great valley views, Table Mountain, Feather River Canyon and Oroville Dam. As we hike this trail we will learn history of the dam and the surrounding areas. The trail is 8.5 miles long and climbs Sycamore hill, which is 700 ft. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8 AM and at the trailhead in Oroville at 8:45 AM, Canyon Dr. and Oro Dam Blvd. Please bring plenty of water, lunch, sturdy shoes. Return time approx. 4 PM. Rain Cancels. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491, Co-Leader Lynn, 877-1671

**Saturday, May 1 – 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](mailto:shogue@ci.chico.ca.us)

**Monday, May 3, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Tuesday, May 4, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Saturday, May 8 – Sacramento Bike Ride/Dinner** (grade 2, class A). Take a 15-mile, fairly flat easy-paced bike ride along the American River on a nicely paved bike path. We'll lunch along the river and take in a delicious Vietnamese dinner afterwards. Meet at Chico Park & Ride at 8AM. Rain cancels. Dress in layers. Bring lunch, water, \$ for carpool/dinner. Leader: Jeanne, 899-9980; Asst. Leader: Charles, 895-3045.

**Monday, May 10, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Tuesday, May 11, 6:30PM – Weekly Power Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

**Thursday, May 13, 6:30 PM - Exploring the Feather River Canyon,** talk and slideshow presented by Rex Burress, retired naturalist, photographer, and artist. Conference Room of the Chico Branch of the Butte Co. Library on East 1st and Sherman Avenues. Call 343-9277 for info.

**Saturday, May 15 - Yard & Garden Tour Fundraiser.** Tour ecological, beautiful gardens for easy maintenance, earth-friendly ideas and support your club at the same time. A fun day, invite your friends and neighbors. Tickets \$8. Info 893-2154.

**Sunday, May 16 – Paradise Lake Bike Ride.** Come enjoy the beauty and serenity of Paradise Lake as we bicycle on a gentle rolling trail along its shoreline. The ride is approximately 8 miles and requires a mountain bike. To participate you will need a properly maintained bike, tubes, patch kit, pump, water, \$ for carpooling and parking, and lunch for a picnic on the shore. Helmet required. Meet at Albertson's parking lot at 9:45AM. Leader- Lynn, 877-1671, Asst. Leader: Michelle, 865-9491.

**Monday, May 17, 6:30PM – Weekly Walk** (see beginning of schedule for details).

May 2004

# National Sierra Club

## Strategic Goals of the

The internal Sierra Club election this spring could prove pivotal and could dramatically alter the direction and mission of our organization. In fact, the Sierra Club we all joined may have a very different look to it next year, depending on the outcome of the 2004 Board of Directors election. That's because current members of the Sierra Club Board of Directors have openly recruited candidates with agendas widely different from the Club's historic conservation mission. The Sierra Club's direct elections make us unique – and vulnerable. One of the most important opportunities Sierra Club members have is the chance to select our own Board of Directors. Every year members select five directors for three-year terms on our fifteen-member Board. But as the Club has grown, the proportion of our members who vote has declined.

And now the Sierra Club is in trouble – our own democratic process is being used against us to take over our organization and hijack our agenda and assets. Because fewer and fewer members are voting, it has left us vulnerable to take-over efforts by people and parties with narrow, personal, one-issue agendas – like animal rights and anti-immigration. These outside groups can recruit and run petition candidates from outside the Club who share their ideology.

And that's exactly what's happening – with help from some current members of the Club's Board of Directors. Director Paul Watson outlined this effort at an animal rights conference earlier this year, just weeks after he was first elected to the Club's Board. "One of the reasons I'm on the Sierra Club Board of Directors right now is to try to change it," Watson proclaimed.

"And once we get three more directors elected, the Sierra Club will no longer be pro-hunting and pro-trapping and we can use the resources of the \$95-million-a-year budget to address some of these issues," said Watson, who calls fishermen "sadistic bastards" – even though about a sixth of the Club's membership fishes.

Watson noted his task will be made easier by low voter turnout in Club elections: "The heartening thing about it is that, in the last election, of the 750,000 members of the Sierra Club, only 8 percent of them voted. So, you know, a few hundred, or a few thousand people from the animal rights movement joining the Sierra Club -- and making it a point to vote -- will change the entire agenda of that organization."

Noted outdoors writer Jim Shepherd characterized this statement as an "attempt to hijack the Sierra Club," an effort Watson confirmed at the Club's annual September meeting, when he admitted that he's trying to "take over" the Sierra Club and its agenda.

In addition to Watson's efforts to commandeer the Sierra Club, the anti-immigration forces which have been targeting the Sierra Club for more than a decade have now joined forces with the animal rights activists. Club Director Ben Zuckerman, another Club Director with close to zero Club experience when he was elected to the Board, has recruited candidates to run for the Sierra Club board from an obscure organization called the Diversity Alliance for a Sustainable America. This organization shares his desire for the Club to become involved in closing down immigration into the United States. The DASA has been funded in part by grants totaling \$125,000 from foundations

controlled by the notorious Clinton-hater and right wing patron Richard Mellon Scaife and his family. According to the Washington Post, "Scaife and his family's charitable entities played a central role in the rise of the right, giving at least \$340 million to conservative causes and institutions."

Director Zuckerman's principal focus on the Board has been a relentless effort to persuade his fellow Directors to overturn the membership vote several years ago to unite the Club by remaining neutral on the question of immigration policy. Zuckerman has compared immigration to cancer, defended Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo -- an anti-immigration zealot who earns an average LCV score of 15% -- as "the person in Congress doing the most for the environment," and called for the Club to work on halting immigration as a means of fighting the war against terrorism. A number of anti-immigration web sites have recently been urging people to join the Sierra Club in order to elect the candidates recruited by Zuckerman.

These unrelenting efforts to undermine the Sierra Club, its conservation agenda, assets, and democratic process prompted the Southern Poverty Law Center, perhaps the nation's leading organization in exposing hate group activities, to advise the Club's volunteer leadership this fall: "We think that members of the Sierra Club should be fully alert to the methods and motives of some of those who are trying to shift it from its historic mission."

So consider yourself alerted to these take-over efforts, this deliberate attempt to undermine our democracy and hijack the agenda chosen by a majority of Sierra Club members. Consider all that is at stake in this Sierra Club election – our democracy, our direction, our ability to stop the Bush administration's assault on our environment and overcome some of the most serious environmental challenges we have ever faced.

Don't sit on the sidelines this election. Vote.

Ballots will be mailed to all Club members at the end of February, and must be filled out and received back by the Judges of Elections by April 21. Every Sierra Club member will receive a ballot and an accompanying statement, in which each candidate describes his or her background, qualifications, and goals for the organization. These last are often written in rather general language, but the Club and the candidates provide internet mechanisms through which they can be questioned more specifically about their views. Take the opportunity and question them.

"Sierra Club Board elections are a fine opportunity for our members to look at our Club and determine the directions they want the organization to go," says Club President Larry Fahn. "I urge all our members to study the candidates carefully. And I urge all members to vote. It is member participation that has made the Sierra Club the most effective environmental organization in the world. It is member participation that will empower us to stop George Bush, and will allow us to carry on our wonderful tradition of effectiveness into the future."

*The following goals, established in 1993, guide the Sierra Club's work:*

### **I. Enhance public perception of "environment" (overcome the perception of limits):**

- A. Develop pressure by consumers for green products.
- B. Educate public that strong environmental protection creates jobs.
- C. Reduce consumption levels in the U.S. through increasing efficiency, recycling, producing more durable goods, and by making waste and non-essential products and packaging socially unacceptable.

### **II. Build upon and develop new forms of political leverage:**

- A. Mobilize market incentives to induce corporate environmental change.
- B. Develop hybrid or "coordinated campaigns," targeting multiple levels of decision making.
- C. Work to make existing institutions more responsive and accountable to community and environmental needs.
- D. Create new vehicles for responsive institutions of government.
- E. Develop unconventional alliances to overcome legislative obstacles.

### **III. Integrate concerns for environmental protection and social justice to strengthen the environmental movement:**

- A. Develop more effective means for communicating through race, class, age, and cultural barriers.
- B. Re-position the Sierra Club as more visibly concerned about threats to community and workplace environments.
- C. Encourage more extensive coalition work between local Sierra Club entities and environmental justice groups.
- D. Develop a stronger capacity to influence state and local regulatory and land-use actions (particularly as these relate to pollution threats to vulnerable groups in our society and land uses they find unacceptable).

### **IV. Enhance the Club's position of leadership within the environmental movement:**

Reuse



Recycle

As a Sierra Club member and an advocate of the John Muir philosophy, I am happy to be connected to a group concerned about the salvation of "all things bright and beautiful"—especially as pertains to "The Range of Light" and those splendid Sierran slopes. Part of that incline drifts right down the Feather River Canyon into "my" Butte County foothills.

There is no doubt to me that if we are to retain our outdoor privileges, we must, like the national agenda of being vigilant to terrorists, maintain a vigilance over our outdoor access places—parks and refuges—as well as the environment as a whole. There is no doubt the George W. Bush administrative policies have put a strain on efforts to maintain healthy habitats, and all who are concerned about the salvation of species as well as spaces shift about uneasily. It seems that everyday we are faced with some "backdoor deal" to subtract from our conservation achievements and endeavors, all in the name of national progress and security.

The environmental concern situation has accelerated to the point it is sometimes overwhelming in scope and speculations. Just take a look at our excellent publication, the *SIERRA* magazine. I perused the current Jan/Feb 04 issue, starting with that stunning cover picture of the "Whitney Massif." That is the stuff of John Muir, founder of the Sierra Club—the "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings" stuff. I am energized and transformed by the wonder of living things! I am inspired by "Going to the woods is going home."

But then I turn the pages, wading past the various advertisements, past the selected (?) letters commending the magazine, past the "Let's Talk" column where the film, "Blue Vinyl," by Judith Helfand is reviewed (Synthetic siding (like I have on my house) a pollutant?!), and finally arrive at the main-staff "Ways and Means" words of Sierra Club Executive-Director Carl Pope. Again, it is a hit at the Bush administration, about cover-ups, and although that may well be warranted, I find it disconcertingly repetitious to play on that same chord.

Maybe we need to keep pounding away, and I do a bit of pounding myself, but it is the less attractive side of the heights. I'd rather be up there on some flowery peak exploring the wonders of nature, which is, or used to be, the primary reason of Sierra Club circles. We shouldn't lose sight of the glorious horizon in the muddle of misused conservationist issues, nor forget to equally emphasize the outdoor habitats we have available.

No doubt we are dependent on environmental lawyers and grassroot conservation advocates to make the nature message heard as someone has to speak out to give us a voice in the management of our natural resources. Nevertheless, I bristle a bit at accelerated attack. I'm not sure how the Sierra Club, which includes you and me, got so enmeshed in "Ground Zero" exposes, other than that the EPA was involved in under-reporting dangers of fouled air, but it's a long way from the Sierra Mountains, as much as I recognize the world has become more interconnected. Perhaps the

"Everything in the Universe is hitched together" philosophy of John Muir applies. How would "John O' the Mountains" react to 9-11 on the other side of the country? Maybe he would be "fightin' mad" which would dismiss my feeble feelings and expressions. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I was overwhelmed to the point of being annoyed by all the funding demands put in my mail during the Christmas season. Not only were there additional requests for money by the Sierra Club, but every environmental organization I belong to, and a good deal more I hadn't even heard of, including the "Best Friends" animal sanctuary out in Utah, put out requests for financial support, playing on the holiday spirit of "giving." I was not happy with that play on Christmas in a Christmas that is commercially overdone anyway. Not only that, but the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society started sending me renewal notices five months before my subscription expired. I suppose I should get used to environmental financial expectations, but I can't support them all on retirement wages.

I go on through the magazine. There is an item about "Little Lobbyist Makes a Case for Clean Air," and how can you knock that in view of the despicable pollution of the San Joaquin Valley—the gateway of Yosemite?! There is "Lay of the Land; CA struggles with air pollution (Reform: Lawn mower and gas-powered tools subdued by a law that goes into effect in 2007!") The wheels of God indeed

grind slowly when law-making is concerned!. There is "Watch: Keeping Tabs on the Bush Administration." (By the numbers: "Percent increase in mercury (above amount allowed by the Clean Air Act) that Bush's "Clear Skies" initiative would let power plants emit by 2010: 520.") You get the picture. Page after page. Efforts that are commendable, but at the same time, disconcerting in what sometimes seems like an ineffective hammering. An article even gets into the Bush administration's favorite form of sex education—abstinence-only!

How gratified I was to get to the "Circling Back to the Sierra" article, which indicates "however you change, the mountains will welcome you home." Then I was swept away in memory of my own circling in the Sierras one fine summer day on a backpack hike to May Lake and Mt. Hoffman. My son and I camped there and climbed "the first mountain that John Muir climbed," reveling in the clear blue sky, towering peaks, talus fields, marmots, deer, and the exhilaration in reaching the top. Of such are mountain friends born and a sense of wilderness appreciation developed that endures forever, even beyond the pale of political policies and devious administrators.

*"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a*

## The Burl Hunters

The term "burl" may be unknown to some, or maybe they have heard the word used in relation to knots in wool when crafting it into cloth. There is also a "burly" person who is big and round ("Burley" is a Kentucky tobacco). But the burl usage I read about in an arts and crafts article in the San Francisco Chronicle referred to tree burls, those swellings on trees that appear to be a tumor-like growth, often appearing at the base of redwoods, and sometimes on other trees, such as buckeye, myrtle, olive, manzanita, maple and walnut.

The craftsman mentioned in the article, Neal DeVore (who lives on Kelly Ridge in Oroville), finds burls and fashions them into artistic bowls and objects on his wood lathe. Burl wood is beautiful with rich color and swirling designs and is also used in classic dashboards for expensive cars and exquisite boxes. Thus there is a demand for burls, and they are limited to certain trees, placing a bounty on the bodies of choice specimens.

Just as some people fleece the environment to make money, the article, "Wish they all could be California burls" by Laura Thomas, spoke of Mr. DeVore buying burls from people who scavenge them all over northern California. "The scavengers are an unusual breed of backwoods folks. They're independent. They live out in the woods and cut trees and root out old stumps to sell," it was said. Just as people are out there scavenging wild foods of

many kinds—berries, mushrooms, ginseng, plants—others are taking aesthetical things like the burls, minerals, and driftwood. As enjoyable as this can be in a hobby sense, the multitude of projected human populations presents a scenario of stripped future wildlands. Companies like the Northern Hardwood Incorporated have men scouting for veneer grade burls daily, according to the web.

More and more it is becoming difficult to find an old growth forest intact...or any place on the land that has not been altered. Even in places that have the protection of parks, the landscape is often trampled by a million footsteps prowling to see the beauties of nature, and park officials are hard-pressed to keep people from taking "souvenirs" like burls and nature products. In Petrified Forest they have some stringent restrictions on people taking the colorful agatized chips, but even so, it is estimated that several tons are sneaked out every year.

I am reminded that in over-populated China, natural areas are very rare. Entire mountains, as described by Peter Hessler in his book, *River Town*, are terraced and utilized for crop space as at Fuling, China.

I have seen some of those redwood canyons along the coast that have been invaded by burl hunters. In one rugged recess, I felt like the first explorer...until I began to find that every redwood with base burls had had them amputated. It gives

## Grizzly Creek Ranch — *(Continued from page 1)*

outhouses. Overnight accommodations comfortably house 120 children or adults in

*(continued on p. 10)*

climate-controlled so-called "cabins" outfitted with running water, showers and flush toilets. It has a lodge with modern kitchen and dining hall, administrative center, amphitheater, sports court, specially designed swimming pool, and 12 cabins with attached independent activity lodges. The Ranch built its own paved paths and roads, drinking water and storage tanks, fire hydrants, and sewage treatment facility, including the settling ponds.

In late 2002, the Foundation set up the Grizzly Creek Ranch Foundation as a non-profit (501 3c) operation to run the camp. All Ranch land, camp buildings and infrastructure systems were transferred by the Foundation and are now owned by the Ranch. The Ranch is separate from the Foundation, presumably for business, legal and liability reasons. The Ranch is organized so that it is not a money-making operation.

Overall Ranch decision-makers are much the same as the Foundation: Ranch and Foundation headquarters are housed in the same office in Sacramento, and the Ranch's board of directors includes several members who also serve on the Foundation's board. Ranch operational support comes from the Foundation. The Ranch is not self-sufficient, does not meet expenses, and depends on the Foundation for solvency; some camper visits are partially subsidized by the Foundation.

The Ranch idea is similar to programs developed by other non-profits such as Camp Ronald McDonald in Lassen County, just outside Susanville, but Grizzly Creek Ranch is larger. Ann Perez, Grizzly Creek Ranch project director, reports the 2003 season lasted two months, with the Ranch hosting and boarding five children's special-needs groups, all from the Sacramento area. For the other three weeks, Plumas children (without special needs) used the Ranch facilities as day-hops. This season, there were no rentals to organized corporate, church, or conference groups, but these types of rentals are slated for the coming autumn. In 2004, the Ranch is completely booked with special-needs groups from June through August, and there has been a change in managers.

Since Ranch operations are still limited, it has had minimal impact on the Plumas economy. Most design and construction companies were from out of the area. Being non-profit, the Ranch has a county property tax exemption, and Plumas County has no business license requirement. The Ranch presently employs a staff of 21, with about 12 being locals. Although the Ranch tries to shop locally for all its supplies, bulk items that are not available locally come from Reno. Income to the county, and nearby Portola, is from sales taxes and expendable services such as utilities, fuel, and maintenance supplies.

McCandliss' plans for the Ranch include future expansion from its present 120 to a 300-person capacity, and the completed development

will eventually cover 40 acres. Although Ranch meadowland was once destined for horses, concerns of the special-needs camper organizations and insurance issues scotched that component of the Ranch's master plan. McCandliss is planning to use Jones Meadow on Carmichael's leased land as open space for groomed hiking trails that allow cross-country wheelchair access. There is a possibility of Foundation support for a Plumas Corporation project to restore their meadow to a more natural state.

Other environmentally-oriented activities included thinning of a dense second-growth lodgepole forest and removal of brush around

Ranch structures to encourage a diversified ecosystem and reduce the fire hazard. McCandliss has no plans to commercially develop the Ranch or the Carmichael Heights, which has spectacular views to the east over the vast Sierra Valley. County Planning reports all Devco's development permits have expired, and new permits are required prior to the county's considering any commercial development proposals.

Grizzly Creek canyon is rapidly changing, with a large privately-owned golf and housing complex under construction farther up the canyon. The Foundation and Ranch, at least, seem determined to keep their operation harmonious

*TALKING TREES CAMPGROUND & HEALTH SPA PRESENTS:*

## **INTERNATIONAL SUMMER SOLSTICE HIKING TREK**

**JUNE 25-27, 2004**

**HIKING CLUBS FROM AROUND THE WORLD WILL COME TO THE TALKING TREES CAMPGROUND & HEALTH SPA TO TEST THEIR SKILLS ON THE TRAILS OF THE OUACHITA NATIONAL FOREST AND ENJOY FELLOWSHIP. FACILITIES INCLUDE THE BEVERAGE BARN, ENTERTAINMENT IN THE OUTDOOR THEATER, MASSAGE THERAPY UNIT, HYDROTHERAPY UNIT, RV HOOK UPS, VENDORS, AND GREAT FOOD DURING THE THREE DAYS IN THE CAMP**

***QUALIFY FOR BADGES BY HIKING THE FOLLOWING:***

***BEGINNER TRAILS OF 0.7 TO 1.2 MILES***

***INTERMEDIATE TRAILS OF 3.1 TO 3.5 MILES***

***ADVANCED INTERMEDIATE TRAILS OF 5.6 MILES TO 9.8 MILES***

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# Conservation

## Changing Rivers

When I go down by the riverside and see the flowing current and the creatures that live there interacting with the stony setting, it seems as if the basin is very stable and will be there forever. Or has been there forever. Although I go for a thousand miles and then return, I can depend on the river remaining seemingly unchanged. "The whole wilderness seems to be alive and familiar, full of humanity. The very stones seem talkative, sympathetic, brotherly," said John Muir, and there is a stable feeling about the river.

Yet, we know that the river is, as is every habitat, subject to change, "...Nature...ever at work creating and destroying, chasing everything in endless song out of one beautiful form into another..." (Muir). There is the natural change, as when lichens and weather and erosion gradually wear away the rocks that are ground down into smaller and smaller boulders. There is the big change, such as rampaging floods, volcanoes or earthquakes. Then there are the changes produced by the affairs of mankind after America was settled by Europeans.

"Earth knows no sorrow that earth cannot heal," again said Muir. What he meant was that nature is very flexible and can rebound from disaster even though it might be in some other beautiful form and take hundreds of years. When there is a constant barrage of injurious manmade actions of the Industrial Age, we may never see the re-created landscape of nature again in our lifetimes.

There is a prime example of a river that has been altered by construction in "my" town of Oroville, CA. The Feather River has been excavated by gold miners, altered by walls and dikes in an effort to get at the gold, slopes were denuded of timber, the gravel bars were dredged down to bedrock, hydraulic mining altered and silted the channels almost out of existence, and most dramatic of all—the river was dammed by one of the largest dams in America! It has further been dammed from the headwaters at Lake Almanor all the way to Folsom Dam at Sacramento with dozens of smaller dams, all trying to squeeze as much usage as possible from the flow. The waters are diverted through canals for retention in reservoirs. Some places are polluted by pesticide runoff. Water is channeled into pipes and aqueducts for use in Southern California and for agricultural fields until one wonders what constitutes the Feather River. "Water isn't water anymore," so lamented Pete Seeger in song.

Yet, some of the river has partially recovered already, and you can walk beside the water on the Feather River Parkway path—even though it is an artificial path constructed of asphalt up against a massive levee—and see waterfowl and aquatic creatures flourishing as they have for thousands of years, even though in a controlled water-release from the dam. Trees will grow there whether transplanted by park crews or dispersed by nature. Beaver have thrived even to the point of gnawing too many trees. All that is needed is protection and space, and things will grow. Ironically, in building places for **people** to live, construction has covered land where plants cannot grow and water flow is channeled into

cement-covered drains.

A revealing condensation of what has happened along some of our western rivers since Lewis and Clark proceeded across the Northwest 200 years ago is presented in the book, *Lewis and Clark Revisited*, by Greg Gregor. President Jefferson was the designer of that revealing Expedition, acting from the premise of finding a practicable water route across the continent *for the purposes of commerce*. Even though he was interested in the physical makeup of the route, his underlying idea was that the rivers "were highways of empire linking American farmers to global markets."

Lewis and Clark found rivers in their wild and primitive state, bordered by immense herds of unafraid buffalo and grazing animals, and the distance was long. It took two and a half years to make the round trip by water and overland. The Missouri River was especially daunting in its immensity, being nearly a mile wide in places. After the Expedition members left St. Louis, May 14, 1804, they traveled 1,600 miles to reach Fort Mandan in North Dakota on October 31. The currents became stronger as they went into what is now western Montana the next year, and finally, they were afoot. Notions about navigable rivers and an easily portaged continental divide dissolved in the fury of white water rapids and a tangle of snow-choked mountains.

President Jefferson was fascinated by rivers, writing a long section on them in the one book he wrote. He considered the Missouri River to be the most important waterway west, judging it on its utility rather than scenic beauty, just as he considered the Ohio River to be the most beautiful river on earth because of its navigability. In his view, rivers were meant to do useful work for human beings.

Not much has changed in some of our national leaders' industrial mentality, but the land and rivers have certainly changed, largely due to that "Manifest Destiny" of using every inch of the west for profitable production. As the photographs in the book indicate, the Missouri River now is an industrial corridor producing generated electricity and irrigation waters for the surrounding farm land where wheat and corn have replaced native grasses.

The Missouri River has been diked and channeled from St. Louis to Nebraska, robbed of any meandering tendency and disrobed of its original character. Wherever a western river flows, it becomes the center for human activities, whether good or bad. There is not a major river in America that hasn't been bridged, bordered with power lines, and sited with cities, cattle, recreational facilities, commercial boating and agriculture. All of these things grow up along its banks.

Sometimes these alterations start on feeder streams, such as on No Creek in Missouri where I lived as a boy. The creek fed into Grand River that entered the Missouri River. The Corps of Engineers had straightened a meandering section of No Creek for rapid runoff during floods, which changed the stream design, but left behind a bypassed

## The Burl Hunters—*con't from p. 9*

you a feeling of spoliation.

(continued on p. 11)

I know of a private redwood ravine recess in the Mayacama Mountains that has some trees with beautiful burls adjacent to a spring-fed stream of remarkable beauty. The rugged canyon is knifed into a steep, heavily forested watershed, and giant red boulders of jasper decorate the streamside of gnarled redwood fantasies as if in its primeval state. At least, the burls were there 15 years ago, but now, I wonder...

What is a tree burl? Essentially, it is a deformity cause by an intrusion into the plant's anatomy, or possibly a thwarted bud, or a virus, that causes a confusion of cells resulting in a tumor-appearing growth. Sometimes a weak-looking sprout will grow from a burl.

Exaggerated spot-growth on plants is not limited to burls, however, as a variety of picturesque swellings can be found, including urchin galls on blue oak leaves, or cotton galls on service berry, or black knot fungus galls on choke cherry. I am fascinated every year by those brilliant red galls decorating the deciduous oak leaves in the Feather River hills, as well as in oak trees all over California. There are hundreds of different kinds, each produced by a different gall maker, not necessarily always by an insect, but the blue oak urchin galls are caused by a cynipid wasp the size of a pin head. Ron Russo, who wrote the book, "Plant Galls of the Californian Region," defines a gall as being "initiated by the chemical or mechanical stimulus of an invading plant or animal," and more than 2000 types of galls have been reported in the United States.

Some things can be collected without detracting from the environment's health or appearance. Hunters even collect ducks, and it can work with regulations, as they are a renewable resource. The urchin galls fall to the forest floor in great profusion and the insects emerge in late winter, and, like nuts or acorns, they are produced in abundance. Indian tribes were dependent on gathering nature's products for a living, and although they could overuse an area, there was plenty elsewhere, and they had but to move to a new location. "Times they are a-changin'," and today you buy your foodstuffs from the store as there are not enough resources for everyone to live off the land.

The oak apple galls the size of a golf ball turn brown and hang on to a tree for a couple years even after the insects have left. I collected some to make ornaments, and as in gathering edible mushrooms, you are really not destroying the species, even though if everyone made an intrusion it might amount to an overrun.

Other forms of plant alterations leading to swellings and deformity are bacteria-caused underground crown galls affecting chaparral plants, "witch's broom," a tangle of growth sometimes seen in pine trees, mistletoe parasitism, and a peculiar flattening of plant tips called fasciation, found especially in poison oak and common mullein, which may be due to genetic changes or viruses within the plant.

Conservation, discretion, respect, and moderation

# Last Words



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April 22, 2004

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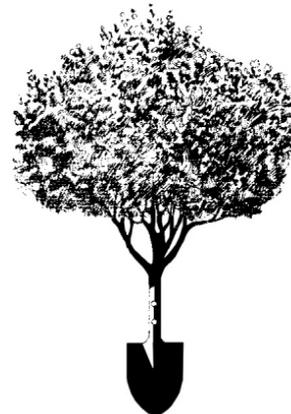
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